



**FAMILY RESOURCE AGENCY  
OF NORTH GEORGIA**

**Head Start / Early Head Start / Pre-K Program**

***2025-2026***  
***PARENT/GUARDIAN***  
***HANDBOOK***

# Welcome

Dear Family:

Welcome to the Head Start Program. Your family and your child are now participants in a national program that serves more than 24,000 children and families in Georgia every year. I hope you are looking forward to an exciting year filled with learning experiences for both you and your child.

Please use this handbook and the program calendar. These have been designed just for YOU to help you keep track of program activities and to provide you with some information in the areas of family growth and development. The staff members who prepared the calendar are dedicated to making this year special for you. So keep these in a handy place and refer to them if you have questions. However, if you can't find the answer, call any time. We'll be glad to help.

You can also help us by volunteering in the classroom, at the Center, or preparing activities at home. If you can't help in this way, the staff will be sharing other ways you can get involved in the program. Please read the section on Volunteer Awards and make sure you receive credit for all of your volunteer activities.

Volunteers with the highest number of volunteer hours are invited to participate in the end of the year award activities, such as the Volunteer Awards Celebration. Parent of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and the Policy Council Chairperson are invited to attend the GHSA Conference in St. Simons! Talk to your Center staff about volunteer opportunities and the forms to complete in order to be eligible for these fun events!

This program has been designed by people who care about children and families. By your participation, we know you care about the same things. I know we will all work together to make this year a great one.

Once again, welcome! Please contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Melissa Metcalf  
Program Director

**Family Resource Agency of North Georgia**

Head Start / Early Head Start / Pre-K Program

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Visit our website: **[www.myfraga.org](http://www.myfraga.org)**

Like Us on Facebook for Information and Announcements:

FRAGA Head Start





## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*To impact our communities through education, advocacy and care.*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

*We help children and families be successful for today and prepared for tomorrow.*

## **GOAL STATEMENTS**

- Help people develop parenting skills by providing expert presentations to community and parent groups;
- Ensure that all children are ready to enter the educational system adequately prepared to meet the challenges of elementary education by emphasizing preschool skills in all programs;
- Help people break out of poverty by providing training in job skills, education in the job search process and encouraging the client's continuing employment;
- Explore an elder care program;

- Be recognized locally and regionally as the premier family support agency with the best possible staff and highest quality programs. Recognition will be achieved through staff participation in professional, service and community organizations;
- Provide a safe environment for adults and children by maintaining the Family Violence Program;
- Maintain safe child care and Head Start Centers;
- Be a well-diversified, publicly recognized organization that grows and expands through taking advantage of opportunities that complement services the agency currently offers;
- Maintain the highest standards of fiscal responsibility within all functions of the Agency, resulting in audits with no findings;
- Provide the highest level of support for employees, both in terms of physical facilities and other types of support;
- Provide appropriate professional development to all Agency and CCP staff, management and board of directors.
- The Agency Annual Report is available on our website: [www.myfraga.org](http://www.myfraga.org).



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION STATEMENT .....	4
PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY .....	8
INTRODUCTION .....	9
ABSENTEEISM POLICY .....	10
H.E.R.O. ( <u>H</u> ERE <u>E</u> VERYDAY <u>R</u> EADY <u>O</u> N-TIME).....	11
SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING .....	11
SAFE SLEEPING GUIDELINES .....	12
TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS .....	13
NO SMOKING .....	14
FIREARMS .....	14
TOYS FROM HOME .....	14
LOITERING.....	14
PRODUCT SAFETY .....	14
PARENTAL ACCESS .....	14
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY .....	15
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.....	17
CURRICULUM/SCHOOL READINESS and ASSESSMENT .....	19
SCREENING .....	20
SECOND STEPS .....	20
PARENT CONFERENCES .....	20
HOME VISITS.....	20

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION .....	21
WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS .....	22
ADMISSION/WITHDRAWAL .....	22
FEES/EXCLUSION.....	22
WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL.....	23
MEALS AND NUTRITION .....	24
WELLNESS .....	24
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.....	25
MEDICATION PROCEDURES/KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME.....	27
HEALTH SCREENINGS AND FOLLOW-UP .....	29
DENTAL EXAM AND FOLLOW-UP.....	30
CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS .....	30
SPECIAL ACTIVITES/NUTRITIOUS ACTIVITIES.....	31
SPECIAL NEEDS.....	32
TRANSITION TO HEAD START FROM EARLY HEAD START .....	32
TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN .....	32
NON-ENROLLED CHILDREN AT HEAD START CENTER.....	33
DISCIPLINE POLICY .....	34
WHAT <b><u>YOU</u></b> CAN DO FOR THE PROGRAM.....	35
WHAT THE PARENT GIVES TO THE CLASSROOM.....	36
VOLUNTEERING/AWARD CELEBRATION/IN-KIND .....	37
CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR EXPECTATION POLICY.....	38

## OUR PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The early years of a child's life are critical to learning and development. Parents are a child's first teachers. It is the responsibility of the program to support learning opportunities in the program and in the child's home.

Activities are designed to meet the educational, social, nutritional, health, emotional and psychological needs of the children. We encourage curiosity, exploration, problem-solving, and self-expression.

We assist children in developing a positive self-image through active involvement with other children and learning to play together in a non-competitive atmosphere that includes successful experiences for all children, no matter what skill level they have achieved. The curriculum includes individual planning for all children with a balance of structured and child-directed activities as well as a prenatal curriculum for pregnant women/expectant families.

Strengthening the families is an integral part of the program. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the program and receive ongoing support from staff, which includes parent meetings and trainings. This creates a comprehensive program which benefits children, families, and the community we serve.





## **INTRODUCTION**

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia is a private, non-profit agency which operates service delivery programs in the following counties: Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Murray, Walker, and Whitfield. Head Start, Early Head Start and Georgia Pre-K are three of the major service delivery programs operated by Family Resource Agency of North Georgia. To view the service area map and center locations please visit our website @ [www.myfraga.org](http://www.myfraga.org).

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K & CCP employs Administrative Personnel, Operations Specialists, Center Managers, Center Supervisors, Child Development Quality Mentors, Family Service Specialists, Family Service Quality Mentors, Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Food Service/Custodians and Substitutes. Family Resource Agency of North Georgia's Administrative Office is located in Rossville, Georgia. The administrative personnel monitors the programs management and accountability in the six-county area.

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia works closely with the local school systems in our service area and has been well received by educators, service providers, community leaders and parents. We collaborate with many agencies and programs, both public and private, to provide the best possible services for children and families. Our parent agency, Family Resource Agency, Inc., located in Cleveland, Tennessee, has been in operation for over 45 years, providing quality care to children and families.

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. For parents and families, school readiness means that they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. Our School Readiness Goals establish the expectations of progress across the domains of Language/Literacy, Cognition/General knowledge, Approaches to Learning, Physical Development & Health/Well-being, and Social/Emotional Development that will improve readiness for kindergarten. Our program also uses the Parent Family Community Engagement Framework to support children's school readiness. The PFCE Framework establishes an ongoing partnership between staff and families so that goals can be reached.

## **ABSENTEEISM POLICY**

It is important for your child to be in class every day that he/she is able to be there. Valid excuses for missing class include the following: illness, family violence, death in the family, hospitalization of family member, or house burning. Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K will monitor your child's attendance in order to assure that he/she gets the best benefits possible from the program. When your child has been absent, a Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K staff member will contact you regarding the missed days. For more tips and information about the importance of attendance please view the Attendance Works website @ [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org).

If your family is going out of town, you must contact staff with information about when your child will return to class. If your child does not return to class at the expected time, and if you do not contact the staff, your child's slot can be released to another child. If your family must be out of town for more than two weeks, your child may be taken off the active enrollment list and placed back on the wait list. As soon as your child has returned and there is an opening in your Center, your child will be re-enrolled.

If your child will be out of class due to an extended illness, you must give Center staff documentation from the child's doctor saying when he or she can return to class. If you do not give the staff the note within three days of their request for it, your child's slot may be released to another child. If your child's illness will keep him/her out of class for more than two weeks, we will work with you and your child according to your child's needs at administrative discretion.

If, for reasons other than those discussed above, your child misses five consecutive days with no contact, he or she can be removed from the active enrollment list and placed on the waiting list. If your child continues to miss class, he/she can be removed from the active enrollment list and placed back on the wait list.

Parents/guardians can review the "Department Of Human Resources Communicable Disease Chart and Guidelines for Exclusion and Re-Admission" at the Center office. Children and adults will not be accepted, allowed to remain at the Center, nor allowed to return for 24 hours if they have a fever of 100.4°F or higher, diarrhea, vomiting, etc., in accordance with guidelines set by licensing agencies and with program policies.

### **H.E.R.O (HERE EVERYDAY READY ON-TIME)**

Each classroom will have a H.E.R.O. sign posted outside of the classroom.

If your child comes in 10 minutes (Pre-K) or 30 minutes (HS/EHS) after the start of the class, the Parent/Guardian (or person dropping off/picking up) will report to the FSS, CM/CS, or Designated staff.

If your child leaves class 10 minutes (Pre-K) or 30 minutes (HS/EHS) prior to dismissal, the Parent/Guardian (or person dropping off/picking up) will report to the FSS, CM/CS, or Designated staff.

**CCP Classrooms Only**— Afternoon slips will be given if a child leaves 30 minutes prior to 2pm.

Parents/Guardians must sign their child/children in and out each day on the classroom iPad. It is very important we have your signature proving your child/children are in attendance each day.



***HELP YOUR CHILD BE A HERO!***



### **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia Head Start/ Early Head Start/ Pre-K Program is required to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or deprivation. Incidents of suspected child abuse will be reported to the Center Manager (CM)/Center Supervisor (CS) by the staff member making the observation. The CM/CS reports to the Department

### **SAFE SLEEPING GUIDELINES**

- Center staff shall place an infant to sleep on the infant's back in a crib unless the center has been provided a physician's written statement authorizing another sleep position for that particular infant that includes how the infant shall be placed to sleep and a time frame that the instructions are to be followed.
- Center staff shall not place objects or allow objects to be placed in or on the crib with an infant such as but not limited to toys, pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft items.
- Center staff shall not attach objects or allow objects to be attached to a crib with a sleeping infant such as but not limited to crib gyms, toys, mirrors and mobiles.
- Sleepers, sleep sacks and wearable blankets that fit according to the manufacturer's guidelines and will not slide up around the infant's face may be used when necessary for the comfort of the sleeping infant. Swaddling shall not be used unless the center has been provided a physician's written statement authorizing its use for a particular infant that includes instructions and a time frame for swaddling the infant.
- Center shall maintain the infant's sleeping area to be comfortable for a lightly clothed adult within a temperature range of sixty-eight (68) to eighty-two (82) degrees depending upon the season. There shall be lighting adequate to see each sleeping infant's face to view the color of infant's skin and check on the infant's breathing.
- When an infant can easily turn over from back to front and back again, center staff shall continue to put the infant to sleep initially on the infant's back but allow the infant to roll over into his or her preferred position and not re-position the infant.



- Wedges, other infant positioning devices and monitors shall not be used unless the parent or guardian provides a physician's written statement authorizing its use that includes how to use the device and a time frame for using the device is provided for that particular infant.

### **SAFE SLEEPING GUIDELINES (cont'd)**

- Infants shall not sleep in equipment other than safety-approved cribs, such as but not limited to a car safety seat, bouncy seat, highchair, or swing. Infants who arrive at the facility asleep or fall asleep in such equipment or on the floor shall be transferred to a safety approved crib.
- When individual storage is not available for the cots and mats, each child's bedding shall be kept separate from other children's bedding and stored in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags (not plastic). When individual storage is available and used for the storage of cots and mats, the bedding may be left on the cot or mat.

### **TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES**

1. When a parent/guardian transports his/her child to/from the center, **he/she must come inside and sign the child in/out with a staff member**. No child, enrolled or non-enrolled, may be left unattended in a vehicle. Violation of this policy will result in notification of the police. Children must be dropped off and picked up within the established time frame (see Late Pick-up Policy).
2. If you bring your child after the scheduled breakfast time, you may wish to feed him/her breakfast before arrival. (The published breakfast menu may not be available after that time and only a light breakfast menu, such as cereal with milk and fruit juice may be offered.)
3. **Your child will be released only to persons on the release list. This person may be required to show some legal form of identification, especially if a substitute is working in the classroom. Notify all release people of this possibility.**





### **NO SMOKING!**

Smoking and the use of tobacco in any form are prohibited in the interior of all buildings, offices or on grounds.

### **NO FIREARMS!**

Possession of firearms, other weapons, or explosives on Agency property is strictly prohibited unless authorized by law enforcement.



### **NO TOYS FROM HOME!**

Children do not bring toys from home. Small children sometimes have trouble sharing their favorite things, and it is heart-breaking to have a favorite toy broken by another child. Additionally, the classrooms are well-equipped, and the children need to be using these items.

### **NO LOITERING!**

Loitering is strictly prohibited on any Agency premises, which includes parking lots, playgrounds, etc. Any person or persons including any designated release person or person responsible for dropping off and picking up children should not be on Agency property any longer than 15 minutes unless otherwise instructed by staff, or they will be asked to leave the premises immediately.



### **PRODUCT SAFETY!**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission provides important safety information about recalled children's products. Please visit their website: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or call (800) 638-2772 for more information.

### **PARENTAL ACCESS!**

Parents, you have the right to access your child's facility any time your child is in care. However, you need to immediately make your presence known to the person in charge of the facility.

## **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

**HOLD YOUR CHILD'S HAND** while in the Center parking lot until your child is safely inside the Head Start/Early Head Start/ Pre-K building or safely inside your vehicle. Watch for other children in the parking lot as you enter or leave the Center grounds in your vehicle.

Injury is the number one killer of children ages 0-14. One child in five dies and five are permanently disabled every hour. More children die from preventable injury than from all childhood diseases combined. Help us preserve the safety of all our children by teaching, modeling and practicing good pedestrian safety habits!

### **Prevent pedestrian injuries!**

- Children should learn street safety as soon as they are ready to walk outdoors, but they need your help.
- Children learn by watching and doing. Go for walks with your children. Be a role model.

### **Be a responsible driver!**

- **Stay alert!** Children don't think before they act, especially when they are playing. Children are small. It's harder for them to see traffic and for drivers to see them!
- **Drive slowly!** You will have more time to see and safely respond to children and other pedestrians.
- **Be ready to make quick stops where there are children!** Children cannot judge speed, direction, or distance very well. If children see a car, they think the driver sees them, too!
- **Use seat belts/age-appropriate car seats at all times!**
- **LOOK AGAIN!** On average, 38 children die each year of heatstroke while left unattended in vehicles. Make the commitment to "look again" each time you exit your vehicle and NEVER leave a child alone in a vehicle.

MORE ➡

**Practice these safety steps!**

- **NEVER** enter the street between parked cars, trees, or shrubs.
- Cross at crosswalks, when available.
- Use sidewalks, when available.
- **STOP** at the curb or roadside, and **NEVER** run into the street.
- **LISTEN** and **LOOK** for traffic to the left, to the right, and to the left again. Teach a child that does not know left from right to look “this way “ and “that way” and “this way” again.
- Wait until the street is clear. **KEEP LOOKING** until you’ve crossed the street safely.
- Supervise your children until they show you they are safe pedestrians. Children under 10 should never cross the street alone.
- Be seen at night! Wear light colored clothing, or trim clothing with reflective tape.





## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The mission of Family Resource Agency of North Georgia, a not-for-profit organization, is to provide a comprehensive program which benefits children and families in the North Georgia communities served by the Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K program. These services include meeting the educational, social, nutritional, health, emotional and psychological needs of the children and families served by the program.

Children in Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K attend classes in an environment which is conducive to learning. We encourage curiosity, exploration, problem-solving and self-expression. We assist children in developing



a positive self-image. This is accomplished through active involvement with other children and learning to play together in a non-competitive atmosphere that includes successful experiences for all children, no matter what skill level they may have achieved.

Classroom activities include both group participation and individual choice. Children are encouraged to initiate activities, explore different ways of accomplishing tasks, recognize their own self-worth, as well as that of others, and relate to other children and adults. Children are also encouraged to develop skills in self-help through taking responsibility for their belongings, toys and equipment. They learn to sort and put away items before moving on to other activities. Individual attention is given to each child every day. Structured and teacher-led times are balanced with child-directed activities and outdoor play. A daily schedule is posted in the classroom. Lesson plans are prepared weekly and approved by the Center Manager (CM)/Center Supervisor (CS). They ensure that curriculum guidelines are met in an organized manner. Teacher/child interaction is an important part of the daily routine.

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In Head Start, Standard day includes a rest period of one (1) hour per day. Cots are provided with sheets which are laundered weekly. Children may choose to sleep or utilize quiet activities during this time. In Early Head Start, children sleep on demand, and sheets are laundered daily. We provide infants with supervised “tummy time” daily. See *page 12 for more information about safe sleeping practices.*

Outdoor play is scheduled for at least one (1) hour per day. When weather does not permit outdoor play, large motor activities are conducted in the classroom or, where available, in a gymnasium. Centers operating five or more hours per day provide each child who is not an infant at least one and one-half (1½) hours of outdoor play. Infants spend at least one hour daily outdoors.

There will be several opportunities during the year when you will have a visit with a Teacher or Assistant Teacher. The staff person will discuss your child’s individual progress and give you ideas on how to increase your child’s skills. You will be asked to share ideas and concerns about your child and his interests with the teacher. This is a great opportunity for you to learn how to become more involved in your child’s education. You spend more time with your child than anyone else does, and that time is very important. We believe that “Parents are Teachers, too” --- **THE BEST ONES!**



## **CURRICULUM**

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia uses the Creative Curriculum published by Teaching Strategies for Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-K.

The Creative Curriculum ® for Infants and Toddlers (EHS & CCP) — Retains its focus on responsive care while incorporating objectives that enable teachers to focus on what matters most for very young children. This curriculum helps teachers focus on how to plan and implement every aspect of caring for and teaching children from birth to age 3.

The Creative Curriculum ® for Preschool (HS / Pre-K) — A comprehensive early childhood educational system that emphasizes a practical, easy to understand approach to working with children. It promotes the use of interest areas as a way of providing experiences that promote cognitive, social, physical, and language development.

Ready Rosie-Parent Curriculum—A research-based curriculum that builds on parents knowledge. Uses video and mobile technology to empower busy families by providing ideas and parent/child activities.

The curriculum we use for pregnant women/expectant families is *Understanding Pregnancy*.

## **SCHOOL READINESS and ASSESSMENT**

We use Teaching Strategies GOLD for HS/EHS and Work Sampling Online for our Pre-K classrooms. Both assessments include predictors of school readiness and are aligned with state early learning guidelines, Georgia Pre-K content standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. GOLD and WSO support Dual Language Learners as well as children with special needs. The five domains of learning are: Language/Literacy, Cognition, Approaches to Learning, Perceptual Motor & Physical Development, and Social/Emotional Development.

### **SCREENING**

A screening tool is used to determine if a child's development is within the typical range. The screening is conducted within the first 45 days of enrollment. It is helpful for identifying children who are at risk, but is by no means a diagnostic tool. It can be used with children ages 0-6.

### **SECOND STEP (HS and Pre-K Only)**

We use Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum to enhance our curriculum by learning and practicing our social-emotional skills.

### **IMIL (I'M MOVING, I'M LEARNING)**

IMIL is a positive approach for supporting a healthy lifestyle. We are utilizing the I'm Moving, I'm Learning program in all classrooms — Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K and at staff meetings and activities.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

To encourage a sense of community, some of our classrooms may recite the Pledge of Allegiance as part of our whole group learning time. The children are invited to participate, but are not required to do so. Please let the teaching staff know if you have preferences on your child's participation in this activity.

### **DENTAL HYGIENE**

To encourage healthy habits, we use a dental curriculum in all Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-K classrooms.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES AND HOME VISITS**

We have two parent conferences and two home visits each year. These are required by our Performance Standards for staff and parents to gain knowledge and understanding of the developmental progress and activities of the child. We do a greater number of home visits with pregnant moms enrolled in our program.



### **HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION**

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Program offers a Standard Day school year program and an EHS year-round program. The hours and days of operation for the programs are below:

- **HS:** Monday-Friday 6.5 hours per day
- **Pre-K:** Monday-Friday 6.5 hours per day
- **EHS:** Monday- Friday 6.5 hours per day
- **Dade HS/EHS :** Monday-Thursday 8 Hours per day
- **EHS-CCP Option:** Monday-Friday 10 hours per day

\*NOTE: Times may vary at different centers. Parents are notified at Program Orientation of the times.

Our Head Start/Early Head Start programs provide services to children ages birth to five (5) years and pregnant moms. Our Pre-K program provides services to children ages four (4) to five (5) years.

We observe all major holidays. We do not necessarily follow the public school calendars. It is important that you keep the calendar in a prominent place as scheduled closure days are noted. See Weather Related Closings (next page) for closure information.

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia can provide information to Head Start and Pre-K parents about opportunities for after school and summer care.

### **WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS**

If the public school in your area is closed due to weather conditions, all the classrooms will be closed. In the event that a school system delays opening or calls for an early dismissal, program hours will follow the same delay/dismissal schedule. Local school system announcements are made on radio and TV stations. If the Center is closed for any other emergency, you will be contacted by phone.



### **ADMISSION, WITHDRAWAL, FEES, and EXCLUSION**

Children are enrolled based on a priority list developed by staff and parents. Those not enrolled are placed on a prioritized waiting list. Vacancies are filled within thirty days of their occurrence. Parents are asked to notify the

Center immediately if they are planning to withdraw their child so that the vacancy can be filled as quickly as possible.

No fees are charged for services.

After following reasonable but unsuccessful attempts to correct a situation, a child may be removed from the Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K program when they pose a risk to the health, well-being or safety of staff or other children. Children may also be removed due to lack of attendance.

## **WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL**

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing. Children need to have a change of clothes at the Center that are appropriate for Head Start / Early Head Start. Clothing guidelines include:

1. Clothing that is washable and sturdy.
2. Minimal jewelry that will not interfere with activities or be a safety hazard on the playground.
3. Snaps and zippers should only be worn if children can manipulate them easily.
4. **Hats, gloves and boots** (if it's cold or wet outside) that are suitable for the outdoors.

Put your child's name on all the clothing they wear to school so we know to whom it belongs.

Remember to have your child wear clothing that is appropriate for the weather and air-conditioned or heated classrooms. Girls will be more comfortable in pants rather than dresses.

Backpacks are not allowed except at the discretion of the Center Manager/Center Supervisor on a case-by-case basis.

For the safety of the child, we strongly encourage that they do not wear flip-flop type sandals or cowboy boots as these are dangerous on playground equipment. Tennis shoes are recommended.



When you are at the center, wear clothes that are comfortable and that you won't mind getting a little dirty. We will be playing outdoors, so tennis shoes are more comfortable. Walking shoes would be appropriate also. Please do not wear revealing clothing such as short shorts, low-cut shirts, or offensive lettering on clothing.

## **MEALS AND NUTRITION**

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Program provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack (4-day program), usually by either our own kitchen staff or by the local public school system. All meals and snacks are approved by a licensed, registered nutritionist prior to being served at the Center. This will ensure children are provided a well-balanced diet. Each child is served fresh milk each day to maintain USDA Nutritional Guidelines. The agency adheres to the CACFP meal patterns for every child. Meals for all children are served free of charge.

Children may not bring food to the Center. Food substitutions are made for individual children in case of allergies or a special diet prescribed by a physician. A written statement from a physician must accompany written parent authorization. These statements and authorizations will be placed in the child's file. This is due to USDA regulations. Parents/Guardians should notify the Center in writing of any substitutions necessary for cultural reasons. While we attempt to make accommodations where possible, regulations may prevent us from honoring some special requests.

Menus are sent home and are also posted monthly in each classroom and in each cafeteria where we house our own kitchen. These are for parental review and interest. Any changes will be added to the posted menus immediately. Family Resource Agency is a "nut-free" facility.

The children are served in a relaxed, family-style atmosphere and are encouraged to try new foods. As in all other activities, meal time is child-oriented. It's a time to share ideas and comments on foods or daily activities. Food is never used as a punishment or reward so that meal time is a happy and enjoyable experience for all.

## **WELLNESS**

We have a developmental consultant who comes in to observe the classroom and provides services to family, children, and staff on an "as needed" basis. We have also implemented a program called "I'm Moving, I'm Learning" which is a movement and healthy nutrition program designed to develop healthy habits and fight obesity.



## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

A plan for emergency preparedness/evacuation due to thunderstorms, tornadoes, fire, etc. is posted in each classroom and is practiced monthly for your child's maximum safety and care. In the event that you arrive at the center during a drill, you will be asked to remain outside the building until the drill is complete. Off-site evacuation locations are posted at each Center. In case of an accident or emergency, you will be contacted as soon as possible. You will be given instructions as to where you need to pick up your child.



**TORNADO WATCH:** This means that tornadoes are expected to develop. The Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K staff will listen to the local radio station for the latest weather report and instructions.



**TORNADO WARNINGS:** This means that a tornado has actually been sighted or indicated by weather radar. The Head Start/Early Head Start/ Pre-K classrooms will immediately seek shelter as indicated in their tornado emergency plan posted in the classroom. The staff will listen to the local radio station for the latest weather instructions.



**THUNDERSTORMS, FLASH FLOOD WATCHES/WARNINGS:** Staff will keep the children indoors, away from electrical outlets and appliances. Evacuation will be conducted when necessary, according to directives from local authorities.



**LOSS OF POWER:** If there is a loss of power, water, heat or air conditioning, and it is not an immediate problem, the Center Manager (CM)/Center Supervisor (CS) will contact Operations and secure the necessary repairs. If the loss of these utilities will be for an extended period of time, and school cannot be conducted as usual, arrangements will be made to send the children home.

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**FIRE EMERGENCIES & EVACUATION:** Emergency drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. This will be done to ensure that emergencies are conducted in a routine manner and reduces the likelihood of this being a frightening experience for your child. In the event of an actual fire, designated staff will contact 911 while teachers take children and class attendance rosters to the designated evacuation area following the evacuation route posted. Attendance will be checked to ensure all children are safe. Parents will be contacted as necessary to be given information on the location of their children.



**SERIOUS INJURY or ILLNESS:** Should a child or staff member receive a serious injury, the Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K staff will call 911. Staff have First Aid and CPR training and will administer necessary procedures as needed. After 911 is contacted, the parents/family will be notified, along with the Administrative Office staff in Rossville. Licensed Centers will notify the licensing agency in accordance with DHR procedures.



**FLU EPIDEMIC/COVID-19 & NOTIFIABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:** In the event of a flu epidemic, COVID-19 cases, or other communicable disease, you will be notified by the Center staff and/or information will be available by calling the Center.



**BOMB THREATS:** In the event of a bomb threat, the Head Start / Early Head Start / Pre-K staff will handle the threat in the same manner as a fire drill. The CM will contact 911 and follow the emergency personnel's instructions.



**LOCK DOWN:** If a situation should arise involving intruders or other potentially dangerous incidents, lock-down procedures will be issued. In the event of a lock-down, the doors are locked and the children will be kept safe and calm inside the classroom. No one will be allowed in or out until the Center Manager (CM)/Center Supervisor (CS) give the all-clear signal.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURE**

- Except for emergency first aid, no medication is administered to your child by the staff at Family Resource Agency of North Georgia unless prescribed by a physician and authorized by the parent/guardian. Only staff members have access to medications, and only staff administer medication.
- All medications must be in the original container and labeled with the name of the medication, the child's full name, date, prescription number, expiration date, the dates and times to be administered, the amount to be administered and any possible adverse reactions.
- When prescriptions are filled, the pharmacist should divide the medicine into two (2) bottles. One bottle should be kept at home, and one bottle should be sent to the Center. The first dosage of medication should always be given to the child at home so that the parent can observe the child for any possible reaction to the medication.
- Medicine should be given directly from the parent/guardian to the teaching staff and returned by the teaching staff directly to the parent/guardian. Medicine may not be given to the child to give to the Center staff.
- If the medication is in tablet/capsule form, both the staff and the parent will count it. If the medication is liquid, both staff and parent will measure it.
- A medication administration chart will be filled out and parent/guardian authorization signed. The parent/guardian and teaching staff will sign the form when medication is given and when it is returned home, with the amount listed.
- All medications will be kept in locked storage which is inaccessible to children.



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- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately if any adverse reactions occur.
- If the doctor changes the instructions for taking the medicine, the staff must have the instructions in writing from the doctor before they will change how the medicine is administered.
- Information must be provided to the center for the child's medical records regarding any prescription medication taken by the child, even if it is not given at the center.



#### **KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME IF HE/SHE:**

- Has a fever of 100.4°F or has had one during the previous 24 hours.
- Has a heavy nasal discharge.
- Has a constant cough.
- Is fussy, cranky and generally not him/herself. (Rest at such times may prevent the development of serious illness.)
- Has symptoms of a possible communicable disease – rash, sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache or abdominal pain, plus a fever.
- Is vomiting or has diarrhea.
- Has ringworm or any rash of unknown origin.



If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, staff should be notified so that the incubation period can be discussed and determined in order to properly inform parents/guardians of other children.

#### **BITING IN EHS:**

It is important to understand that biting is a form of communication and is developmentally appropriate behavior for children under the age of three. So, while biting can be minimized using specific strategies and responses, it cannot be completely eliminated. We take a team approach by working with teachers, families, and behavioral health professionals to focus on the motivation of the behavior and by utilizing the Biting Guide—a Parent/Teacher Resource.

### **HEALTH SCREENINGS AND FOLLOW-UP**

When your child begins Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K, you are asked to give your Family Services Specialist a copy of your child's health screenings that include vision, hearing, nutrition, and dental. If your child has not had the screenings performed recently, you are asked to take him or her to get them done. It is very important that this be done as soon as possible after the request is made. One reason this is important is that the government requires Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K to have all physicals on file within 90 days after the first day of classes. This is not the major reason, however.



**The best reason for having the health screenings performed is to protect the health and future education of your child.**

Some children have problems with vision or hearing which no one knows about until the child is several years old. By that time, he or she will have missed out on many things and may mistakenly be called "slow". Other children lack iron in their blood which can make them feel tired and can affect their growth. The screenings will find problems and allow time for them to be remedied. Our Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K families have been working very hard to get screenings and treatment done for their children, and we appreciate this very much. Please keep up the good work!

We also work with pregnant moms/expectant families to ensure appropriate pre- and post-natal care is obtained.

### **CHILDREN'S THIRD BIRTHDAY**

Georgia licensing requires that when a child turns three years old during a school year, the parent/guardian must give permission for the child to remain in the EHS classroom until he/she is eligible for Head Start the next school year. This is covered on the Parent/Guardian agreement. A transition meeting will occur at least six months prior to child's third birthday to explain all options available.

### **DENTAL EXAM AND FOLLOW-UP**



Often families do not think dental exams and treatment are important because their child is going to lose the baby teeth before he or she grows permanent teeth. However, it is very important to keep these baby teeth in good condition!

If a child loses a baby tooth too soon, the permanent teeth don't grow in the way they should. If they are crooked, the child may have future problems, not only with teeth, but with problems caused by the teeth not meeting correctly. These can include headaches and pain in the jaw.

When your Family Service Specialist talks with you about having your child's dental exam performed, please remember that exams and treatment are important in helping children be happy and healthy, both now and in the future. We know that this is what you want for your child!

### **CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS AND/OR HEALTH CONCERNS SHORT TERM EXCLUSION**

A child who has any type of contagious illness or condition must be excluded from the Head Start Center during the contagious period. Children who have medical procedures such as medical tests or surgery must be released by the physician to return to class. This policy helps ensure the health and safety of the sick or injured child, as well as of the other children in the classroom. Guidelines have been established to determine the conditions which require exclusion and criteria for these conditions. Some types of exclusions require completion of a release form by the physician to certify that the child is able to return to class. These forms will be provided to parents by the Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K staff.



### **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES / NUTRITION ACTIVITIES**

Special activities/Nutrition activities will reflect the needs of the population served by our program. Special activities will focus on providing opportunities for children to develop an appreciation, while honoring cultural and religious differences of families. Parents will be included in the planning of

special activities and nutrition activities through the input at Parent Meetings and Conferences.

#### **Guidelines for Staff:**

- Parents will be informed in advance of special activities (such as an on-site field trip, egg hunt, etc). Children who do not attend on these days will be marked as non-scheduled.
- Use special activities/nutrition activities as part of many other kinds of activities about a cultural group. Ask yourself: how does this special activity support the lesson plan theme? Is it developmentally suitable to my group of children? Is it related to their lives and interests?
- Respect diversity of beliefs as represented in your classroom (children and staff). Demonstrate respect for everyone's traditions throughout the curriculum.
- Be sensitive to the possibility that many families may find certain special activities stressful because of the enormous amount of commercialization and media pressure to purchase things. Talk about the underlying meaning of the special activities as times when your family and other people you care about come together and enjoy each other.
- Although parent input is important, teachers must ensure the appropriateness of all activities and help parents modify their suggestions when needed, taking into consideration safety, health, nutrition and social-emotional appropriateness.
- Consider experiences from the point of view of children in your program. The lesson that a friend celebrates different holidays, or the same special activities in a different way, and is still a friend, is the most important lesson for appreciating differences.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

***We welcome children of ALL abilities!*** At least 10% of the slots in the Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K program are made available to children who have an IEP or IFSP. Through various screenings and observations, special needs may be identified in children that we didn't know about previously. If your child has a special need, the Teaching Staff and Family Service Specialist (FSS) will work with you to ensure that the needs are being met.



### **TRANSITION TO HEAD START FROM EARLY HEAD START**

For children who will be transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start, we will work with you to assure a smooth and positive transition for your child. Activities may include visiting a Head Start classroom they will possibly attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to accompany their child in order to meet the Head Start teachers. We will complete an Early Head Start Transition at 27 months old to update you on your child's developmental and health status at the time of the transition, as well as any alternative child care options available to your child.

### **TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN**

For children who will be going to Kindergarten, we will work with you to assure a smooth and positive transition for your child. Activities may include visiting the public school they will attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to accompany their child in order to meet the school administrator and teachers. We will gladly provide any documentation we have gathered on your child to transfer with them to Kindergarten upon your request.





**SIBLINGS / OTHER NON-ENROLLED CHILDREN ACCOMPANYING  
PARENT/GUARDIANS TO HS/EHS/PRE-K CENTER POLICY**

This policy has been developed to ensure that:

- Younger children are not involved in activities which are not age appropriate
- Non-enrolled children do not disrupt the planned activities.
- Non-enrolled children are not present without proper supervision, and teaching staff are not distracted from their duties with the Head Start children to monitor the activities of the non-enrolled children.
- Parent/guardians are able to devote their attention to the Head Start child.
- Non-enrolled children are not left out because the planned activities do not allow for extra children.
- Head Start children are not exposed to children who may not have required immunizations.
- State licensing regulations regarding the number of children and space.

Therefore, our policy is that non-enrolled children are not allowed to attend classroom functions at our Head Start centers during the center's normal operating hours. This policy is in effect in all programs operated by Family Resource Agency of North Georgia.

Non-enrolled children may accompany parents/guardians to NON-CLASSROOM FUNCTIONS in the Head Start center according to the following guidelines:

- The non-enrolled child can be at the Center, but not in the classroom, for no more than one hour of any day.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for the supervision of the child at all times.
- The non-enrolled child must remain with the parent guardian at all times.
- If at any time a non-enrolled child is not properly supervised, the parent/guardian and child will be required to leave the Center.
- Non-enrolled children may NOT accompany parents who are volunteering at the Center.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Program uses guidelines for positive discipline. Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of each individual child, the group, and the adult.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they *should* do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

*The following are “appropriate actions” and “inappropriate actions” in the Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K program.*



### **APPROPRIATE**

- Use positive words with the children, i.e. “Let’s walk” instead of “Don’t run”.
- Hold hands with the children.
- Smile when talking with them.
- Use a pleasant friendly tone of voice.
- Use positive reinforcement, rather than punishment.



### **INAPPROPRIATE**

- Physical punishment, such as slapping, spanking, hitting, pulling on their arms; abuse of any kind.
- Isolate children
- Deprive a child of food or rest.
- Shake a child
- Scream or yell at the children

These policies are developed in conjunction with the Head Start National Office. All personnel, including Staff, Parents, or Volunteers, ***must*** follow these directives.

## **HOW YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE PROGRAM**

As parents/guardians, you may wonder what you could possibly do to help a teacher. Well, we want you to know **you are our most valuable resource**, and we really need you. Below is just a partial list of the things you might be able to do for us:

- Volunteer to help the classroom staff, or as an extra adult to help with classroom activities. Participate in classroom activities, ie. Art, reading/library, dramatic play/music, science experiments;
- Attend on-site field trip;
- Help us keep the Center in good working condition;
- Help serve meals and snacks (in order to help with food, parents/guardians MUST have a TB test on file and follow meal service health and safety procedures);
- Assist with preparation of material for classroom activities;
- Volunteer hours are a required part of the Head Start / Early Head Start grant, so volunteering helps us meet our In-Kind requirements;
- Maintain confidentiality of information about children, families and staff;
- Attend all IFSP or IEP meetings for your child to insure his/her individual needs are met.



### **WHAT YOU GIVE TO THE** **CLASSROOM**

- You give your child a feeling that school is a safe and friendly place to learn.
- You give a helping hand in the classroom activities to support the children's learning experiences.
- You have the opportunity to be a positive role model for children.
- You help the teacher gain a better understanding of your child to ensure his/her individual needs are met.
- Your knowledge, skills, and talents are appreciated and add cultural diversity to the classroom.



### **WHAT YOU GET FROM THE** **CLASSROOM**

- You learn about your child through other children in classroom activities.
- You receive support and guidance on various teaching methods for your individual child's needs.
- You learn more about how your child learns and grows.
- You gain an understanding of how the school and home activities work together to help your child.
- You receive information about your community resources and facilities.



**VOLUNTEER AWARDS.** “In-Kind” is the way we document the time you spend helping your Head Start center as a volunteer. Your child’s Teacher and your Family Service Specialist will show you how to document your hours. It is very important that you write down your hours every time you help in the classroom, assist on an on-site field trip, attend a Parent Meeting or Policy Council Meeting, participate in Male Involvement or even take construction paper home to cut out decorations for the bulletin board. These hours are tracked and are used to determine volunteer awards at the end of the year.



**VOLUNTEER AWARD CELEBRATION.** Every spring we have a celebration to honor those parents and Policy Council members who helped us in different ways throughout the year. We show our appreciation by presenting each volunteer with a certificate of appreciation, as well as serving refreshments.

**IN-KIND FOR VOLUNTEER HOURS.** Volunteer hours are an important part of how our program meets its goals and parents make the best volunteers! You can volunteer in many ways (*see page 37 for a list of various ways you can help*). Any time you volunteer at one of our centers, please be sure to document your volunteer hours. Your Center Manager/Center Supervisor or Family Service Specialist can show you how to document your hours. We use In-Kind to track volunteer hours to determine who will attend the Volunteer Award Luncheon each spring, and who will attend the GHSA Spring Conference in St. Simons— be sure you get credit for the time you spend volunteering! ***IMPORTANT NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS: Family Resource Agency of North Georgia is a mandated reporter of Suspected Abuse/Neglect.***

**FAMILY RESOURCE AGENCY OF NORTH GEORGIA  
CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR EXPECTATION POLICY**

Family Resource Agency expects that all of its customers/clients will interact with its staff in a civilized manner and will work to resolve any problems, conflicts, or issues in a manner that incorporates mutual respect for one another.

Unreasonable and/or disorderly conduct, language or mannerisms that threaten, intimidate, demean, harass, or provoke staff, or are generally considered vulgar or offensive are not acceptable. Violence or threats of violence either displayed, plainly stated, or implied, will definitely not be tolerated.

Posting to any social networking, blog, webpage, internet site or public forum of any pictures of children other than your own, staff or families and/or negative comments about children, families, staff and the program is prohibited. This is a violation of privacy laws and confidentiality policies, and can damage the credibility of those individuals and the program.

This same code of conduct applies to spouses, boyfriends-girlfriends, relatives, or any other person who may have contact with Agency staff in relation to the enrollment of a particular child, children or client.

Any person determined by Agency management to have violated this policy will generally be notified of the violation and reminded of our positive and civil behavioral expectations. If, after notification, the problematic behavior, language, or situation continues, the Agency may take steps to ban the person and/or family from the center. The Agency, however, reserves the right to immediately remove from the center any person and/or family that management believes poses a threat to the safety and/or health of its other customers and/or staff.