

**Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative
Head Start Program**

PARENT HANDBOOK



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WELCOME

Welcome to the **Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative Head Start Program**. We are glad you have chosen our program and are excited to serve your child (ren) and family this year. This handbook was written as a guide to describe our program and provide details that go into making each Head Start day a positive experience for you and your child.

The program serves a total of 455 Preschool children in the Center-Based and Home-Based setting in a four county area, which includes Campbell, Claiborne, Hancock, and Scott Counties. The children receive comprehensive services in the centers and in their homes.

Parents are encouraged and supported in their efforts to participate in the program. Participation is voluntary and not a requirement of the child's enrollment. We have an open door policy and the centers are open to parents during all program hours.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement of Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative Head Start/Early Head Start Program is to provide high-quality comprehensive services to enhance the lives of children and families from prenatal to preschool age.

EDUCATION

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

In order for your child to fully benefit from the Head Start experience, he/she must be dropped off by 9:00 am, when the learning program begins. You are expected to send your child every day unless he/she is ill. Head Start is a voluntary program with service hours and attendance requirements designed to provide maximum benefits to your child. If you are unable to meet these requirements, program staff will provide referrals to area programs that may offer hours to accommodate your needs. If you choose to leave your child past 1:30 p.m., you will be responsible for providing afternoon transportation. In the event of an extreme emergency, you must call the center for your child to remain past closing time. Due to the increased focus on school readiness and the need for additional staff training, all centers will be closing at 1:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the program year. Children will not be permitted to stay beyond 1:30 on these days. If the child is in an extended duration classroom, the early Wednesday release does not apply. Core hours for extended duration classrooms are from 8:00-2:30. The bus will leave the center at 2:30

HOME VISITS AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Home visits and parent-teacher conferences are a very important part of the center-based program. Teachers are required to make two home visits and schedule two parent conferences a year. The first home visit will be at the start of the program year, usually in August. The purpose of this visit is for your child to get to know his/her teacher, to complete all necessary paperwork, and to answer any questions you may have about the program. The second visit will be near the end of the year. The purpose of this visit is to inform you of your child's progress and to give you some activities that you can do with your child during the summer. If your child will be attending kindergarten, preparation for entry into the school system will also be discussed. Your participation in these home visits and parent-teacher conferences are greatly appreciated!

HAND-TO-HAND POLICY

If your child will be riding the Head Start bus, in order to transport your child as safely as possible, we require that you abide by our “Hand-to-Hand” Policy. At the bus stop, you must hand deliver your child to the bus, and an adult must meet our bus in the afternoon in order for the employee to hand deliver the child to the monitor who is waiting. If a designated adult is not there to meet the child, then your child will be returned to the center. If you transport your child in the morning, you are required to hand deliver him/her to a teacher or a teacher assistant inside the Head Start center. We require that you pick up your child in the afternoon by the same method. You will not be permitted to deliver your child to the center until a teacher or teacher assistant is present. Only teaching staff are allowed to receive your child. Check with your child’s teacher for the correct time to bring him/her.

CLOTHING

Your child should dress in clothing that is comfortable and suitable for the weather. Children are involved in a number of messy, creative activities that can get clothes dirty. Therefore, we ask you to send your child in comfortable clothes that they can play in without worry. An extra set of clothing (well labeled) must be available at the center at all times in case of an accident.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a very important part of our program. It is a State licensing requirement that outdoor play be provided every day except when it is raining and when temperatures are below 32° or above 95°. Please make sure that your child is suitably dressed for all weather conditions with shoes, coat, gloves, etc.

TOYS AND TREASURES

Each child has a specially marked “cubby” for personal belongings and treasured art projects. Past experience has shown that toys from home can create conflicts at the center. We have a wide variety of fun and interesting toys in the classroom that offer many opportunities for sharing. We ask that you leave personal belongings at home. There are three things that **must** remain at home – **gum, candy, and money**.

DISCIPLINE

The staff is trained to intervene immediately to stop behaviors that are unsafe or destructive. Teachers and Assistants will strive to always model appropriate interactions. They will not isolate, spank, shake, jerk, shame or deny food, rest or outdoor play. Children will not be punished for bathroom accidents. Activities will be provided to keep children involved both physically and mentally to help promote positive behavior. Good behavior will be praised and reinforced. We require that parents who volunteer or visit the center abide by these standards if you must correct your child on the Head Start Program's premises.

Disabilities

SERVICES TO CHILDREN

The Head Start/Early Head Start program offers services to children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of the disability. The program does not deny placement on the basis of the disability when parents wish to enroll their child; the child meets eligibility requirements; Head Start/Early Head Start is an appropriate placement; and the Program has available openings to enroll more children. Information from screenings and classroom assessments are used to determine each child's development progress so teachers can plan activities to support individual learning. When concerns arise about a child's progress, steps are taken, including obtaining additional information from the parent/guardian, repeating screenings, or requesting permission from the parent/guardian to make a referral for further evaluation through the local school system or other agency. Staff are trained in working with each child's specific needs through guidance from parents, therapists, the Program, and outside agencies. Placement options are determined based upon the needs of the child, M-Team and/or therapist recommendations, and parent requests.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND **CRISIS RESPONSE**

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Because safety is a top priority, the Program has a detailed plan for emergency response. Drills are practiced monthly to ensure staff and child knowledge of what to do in the event of an emergency. Tornado and fire drills are practiced each month. Fire drills include an evacuation from the building. Other drills, such as earthquake, bus evacuation, intruder, and lockdown, etc., are practiced during the year on a schedule that allows for effective practice of the protocols while minimizing disruptions to classroom schedules.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

PARENT/CENTER COMMUNICATION

It is very important that parents and teachers communicate regularly. Calendars, flyers and other information regarding training and classroom activities/events are sent home in a timely manner. Also, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher at any time by visiting or calling the center. Your input is always welcome. A bulletin board with announcements is available in the center for you to view. Please take time to check the parent board regularly to keep informed of center and community happenings.

ATTENDANCE

In the event of an unexpected absence, you must contact the center within one hour of the program start time to inform the staff that your child will not be attending that day. If your child is absent for consecutive days, your Family Advocate will contact you to provide support services as needed for the child to resume attendance. If your child has a pattern of absences, you must meet with staff to develop an attendance plan that includes strategies to improve the child's attendance. If a child ceases to attend or continues to have frequent absences, the program will consider the enrollment slot as a vacancy and will be filled with another family on the waitlist.



Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool: Build the Habit of Good Attendance

Early School Success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.

Missing 10 percent of preschool (one or two days every few weeks) can

- Make it harder to develop early reading skills.
- Make it harder to get ready for kindergarten and first grade.
- Develop a poor attendance pattern that's hard to break.

High quality preschool programs have many benefits for your child. The routines your child develops in preschool will continue throughout school. You can make the most of preschool by encouraging your child to attend every day!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with your child and his/her teacher to help your child develop strong attendance. Your enthusiasm is a big boost to success.

Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before
- Share ideas with other parents for getting out the door on time

Before the school year starts:

- Find out what day preschool starts and start the exciting count down!
- Make sure your child has the required shots.
- Attend orientation with your child to meet the teachers and classmates.

Ready – Set GO!

- Develop back-up plans for getting to preschool if something comes up
- Ask family members, neighbors or other parents to lend a hand if you need help dropping off or picking up your child
- Schedule medical appointments and extended trips when preschool is not in session
- If your child seems anxious about going to preschool, talk to the program director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice. If the problem persists, make sure the program is a good fit for your child.





Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative
Head Start/Early Head Start

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Annual Notice of Parental Rights Pertaining to Privacy of Child Records

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This letter serves as a reminder of your rights under the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) – Protections for the Privacy of Child Records.

1. You have the right to provide written consent before Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative (CPEC) Head Start/Early Head Start discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from your child's records.
2. However, CPEC Head Start/Early Head Start is permitted to disclose PII from child records, without consent of the parent, if the disclosure meeting of the following exceptions:
 - a. The disclosure is to program managers or governing body members who need to access PU to provide Head Start services such as managers or support staff. It may also include a volunteer or consultant who, while not employed by CPEC, performs program-related services such as mental health consultants or nurses.
 - b. The disclosure is in connections with a program audit or evaluation to ensure that the Program is in compliance with the federal requirements.
 - c. The disclosure supports a study to improve child and family outcomes.
 - d. The disclosure is to address a disaster, health or safety emergency during the period of emergency, or a serious health and safety risk.
 - e. The disclosure is necessary to comply with a sealed judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
 - f. The disclosure is to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to conduct program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements regarding meals provided by the Program.
 - g. The disclosure is to a case worker or representative from a state or local Welfare agency, who has the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement, when the agency is legally responsible for the child's care and the agency agreed in writing to protect PII, to use the information from the child's case plan for specific purposes intended of addressing the child's needs, ad to destroy information that is no longer needed for those purposes.
 - h. The disclosure is to the appropriate parties to address suspected or known child abuse or neglect.

3. You have a right to:

- a. View a log of all individuals, agencies, or organizations to whom PII from your child's record was disclosed.
- b. A free copy of any records provided to a third party, unless the disclosure was made pursuant to a court order ordering their nondisclosure.
- c. View any written agreement that CPEC Head Start/Early Head Start has with third parties.
- d. View your child's record on file with CPEC Head Start/Early Head Start. Please talk to your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns.
- e. Request an amendment of your child's record if you believe that portions of the record are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the child's privacy.
 - i. If you believe that any information in your child's record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the child's privacy and would like to request amendment of your child's record, please contact CPEC Head Start/Early Head Start at 423-626-9270 and we will help you through the process.

Please sign and date the attached "acknowledgement of Recipient of Annual Notice" form attached to this letter.

Thank you,

Jaime David

Jaime David
HS/EHS Assistant Director

GOVERNANCE

POLICY COUNCIL

The Policy Council is a formal structure of shared governance of the Head Start program in accordance with the Federal Performance Standards, which provides parents an opportunity to participate in decision-making concerning program design and implementation. Parents of currently enrolled Head Start children are eligible to serve and make up the majority of the Council. Other members are from the community and may include previous Head Start parents. The Policy Council has a total of 18 members, which includes: 11 parents and 7 community representatives. Membership on the Council is limited to a total of five years of service with re-elections annually. Policy Council representatives are elected from each center at the September Parent Meeting. Each center receives a copy of the Policy Council Minutes for Parent Committee review and the minutes are posted on the Parent Room bulletin board. The names from each center are drawn for appropriate representation with the remaining names serving as alternates. All program options are represented. There are five scheduled meetings per year with more if needed. Meetings are held at the central office in Tazewell and transportation is provided.

HEALTH

REQUIRED SCREENINGS

Before your child attends our Head Start center, he/she **MUST** follow the periodic schedule for check-ups and screenings as outlined in the EPSDT schedule for the Bureau of TennCare for the purpose of establishing a medical home. The physical includes:

- Height; Weight; Hematocrit and Hemoglobin; Blood Pressure; Lead Screening
- Hearing and Vision Screening
- Tuberculosis Screening (recommended, not required). At least one is needed.
- A general health assessment, to be completed on a Head Start physical form

Each child will have screenings that include:

Behavioral; Developmental; Dental; Speech; Nutritional

SICKNESS

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust that you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if in the opinion of the teaching staff your child is sick, he/she will be separated from the other children to a quiet place and you will be notified to come and pick up your child. If you are employed, please have an alternate plan in place if you cannot leave your place of employment to pick up your child if he/she should become ill while attending. The following criteria will be considered, but not limited, in determining if your child must go home:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| * A temperature of 100.5° or more | * Diarrhea |
| * Vomiting | * Severe coughing |
| * Difficulty breathing | * Sore throat |
| * Yellowish skin or eyes | * Pink eye |
| * Open sores | |

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

Before any medication can be given to your child, the medication must be brought to the center by the parent and a medication form must be signed and dated. To be given at the center, all medication must meet the following guidelines to be given at the center:

*be in the original bottle

*date of prescription

*amount and time to be given

*contain a prescription number

*doctor's name

Only one day's worth of medication will be accepted per day. If at all possible, ask your doctor to prescribe medication so that it will not need to be given during center hours. We cannot give any medication other than those prescribed by a medical professional; therefore no over-the-counter drugs (such as Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.) or sunscreen are to be sent to the center. All medication will be stored in a metal box, under lock and key. Any medication cannot be transported on the Head Start bus.

SMOKING

To promote the health and well-being of children and families, the program will strive to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, parents and children. Staff and volunteers will serve as role models by not smoking in the presence of children, parents and participants in any program facility or outdoor activities such as the playground, walks or other off-site activities. Being a guest on school property, we will abide by the policy enforced by the respective school system. Staff will assist parents who wish to quit smoking by facilitating access to recommended smoking cessation programs and materials.

ALLERGIES

Staff will be informed of children with food allergies. They are trained in emergency procedures in the event of an allergic reaction. Children on medically-based diets, who have allergies or intolerances to food or other required medical dietary modifications, will be accommodated. Written orders will be obtained from a healthcare provider including the F.A.R.E. form. Allergy plans will be developed by the Nutrition Manager for the child's health record.

NUTRITION SERVICES

Children attending Head Start will be served nutritious meals daily including Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack.

Head Start partners with USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP), which reimburses for Head Start children to have nutritious meals and snacks. Therefore, all meals and snack are at no cost for Head Start families.

Meal time is also a learning time in the program. Staff and children eat together, during this time children have the opportunity to taste new foods, ask questions and share their likes and dislikes of the foods that are being served. All meals MUST meet USDA and CACFP guidelines. Children on medically-based diets, who have allergies or intolerances to food or other required medical dietary modifications, will be accommodated. However, written documentation from the child's physician is required. Religious and Culture customs will be accommodated with written request by the parent/guardian.

While volunteering at Head Start, please feel free to eat lunch with your child. Volunteering two hours will permit you to eat at no cost.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Head Start/Early Head Start program promotes positive mental health/social-emotional wellness for enrolled children through daily routines, activities, and scheduled classroom observations that are conducted by a professional with knowledge of child development and best practices for preschool classrooms. The program also offers referral to mental health professionals upon request from the parent/guardian. Staff also offers referrals for mental health services for adults, upon request.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent Engagement is built on mutual trust and respect between families and staff. It means promoting relationships with families that support family well-being and promoting positive parent and child relationships, and providing ongoing learning for the parent and child. Each family has diverse interest and strengths that the program will encourage and build on to enhance the educational outcomes for the child (ren).

PROGRAM SURVEYS AND EVALUATIONS

In an effort to continuously improve the program, we need your feedback and input throughout the year. At the beginning of the program year, you will be given the opportunity to fill out a parent training survey to help choose topics for monthly parent training. At the end of the program year, you will be asked to complete a program evaluation to express your thoughts and feelings about the program, your child's teacher, and what your child has learned. These are very important to us as we strive to improve the quality of the program. Please take the time to complete and return them to your child's teacher.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent engagement is the cornerstone of every Head Start Program; therefore we encourage all parents to volunteer and become involved all areas of the program. As parents, you are the primary educator in your child's life. We want to partner with you and encourage you to become actively engaged in your child's education. Volunteering in the classroom, attending parent meetings and serving on various committees are just a few of the opportunities for parent engagement offered by Head Start. However, because the interest and needs of Head Start families differ, you may

choose to become involved in different ways. Please talk to your child's teacher or family advocates to discuss the many ways that you can become engaged.

PARENT MEETINGS

The program provides monthly parent meetings which allow parents an opportunity to connect with other parents in the program, participate in requested training to enhance parenting skills and goals, receive school readiness activities to use at home, plan fun events for the classroom, participate in leadership activities by serving on parent committees, Policy Council, Health and Education Advisory committee and participant in special projects. Representatives from different community agencies are invited to the meetings to provide training, resources, and information. The scheduled meeting day and time will be voted on in September at the first parent meeting to ensure the best possible attendance. It is our hope that you will take the opportunity to attend these meetings.

VOLUNTEERS

Anyone volunteering at least 30 hours per month must have proof of a negative TB skin screening on file with the Health Manager. Parent visits and volunteering during center hours are always welcome. You are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities throughout the year to volunteer in your child's classroom.

MALE INVOLVEMENT

The program is committed to encouraging male involvement in a child's life. This involvement can be demonstrated through shared decision making about the program, participation in classroom activities, attending parent meetings, as well as with their child at home. There are various activities offered at the centers such as the "Buddy Breakfast/Lunch", Reading Program and story contest. You will be provided with additional details.

CELEBRATIONS

Holiday celebrations in the classroom will be planned with respect to families' culture and conducted in a way as to honor the family's value systems. No child shall be forced to participate in any celebrations and an alternate activity will be planned and provided. Families will not be expected to make donations for celebrations/events. However, if parents wish to donate food for celebrations, such as family day or other center activities, only store bought, pre-packaged, unopened food can be accepted (to ensure the safety of the children). Homemade food items are not permitted to be served in the center. To promote healthy choices, only healthy snacks are allowed to be served in the centers. **No cupcakes, cookies, candy, drinks high in sugar content, etc.** will be allowed for any event at the center. Only healthy snacks like gold fish crackers, etc. will be permitted. Your teacher can provide healthy snack options that are safe for young children.

TRANSPORTATION

Each child transported on the bus will be required to wear or ride in a Child Safety Restraint System. Trained staff will properly secure the child. A bus monitor will be on the bus to assure you and the driver that children are transported safely. This is required by both the Department of Human Services and the Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative Performance Standards. Please do not eat, drink, or litter on the bus. Maximizing the safety of the children is our priority. Safety principles will not be sacrificed for operational efficiency. Transit time, number of children to be picked up, number of school bus stops, street crossings, and hazardous weather policies must be adhered to. The hand-to-hand contact information should be updated regularly at the center.

LOADING

Flashing amber warning lights are activated at 200 feet before stopping to warn other drivers that the bus is about to stop. The red warning lights are turned on and the stop sign comes out when the bus has come to a complete stop. The driver then checks mirrors and oncoming traffic, to make certain that the students can board safely. Parents should look both right and left and then at the bus driver to be signaled when it is safe to cross the street and board the bus. The adults should cross in front of bus at least 12 feet to ensure that the bus drivers can clearly view the crossing. The bus monitor will buckle the child in their assigned seat. The bus will move only after every passenger is safely buckled in.

UNLOADING

The flashing amber warning lights are activated 200 feet before stopping. The red warning lights and stop sign are turned on after the bus stops. The bus driver checks mirrors and oncoming traffic. The bus monitor then unbuckles the child and escorts them to the waiting parents on side of street. The child and parent should exit at least 10 feet away from the bus. The bus monitor returns to seat, buckles themselves in and the bus pulls out.

HOME-BASED ONLY

SOCIALIZATION SESSIONS

Times will be scheduled for you, your child, your home visitor and other children and families to attend **weekly** group socialization. Each session will last about four hours and will include breakfast (for the children) and lunch for the parent and child. Your Home Visitor will let you know your socialization day and time. Please make every effort to attend these sessions because they are very beneficial to you and your child. You will be asked to sign a socialization agreement outlining socialization responsibilities. We can also provide transportation to these sessions if needed. Please discuss your transportation needs with your Home Visitor.

HOME VISITS

The home-based option is designed to provide weekly home visits to each family. The Home Visitor will stay at least 1½ hours at each visit. Cancelled visits must be rescheduled within the week that they are cancelled. Home Visitors will bring information and activities to share with you and your child. Parents are expected to be an active part of each home visit. It is very important that you and your child are prepared for the visit at your scheduled time. This will give your child a sense that he/she is special because you are setting aside this time just for him/her. You will be asked to complete and sign a Parent/Home Visitor Agreement, which outlines both the responsibilities of the parent and Home Visitor.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent engagement is the cornerstone of every Head Start Program; therefore we encourage all parents to volunteer and become engaged in all areas of the program. As parents, you are the primary educator in your child's life. We want to partner with you and encourage you to become actively engaged in your child's education. Keeping all scheduled home visits, attending socialization sessions, going on field trips, and serving on various committees are just a few of the opportunities for parent engagement offered by Head Start. However, because the interest and needs of Head Start families differ, you may choose to become involved in different ways. Please talk with your Home Visitor to discuss the many ways that you can become involved in Head Start.

