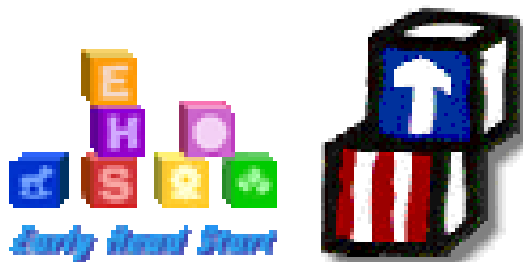




**FAMILY HANDBOOK  
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START  
PROGRAM**



**8649 Baypine Road, Ste. 300, Bldg 7  
Jacksonville, FL 32256  
(904) 726-1500  
1-800-745-4836  
[www.ecs4kids.org](http://www.ecs4kids.org)**

***A LOOK AT HEAD START/EARLY HEADSTART***

Head Start and Early Head Start is a comprehensive school readiness program for pregnant women, children and their families who are age and income eligible, including children with disabilities or special needs. This program serves 2,234 children and pregnant women in Baker, Bradford, Clay, Nassau, Duval, Alachua, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion, Lake, and Citrus Counties.

***A Statement of Inclusion***

In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, all children are eligible for the Head Start/Early Head Start program. ECS does not discriminate against staff or families on the basis of sex, age, religion, national origin, race, marital status, physical or mental disability, veteran status or sexual orientation.

***EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START REGION I ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION***

The agency is governed by the Board of Trustees and the Head Start Policy Council.

Chief Executive Officer	Connie Stophel
Chief of Center Operations	Jeanne Dillard
Chief Administrative Officer	Temple DePlato
Chief Financial Officer	Wendy Hughes
Chief Development Officer	Lauren Hopkins
VP of HS/EHS	Autumn Tomas
AVP Early Childhood Education	Melanie Clough
Senior Director of HS/EHS- Educational Operations	JewRonda Greene
Senior Director of HS/EHS- Comprehensive Services	Maria O'Donnell
Senior Director of Facilities & Transportation	Bryan Ward
Senior Director of Quality Assurance	Pam Jett
Director of Educational Operations	Telisa Pitts, Maritza Alejandro, Heather Shepherd
Director of Training	Nilda Price
Director of Health and Nutrition Services	Jamila Green
Director of Child Care Food Program	Katherine Debrocq
Director of Family Services	Jenni Matusko
Director of Home-Based Services	Kim Scurti
Director of Outreach	Benita Martin
Manager of Center Operations	Rebecca Hammond, Alisha Williams, Donnalee Rowell, Tiffany Daniels-Manns, Lori Gabel, Loraine Perez, Samuel Garcia
Health and Nutrition Services Manager	Terricena Kittles
Child Development Services Manager	Lilyeth Antonio
Social Emotional Services Manager	Jessica Moreno
Child Care Food Program Manager	Jessica Bianchi
Education Manager	Kim Hoffmann; Melina Stewart
Family Services Manager	Kirstie Burkhalter, Robin Kinsey, Michelle Brown, Amy Rahming, Darnell Stewart, Stephanie Ash, Cinton Alford, Sekennia Welch
Home Based Services Manager	Maria Luna, Yesenia Rutledge
Quality Assurance Manager	Amber Ward
Manager of Systems Administration	Tiffany Davis

**The Episcopal Children's Services, Inc. Headquarters office is located at 8649 Baypine Road, Ste. 300, Bldg 7 in Jacksonville, Florida. The central office phone number where any of the above individuals can be reached is (904) 726-1500.**

	<b>CENTER ADDRESS AND CONTACT NUMBER</b>	<b>CONTACT PERSON</b>
<b>Baker</b>	<b>Baker County Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 418 S. 8th Street MacClenny, FL 32063 (904) 259-1177	<b>Jamie Rich, Ann Alford</b> Family Advocates  <b>Marie Fryer</b> Center Manager
<b>Bradford</b>	<b>Starke Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 1080 N. Pine Street Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-8280 or (904) 964-2519	<b>Alise Watson</b> Family Advocate  <b>Gina Powell</b> Center Manager
<b>Clay</b>	<b>Green Cove Springs Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 1107 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Green Cove Springs, FL32043 (904) 529-1150	<b>Lisette Fiannaca</b> Family Advocate  <b>Marisol Buitrago</b> Center Manager
	<b>Orange Park Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 15 Belmont Blvd. Orange Park, FL32073 (904) 213-3071	<b>Janice DeJesus</b> Family Advocates  <b>Qiara Carr</b> Center Manager
	<b>Middleburg Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 2506 Blanding Blvd. Middleburg, FL 32608 (904) 291-5472	<b>TBD; Meilin Chang</b> Family Advocates  <b>Madelina Colon</b> Center Manager
<b>Nassau</b>	<b>Fernandina Beach Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 516 South 10 <sup>th</sup> Street Fernandina Beach, FL (904) 491-3631	<b>Iliana Ventura</b> Family Advocate  <b>Cisely Hightower</b> Center Manager
	<b>Callahan Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 45089 Third Avenue Callahan, FL (904) 879-5019 OR (904) 879-2811	<b>Jacqueline Brooks</b> Center Manager  <b>Dannielle Wilkerson</b> Family Advocate
<b>North Florida Home Based</b>	<b>Early Head Start Home Based Services</b> Home Based Supervisor can be contacted at ECS Central Office 904-726-1500	<b>Corinthia McKenzie, Marbanean Jennings, Amanda Davis, Luz Rosado, Isaura Ingles-Ramos, Angelica Miranda, Shenna Wade, Courtney Forth</b> Home Visitors  <b>Maria Luna</b> Home Based Services Manager

<b>Duval</b>	<b>Westside Early Head Start</b> 2648 W. 5 <sup>th</sup> Street Jacksonville, FL32254 (904) 693-5042	<b>Jamillah Abdullah</b> Family Advocate  <b>Takira Mainor</b> Center Manager
	<b>Northside Early Head Start</b> 1070 West 18 <sup>th</sup> Street Jacksonville, FL32209 (904) 359-2612	<b>Claytonia Johnson, Tonishea Gibson</b> Family Advocates  <b>Shakekee Bryant</b> Center Manager
	<b>Rhoda Martin Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 337 4th St. S. Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250 (904) 674-6265	<b>Jhai Johnson</b> Family Advocate  <b>Carmelita Gilmore</b> Center Manager
	<b>Good Shepherd Early Learning Center</b> 1100 Stockton St, Jacksonville, FL 32204 (904) 723-4413	<b>Eugenia Canales</b> Family Advocate  <b>Tierrah Crawford</b> Center Manager
	<b>Wingate Early Head Start</b> 11100 Wingate Rd. Jacksonville, FL 32218 (904) 674-6231	<b>Shalanda Moore</b> Family Advocate  <b>Arlesha Green</b> Center Manager
<b>Duval CCP's</b>	<b>Lane Ave CDC Kiddieville Christian Academy For Your Child Victory Land</b>	<b>Dee Lee</b> <b>Eugenia Canales</b> <b>Tracey Clare</b> Family Advocates
<b>Alachua</b>	<b>Gainesville Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 530 NE Waldo Rd Gainesville, FL 32641 352-225-5021	<b>Alicia Sprangle, Cyarah Welch</b> Family Advocates  <b>Cynthia Davis</b> Center Manager
	<b>Highlands Head Start</b> 1132 NE 16 <sup>th</sup> Ave Gainesville, FL 32609 352-339-9565 (cell)	<b>LaVeta Carroll; Domanique Presley; Tamara Brown</b> Family Advocates  <b>Diane Frazier</b> Center Manager
	<b>Waldo Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 14450 NE 148 <sup>th</sup> Ave Waldo, FL 32694 352-355-5348 (cell)	<b>Lakedra Hall</b> Family Advocate  <b>Robert Moramarco</b> Center Manager

	<b>Eden Park Head Start</b> 1340 NE 39 <sup>th</sup> Ave Gainesville, FL 32609 1-800-745-4836 (cell)	<b>Julie Johnston</b> Family Advocate  <b>Mary Strawder</b> Center Manager
	<b>Hawthorne Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 5837 SE Hwy 301 Hawthorne, FL 32640 352-359-7955 (cell)	<b>Natasha Jones</b> Family Advocate  <b>Sharissa Lee-Cobb</b> Center Manager
	<b>Eastside Head Start</b> 1930 NE Waldo Rd Gainesville, FL 32609 352-355-6374 (cell)	<b>Natasha Jones; TBD</b> Family Advocates  <b>Tekela Battles</b> Center Manager
<b>Alachua CCP's</b>	<b>The CHILD Center</b> <b>Martin Rochelle</b> <b>Just a Blessing</b> <b>Building Dreams</b> <b>I Rise Performing Kids Academy</b>	<b>Amanda Stedt; Kaidian Boubacar</b> <b>Kaidian Boubacar</b> <b>Shonta Miller; Shaquerria Campbell</b> <b>Olivia Kelly</b> <b>Shonta Miller</b>
<b>Levy</b>	<b>Bronson Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 9051 NE Hwy 27 Alt Bronson, FL 32621 352-486-4444	<b>Arlene Henkin</b> Family Advocate  <b>Tonya Adams</b> Center Manager
<b>Levy CCP's</b>	<b>Clyatt House</b> <b>Fun 4 Kids 2</b> <b>Kids N Company</b>	<b>Patricia Byrd, Tamika Collins, Jessica Melton</b> <b>Tamika Collins</b> <b>Latasha James; Hazel Lake; Jacqueling Mathis</b> Family Advocates
<b>Central Florida Home Based</b>	<b>Early Head Start Home Based Services</b> Home Based Supervisor can be contacted at the ECS Skylark Office (352) 401-5000 ext 255	<b>Patricia Wiggins, Shauna Thomas, Kawanza Montfort, Weniquecka Gordon, Olga Monsalve, Twilla Sponholz, Polly Smith, Destiny Bethea</b> Home Visitors  <b>Yesenia Rutledge</b> Home Based Services Manager
<b>Lake</b>	<b>Eustis Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 550 McDonald Ave. Eustis, FL. 32726 (352) 800-4275	<b>Lavera Marshall, Carlee Altman</b> Family Advocates  <b>Starr Wingfield</b> Center Manager

	<b>Clermont Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 690 E. Desoto St. Clermont, FL. 34711 (352) 708-8105	<b>Tayesha Griffiths, Barbara Rodriguez</b> Family Advocates  <b>Aneesa Gilley-Timmons</b> Center Manager
	<b>Mount Dora Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 1560 Highland Ave. Mount Dora, FL. 32757 352-729-2360	<b>Kimetra Johnson</b> Family Advocate  <b>Lori Horton</b> Center Manager
	<b>Leesburg Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 1111 Pamela Street Leesburg, FL 34748 352-805-4604	<b>Terrenseah Fuller, Janet Figueroa</b> Family Advocates  <b>Diana Williams</b> Center Manager
<b>Marion</b>	<b>Howard Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 306 NW 7th Ave. Bldg. 3 Ocala, FL. 34478 352-547-8083	<b>Dany Tome, Deborah Gerard</b> Family Advocates  <b>Marvis McDavid</b> Center Manager
	<b>Thelma Griffith Center Early Head Start</b> 1601 NE 25th Ave. Ste 1000 Ocala, FL. 34470 352-547-8070	<b>Merlene Roberts, Michelle Santos</b> Family Advocates  <b>Maurin Urdaneta</b> Center Manager
	<b>Boynton Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 1701 NW 10th St. Ocala, FL. 34475 352-547-8017	<b>Karen Vaughn, Deborah Dennard</b> Family Advocates  <b>Lovely Hope</b> Center Manager
	<b>Skylark Head Start/Early Head Start</b> 1600 NE 25th Ave. #900 Ocala, FL 34470 352-512-9027	<b>Tracy Houston, Ernestine Tyler, Eveny Santos, Lillie Thornton, Joyce Johnson</b> Family Advocates  <b>Dan McBride</b> ERSEA Specialist  <b>Lisa Woods</b> Center Manager
<b>Marion CCP's</b>	<b>ABC Academy</b> <b>Kids Academy</b> <b>Building Blocks</b> <b>ABC @ Belleview; Belleview Playland</b>	<b>Sonya Wright, Sharon Engstrom</b> <b>Joyce Johnson</b> <b>Alisa Kingcade</b> <b>Kiarelis Rosa Carrasquillo</b> Family Advocates

<b>Citrus</b>	<b>Carter Street Head Start</b> 2285 Carter St. Inverness, FL. 34453 352-503-2363	<b>Brianna Porro</b> Family Advocate  <b>Dana Vaccaro</b> Center Manager
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**VISION:** ECS will be a recognized leader in early childhood education; a 501c3 with a strong entrepreneurial spirit that uses research and best practices to help families ensure their children enter school ready to learn.

**MISSION:** To create opportunity so that the children we serve can achieve their full potential.

**ECS creates an opportunity for children to achieve their full potential by**

- Establishing and maintaining a relationship of mutual trust and communication with parents and caregivers while providing integrity, support and encouragement in all aspects of their child's development.
- Establishing and maintaining safe and physically comfortable environments for learning that are responsive to their developmental learning needs.
- Planning for each individual child based on their own unique needs and interests.
- Appreciating the uniqueness of each child and promoting his/her own self-worth.
- Providing early education learning environments encompassing a rich variety of activities that foster physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.
- Continuously researching, assessing, evaluating, and improving comprehensive services and best educational practices to the children, families and communities we serve."

**PHILOSOPHY: At ECS, we believe that**

- Parents are the first and primary educator of their child. We encourage and support family and community involvement. The potential for learning is greatest during the early years of a child's life and every possible learning opportunity should be provided to children at the earliest possible age. Children's social, emotional and cognitive development is enhanced through the provision of the comprehensive services that ECS provides.
- Nurturing, stimulating, safe and fun filled environments that are print-rich, orderly, and sanitary provide optimal learning environments. Teachers are responsive and nurturing with each child to establish trusting and secure relationships.
- Treating children as individuals in an environment that supports and promotes respect, trust, fairness and diversity. Enabling children to reach their full potential and to become enthusiastic lifelong learners—emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially. Through guided experiences and discovery-oriented approaches, teachers support a continuum of growth and development for each child, promoting the ability to become reflective problem solvers at a young age.
- Teaching children how to handle conflict, disappointment, sharing, and other critical social skills using the concepts of Conscious Discipline and Loving Guidance. This program promotes positive redirection, self-calming techniques, labeling emotions, and developing language to express and solve problems. We do not use time out, isolation, or any other punitive forms of punishment. "Discipline" comes from the word "disciple" and should be focused on learning and growing, not punishing.
- Balancing child-focused and teacher-facilitated learning experiences that support children's continuous physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development. Utilizing a curriculum that builds a foundation for school readiness for infants and toddlers and 3-5-year-olds by integrating the Florida Developmental and Learning Standards and Child Outcomes Framework, that include:
  - Physical Health
  - Approaches to Learning
  - Social and Emotional
  - Language and Communication



- Cognitive Development and General Knowledge
- Motor Development
- Supporting and integrating research that shows the early years are the most important years for learning.
- Incorporating into the curriculum—and professional development training of staff—sensory and stimulating activities and environments to promote healthy brain development.
- Evaluating children’s development and using data to inform instructional design and implementation.
- Searching for and learning about research-based strategies and best practices in the field of early education to provide best educational practices.

Quality childcare offers healthy, social, and educational experiences under qualified supervision in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Children in these settings participate in daily, age-appropriate activities that help develop essential skills, build independence and instill self-respect. Parents and Families should know their childcare facility. Department of Children and Families provides a quality childcare checklist available to families to use when considering a childcare program. See attached Know Your Childcare Facility brochure.

**ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE & ATTENDANCE POLICY HS/EHS & VPK 2022-2023**

Establishing a consistent daily routine gives your child security and helps to build a relationship between the classroom and home. For these reasons, children are expected to be at school on time each day **and** attend the full class session. Your child must be signed in and out electronically by an authorized caregiver each morning and afternoon. Children will be released only to those persons authorized by the parent on the DCF enrollment form. All persons picking up a child must be at least 16 years of age or the child’s legal parent/guardian. Children will not be released to any person appearing to be impaired or intoxicated.

***Arrival/Departure***

Your child must arrive at school no earlier than the designated opening time and must leave no later than the designated closing time. Failure to pick up your child by center closing may result in authorities being notified. If this is a continuous problem, the following steps will be taken:

1. Conference will be held with EHS/HS Staff
2. Parent will be required to follow an attendance action plan
3. Parent will report to FA weekly regarding the progress with their action plan
4. If these steps are not followed, your child may be withdrawn from the program.
5. If a situation warrants, ECS staff may terminate a family without an attendance action plan.

If you are more than one hour late two times with no contact, your family may be terminated from the program.

***Attendance***

Regular attendance is necessary so that your child gets the most from his/her Head Start experience. If your child is absent and you have not contacted us, we will contact you. If your child is absent for four consecutive days with no contact from you, your Family Advocate will make a home visit. If you are not home, the FA will leave a warning letter asking you to contact the center staff by a given deadline. If there is still no contact by the deadline given, your child will be withdrawn from the program.

Also, If absences become excessive or routine, a conference will be scheduled to discuss services, options and/or possible withdrawal from the Head Start and/or VPK program. If your family needs extended leave, please

advise your Family Advocate.

All parents with children enrolled in the VPK program are required to sign the monthly parental choice certificate on or after the last day of each month to certify that month's attendance. ECS agrees to not amend its program attendance policy for the duration of the VPK contract.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

ECS does not provide transportation. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that each child is brought to and picked up from school each day. In the case that you are having transportation problems, notify your Family Advocate immediately. We will work with you to try to find resources to help. This could include carpooling, public transportation (when available), or home visiting (EHS only).

In the event parents are observed not putting their child(ren) in a car seat, an administrative staff member will meet with the parent/ driver to provide the parent with a pamphlet that has resources and safety information/ statistics about child car seat safety. Staff will follow up with the parent until a car seat is obtained. If the seat is not obtained, reason(s) why will be discussed so solutions can be developed, and parent will then be given information/ referral to child safety class (where a car seat will be given) provided in that county or surrounding counties.

### **BALANCED NUTRITION**

ECS Head Start Centers help you balance your child's nutritional needs through our Balanced Nutrition program. Menus, written and approved by a registered dietician, meet or exceed USDA standards. A nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided for all children. Please discuss any special dietary needs for your child with your Family Advocate. For substitutions to be made, a doctor's note is required stating the specific dietary restrictions. A child cannot be at the center until all required documentation is completed, reviewed & the nutrition staff have been notified and any/all dietary substitutions have been purchased and are on site. Your Family Advocate will work with you & your doctor if needed to complete any paperwork and an Individualized Health Care Plan if needed for your child.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for children with food allergies/special dietary needs with appropriate medical documentation or who require specific menu items for cultural reasons. In order to ensure the health and safety of all children, food items purchased or brought from home, cannot be brought into the classroom to be eaten. This will help us prevent children with allergies from being exposed to foods which could be harmful.

### **HOLIDAYS**

ECS Head Start centers will be closed for the following holidays. If a center will be closed on any other date, notice will be posted for parents.

- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving & the day after
- Winter Break (dates to be announced)
- Spring Break (dates to be announced)

### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

If the threat of a hurricane or other natural disaster is imminent, we will follow the Public-School System in the center's county for closure guidance. Once the storm passes and is out of the area, we will assess the center for damage and re-open as soon as possible.

The following steps must be confirmed before opening the center:

- The center must have power, water, a working land line, and any physical damage must be repaired.
- Notification must be received stating our food vendor can provide meals.
- There must be available staff in the center to provide required staff to child ratio.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

In case of an unforeseen emergency, procedures to be taken by the facility during a fire, evacuation, relocation, shelter in place, lockdown, and inclement weather (tropical storms, tornadoes), and to facilitate parent/guardian reunification onsite and offsite will include the following instructions:

Parents/guardians will be notified during and following an emergency event. Children will be taken to a nearby address posted in the center and also on file in the program's Emergency Response Plan. Parents should meet childcare employees at that location to pick up their children. Daily classroom attendance rosters must be used to account for all children once gathered in a safe space after exit and upon return to the program.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

Episcopal Children's Services Head Start protects and safeguards the confidentiality of child and family individually identifiable information. All information included in your child's classroom portfolio or center files in kept under lock and key with only those staff listed below having access. Any information in our electronic software is password protected with only those staff listed below having access. You may request access to your information at any time and staff will make it available to you. Hard copies of Disclosures not specifically permitted by applicable law will be made only with your written authorization.

<b>Type of Information</b>	<b>Staff with Access</b>
Child Screenings and Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Your child's Teacher or Home Visitor</li><li>● Center Manager</li><li>● Family Advocate</li><li>● Assistant Center Manager</li><li>● Management Staff for the purpose of monitoring compliance with regulations</li><li>● Support Staff for the purpose of monitoring compliance with regulations</li><li>● Interns and/or community volunteers</li></ul>
Child Health and Nutrition Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Your child's Teacher or Home Visitor</li><li>● Center Manager</li><li>● Family Advocate</li><li>● Assistant Center Manager</li><li>● Management Staff for the purpose of monitoring compliance with regulations</li><li>● Support Staff for the purpose of monitoring compliance with regulations</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interns and/or community volunteers</li> </ul>
Application Information, including income verification and birth certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center Manager</li> <li>• Family Advocate</li> <li>• Assistant Center Manager</li> <li>• Management Staff for the purpose of monitoring compliance with regulations</li> <li>• Interns and/or community volunteers</li> </ul>
Family Information, including referrals, goals, notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Visitor</li> <li>• Family Advocate</li> <li>• Management Staff, including Center Manager, for the purpose of monitoring compliance with regulations</li> <li>• Interns and/or community volunteers</li> </ul>

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Episcopal Children's Services Head Start is responsible for the prevention, identification, and reporting of child abuse and neglect (sexual, physical, emotional). Under Florida law, suspicion of child abuse and neglect must be reported immediately to the Department of Children and Families. Training is provided to staff in all areas of child abuse and neglect. *The abuse hotline number is 1-800-96-ABUSE.*

#### ***Distracted Adults***

During the months of September and April, childcare facilities are required to provide parents with information regarding the potential for distracted adults to leave children in a vehicle upon arrival at the destination. You will be given a brochure during these months and asked to sign an acknowledgement stating you received it.

### **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In the Family and Community Engagement Service Area, the primary contact for families and community representatives is the Family Advocate. The mission of the Family and Community Engagement Service Area is to engage families and support children's overall learning and development while offering links to resources and social services to each child and his/her family in the Head Start program.

#### ***Accommodating Family Communication Needs***

It is our pleasure to serve families based on their own unique needs. This includes providing services to families who include Dual Language Learners. We are pleased to offer translation services, and bilingual staff members whenever possible. We are available to help you be active in your child's education regardless of what type of communication assistance that may include. We would gladly give help in reading, writing, or understanding any of our documents or forms, if needed. It is our job, and we are happy to do it! Also, to better communicate and engage with you, ECS uses the Learning Genie Family Engagement App! You can download this app on your I Phone or Android device in your native language! This will allow us to send you messages that will automatically be translated to your native spoken language.

## Learning Genie

We are using Learning Genie to improve communication between us. Through this program, we will send photos, reminders of parent meetings and other engagement events, and provide ways for you to continue enhancing your child's early learning at home. Download the **free** mobile app on your iPhone or Android device.



### Learning Genie: The Basics

**Get updates on your child's day.** Receive real-time updates and photos on your device.

**Continue the learning at home.** Learning activities and video books shared through the app allow families to expand on the learning from home.

**Safe for Everyone.** All of your child's information is kept safe and private on the Learning Genie platform. Learning Genie's software is protected through secure-socket layering via Amazon Web Services, is compliant with FERPA regulations, and has obtained the iKeepSafe California Student Privacy Badge.

### Frequently Asked Questions by Families

#### **How do I sign up for a Learning Genie Parent Account?**

Once consent has been given, you will receive a code from your center or program staff.

Download the Learning Genie Parent App on your device.

Sign in with your parent code.

Use the email address you provided on your consent form and create a password.

#### **How long is my child's data saved in the system?**

Your data will be retained in the system up to three years after students left the schools. The data will be removed if the school choose to permanently delete children's info.

**What if I have more than one child using Learning Genie in separate classrooms** Learning Genie assigns each child a separate parent code. Each parent app can have multiple children attached.

#### **What are the best practices for using Learning Genie for social media?**

Learning Genie recommends that families approach public social media with caution. Posting photos of other children on any public space compromises those children's privacy. Please be aware of any other children that may be in a photo before it is shared.

### ***Family Partnership Agreement***

Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS) is a comprehensive school-readiness program for children and families. The EHS/HS program recognizes that, as parents/guardians, you are the first and most important teachers in your child's life. The goal of the Family Partnership Agreement is to support families as they identify and achieve their own goals, nurture the development of their children, and advocate for communities that are supportive of children and families of all cultures.

During the Family Partnership Agreement process, staff will:

- Meet with families in their home.
- Offer families the opportunity to develop and implement family goals
- Offer families the opportunity to develop and implement school readiness goals.
- Link families to appropriate resources/supports in the community.
- Provide opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, and services through program training and workshops.
- Provide family involvement opportunities in child development and education, parenting skills, family literacy, health, nutrition, mental health services, and community advocacy.

During the Family Partnership Agreement, parents/guardians will:

- Ensure your child maintains at least 90% attendance monthly
- Participate in *at least 3* Parent Involvement activities, meetings, workshops, and/or events.
- Work with the EHS/HS staff on family goals and school readiness goals throughout the year.
- Participate in Home Visits with the Family Advocate
- Participate in at home learning activities
- Participate in Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health Services as they apply to the EHS/HS Family.

### ***Parent Engagement***

Making a good Head Start/Early Head Start program calls for many people to work together, sharing their talents, knowledge, and energy so that the children can receive the greatest benefit. The more knowledge and energy parents and staff can invest in the program, the better the program. There are at least four major kinds of parent engagement in local Head Start/Early Head Start programs:

1. Participation in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program.
  - a. Become an active member of the Head Start Parent Committee or serve as a representative of the Policy Council.
  - b. Share information about the program and ideas on ways to improve the program with other parents and staff.
2. Participation in the classroom as volunteers, observers, or paid employees.
  - a. Play is a child's work. You may visit the center at any time to observe your child at "work."
  - b. Become a volunteer to interact with the children, help staff prepare materials, and become involved in planning activities. Be present and engage with your child during center events and other classroom activities. We have regularly planned classroom activities for parents to experience with their child. Ask your child's teacher when they are!
  - c. Many parents, after volunteering in the classroom, become substitutes as well as permanent employees.
3. Participate in program development and collaboration.
  - a. Parents may help plan educational programs in areas which are of interest to them.
  - b. Parents may also wish to work together on community problems of common concern, such as health, housing, education, and welfare.
4. Work with your children in your own home in connection with the staff of the center during home visits.
  - a. Get ideas from staff about parent/child activities.
  - b. Share ideas with the Head Start staff about your child.

- c. Welcome Head Start staff into your home for home visits to be made during the year.

We hope that you will take advantage of opportunities to help your child get a “Head Start” in life. Always sign in and out, and identify the service(s) donated, including the number of hours volunteered. The Episcopal Children’s Services Discipline Policy and Standards of Conduct will apply to all volunteers at all times. Siblings of Head Start/Early Head Start children may not attend when a parent is volunteering in the classroom. ECS maintains an open-door policy with all parents of enrolled children. You are always welcome to visit and work in your child's classroom/center. You cannot volunteer more than 9.5 hours a month without receiving a level II FBI/FDLE background clearance and beginning the Department of Children and Families 45-hour online training courses. Any persons with restricted access to children will not be allowed to volunteer or participate in center activities.

***Policy Council***

The Policy Council is an important way for parents and community representatives to become involved in the decision-making process of the Head Start program. Each center elects a parent representative to the Policy Council. The Policy Council meets regularly and helps establish goals, develop plans, and determine policies. It is the responsibility of all policy council members to take back the information from the meeting to their child's center.

***Male Involvement Program***

Involvement opportunities are offered specifically for the men involved in the child’s life (father, uncle, friend, etc.). These “male involvement activities” will be offered at meetings held at the center throughout the year. Refreshments and activities may be provided for the men who attend. This is an excellent opportunity to promote male participation throughout the school year. Participating centers ask for a male volunteer to act as the leader of the male involvement group. If you are interested and would like to learn more about being the male leader, see your Family Advocate!

***Internship Program and Community Volunteers***

During the school year your child may have the opportunity to have a student intern and/or other community volunteers in his or her class. These volunteers are with us to learn and/or gather valuable information in the areas of Education, Family Support, Health and Inclusion Services. Under Head Start supervision, these volunteers may provide classroom instruction, review files, help with developmental screenings, complete health checklists and any other tasks that we feel would help support our partnership. No names or identifiable information will be shared outside of ECS. Interns and community volunteers are a wonderful asset to our program and to your child!

***Non-Federal Match***

The Head Start/Early Head Start program must meet a Non-Federal Match requirement to maintain the program. Parents must volunteer in the program for the Non-Federal Match requirement to be met and therefore sustain the Head Start/Early Head Start program.

The Head Start Act stipulates that the Federal share of the total costs of the program will not exceed 80 percent of the total grantee budget. As an example, if our budget was \$100, the Federal government would give us \$80 and ECS would need to raise \$20 to meet the costs.

Property or services can be used to meet the portion that ECS needs to raise each year to maintain our Head Start grant and ensure adequate funds for a quality program. These contributions are called in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions may consist of donations or volunteer services directly benefiting the

Head Start/Early Head Start program. We cannot meet our requirement without the active participation of parents. Your time, energy and efforts benefit your family and the Head Start/Early Head Start program in many ways!

**Below is a list of allowable In-kind which parents can contribute throughout the program year:**

<b>Head Start Allowable In-kind</b>	
<b>SUPPLIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Donations of supplies to be used in the classroom</li> <li>2. Donations of supplies for parent meetings and other events.</li> </ol>
<b>VOLUNTEER TIME</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent time volunteering in the classroom</li> <li>2. Parent time at state or local association meetings</li> <li>3. Attendance at Parent Committee meetings when planning activities for the center or at Policy Council meetings</li> <li>4. Parent time volunteering at end of year festivities, center holiday celebrations, fall festivals, breakfast events, etc.</li> <li>5. Parent time for laundering linens used in the classroom.</li> <li>6. Parent time for preparing or creating curriculum supplies for use in the classroom.</li> <li>7. Parent time for helping fix things around the center</li> <li>8. Working in the garden if applicable</li> <li>9. At-home learning activities with child related to Learning Goal</li> <li>10. At-home reading activities</li> <li>11. Volunteer mileage, prenatal doctor visits (for Home Base), therapy appointment mileage, well baby mileage, and other mileage (other mileage includes any other required doctor/dentist visits that benefit the program. Parents can also count travel in relation to doing direct work for the center or attending a planning meeting. Note: This work and planning meetings cannot be claimed if taking place at the centers.)</li> </ol>

All in-kind will be tracked through the In-Kind Pro (IKP) electronic tracking system. With the assistance of center management and/or the Family Advocate, parents can download the IKP app to their cell phones and enter all in-kind donations, volunteer time and at-home activities. The app allows parents to conveniently track all in-kind without the use of paper forms. All verified in-kind will be counted toward meeting the center’s Non-Federal Match goal. See appendix for flyer on how to download the In-Kind Pro app.

### **EDUCATION AND EARLY LEARNING**

The Education & Early Learning Development Service Area provides an exciting educational program for children birth to five years of age. The goal of this service area is to provide activities and experiences that will help young children be ready to succeed in school and to eventually become successful adults. Our education program is designed based on what is known about how children learn.

#### ***The Learning Environment***

It is important to a child’s sense of security that there be a predictable routine during each day. The schedule in all classrooms allows for a balance of different types of activities throughout the day. There are large group times, small group times, and time for individual play. There are active times and quiet times. Outside playtime is provided daily. A teacher to child ratio of 1:4 for Early Head Start and 1:10 for Head Start provides more individual attention and closer relationships.



The learning environment in each program is designed to interest children in activities that encourage growth in the following developmental areas:

- Social Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology (when age appropriate)
- Social Studies (when age appropriate)
- Arts
- Logic and Reasoning
- Approaches to Learning
- English Language Acquisition (for Dual Language Learner)

Because children learn best when using their senses to explore the world around them while engaging in meaningful interactions with adults and other children, the use of TV and video is limited in Head Start classrooms to occasional pre-approved viewing only. Early Head classrooms do not use TV or video.

Creating a meaningful, safe, and fun environment, based on relationships and learning, is the priority of our education program.

### ***Curriculum***

Head Start and Early Head Start use the *Creative Curriculum*, a comprehensive, research-based, early learning framework that guides teachers in planning lessons and experiences that support child development. The curriculum promotes the use of interest areas, or learning centers, as a way of providing experiences that promote development. The curriculum also promotes high quality teacher-child interactions and allows teachers to individualize activities based on the child's interests and abilities.

Teachers are responsible for completing a digital lesson plan each week that contains high-quality, fun, interactive activities. These are posted in each room and are available for parents to review. Teachers individualize for children daily using the digital curriculum that integrates child data from Teaching Strategies Gold into the daily lessons. Parents create goals quarterly to help teachers ensure children are reaching their full potential.

Families are an active partner in their children's education and development and are encouraged to openly communicate with staff. Families should participate, at least monthly, in discussing at-home observations of children's development and work with teachers to establish ongoing learning goals. Families are also encouraged to participate in the classroom, School Readiness Committee, and Successful Transition meetings and trainings.

### ***Assessment***

*Teaching Strategies GOLD* is used in the Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms as a digital child portfolio and assessment tool which tracks children's progress of school readiness goals in the developmental areas mentioned above. Ongoing child observations document children's developmental strengths, needs, and interests. Three times a year, teachers use the collected child observations, work samples, photos, parental

input, and other screenings to determine the child's current level on the 38 objectives within the *TS Gold* system.

Assessment and screening results and documentation within the digital *TS Gold* portfolio are shared with the parents on home visits, at parent teacher conferences, and informally at the convenience of the parent. The program uses child outcome information for planning, teacher training, and individualizing instruction to meet children's specific needs. Child outcomes are presented three times per year at Policy Council meetings and twice per year at School Readiness Transition meetings.

### ***Parent Communication***

Because parents are a child's first teacher, it is essential to have good communication between teachers and families. Parents have valuable information about their children to share with teachers. Two parent conferences and two home visits are scheduled during the year. At these times, teachers will meet with families to share children's progress and to learn about parents' goals for their children. Parents are encouraged to share, at least monthly, their own observations of children's learning and development.

### ***Child Screenings and Assessments***

The Office of Head Start requires that all children receive health, developmental and social-emotional screenings within 45 days of enrollment in the Head Start or Early Head Start program. Screenings do not diagnose a delay or disability. They may identify concerns which require closer examination. We do these screenings by using the following screening tools. All teachers and other staff are trained on using a screening or assessment tool before using it with children. If you have any questions about a screening or assessment tool please speak with your Center Manager. We are happy to review it with you in more detail.

### **Agnes and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)**

**When:** enrollment for all ages and at identified increments as suggested on screening

**Who:** all children

**Why:** The ASQ lets us know that your child's development is on target. If there are concerns, we will talk to you about the next steps to take. Teachers and Home Visitors will use the results to plan goals for your child.

**How:** You will receive a link to complete the ASQ online. Paper copies and assistance are available, if needed. Teachers or Home Visitors will review results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit.

### **Agnes and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE)**

**When:** enrollment for all ages and at identified increments as suggested on screening

**Who:** all children

**Why:** The ASQ-SE lets us know that your child's development is on target. If there are concerns, we will talk to you about the next steps to take. Teachers and Home Visitors will use the results to plan goals for your child.

**How:** You will receive a link to complete the ASQ online. Paper copies and assistance are available, if needed. Teachers or Home Visitors will review results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit.

### **M-CHAT-R**

**When:** at 18 months and 24 months

**Who:** Early Head Start children

**Why:** The M-CHAT-R (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Revised) is now required for children 18 months and 24 months of age. It is an early behavior screening

**How:** Teachers or Home Visitors will complete it based on their own observations. Teachers or Home Visitors will review results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit. If scores indicate a risk, the Disabilities Specialist and Family Advocate will follow up with you and a referral to Early Steps may be made.

### **BDI-3**

The BDI-3 is a standardized assessment of key developmental skills in the following areas: Adaptive, Personal-Social, Communication, Motor and Cognitive. If your child scores in the referral range on the ASQ, the Disabilities Specialist may perform the BDI-2 to determine if your child should be referred to the local school district or Early Steps for further testing. Your Family Advocate or Home Visitor will meet with you to discuss this process if your child scores “refer” on the ASQ.

### **The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)**

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) is used to detect whether new mothers are suffering from postnatal depression. It is completed by moms within 2 weeks of delivering their babies and again before their child is 8 weeks old. The EPDS helps us identify mothers who are at risk for postpartum depression. Mothers who score above the cut-off score will receive further services from our Social Emotional Specialist.

### **PLS-5 Preschool Language Scale**

**When:** enrollment, annually, and when turning three

**Who:** Head Start children (ages 3-5)

**Why:** The PLS-5 lets us know that your child’s language development is on target. If there are concerns, we will talk to you about the next steps to take.

**How:** Staff will complete the screening with your child at the Head Start summer screenings. If you miss the summer screenings, they will complete it with your child during the school day. Your child will point or verbal response to pictures and objects in a book and staff will listen for the sounds they are pronouncing. Teachers will review the results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit.

### **Hearing Screening**

**When:** enrollment

**Who:** Early Head/Head Start children

**Why:** The hearing screening lets us know that your child is hearing normally. If there are concerns, we will talk to you about the next steps to take.

**How:** Staff will complete it with your child at the summer screenings. If you miss the summer screenings, they will be completed with your child during the school day. Your child will wear headphones to listen to words at different volumes. He/she will point to the picture of the word he/she hears. Screening may also be obtained by using an OEA hearing Machine. Teachers will review the results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit.

### **Vision Screening**

**When:** enrollment

**Who:** Early Head/Head Start children

**Why:** The vision screening lets us know that your child is seeing normally. If there are concerns, we will talk to you about the next steps to take.

**How:** Staff will complete the vision screening with your child at the Head Start summer screenings. If you miss the summer screenings, they will complete it with your child during the school day or at your home visit. Your child will use an eye chart designed for preschoolers to identify shapes that get smaller and smaller in size. Screenings may also be obtained by using the SPOT vision screener machine. Teachers or Home Visitors will review the results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit.

### **Blood Pressure Screening**

**When:** enrollment, annually, and when turning three

**Who:** Head Start children (ages 3-5) who have not had one completed by their doctor recently

**Why:** The Blood Pressure screening helps indicate early signs of hypertension. If there are concerns, we will talk to you about the next steps to take.

**How:** Staff will complete it with your child at the Head Start summer screenings. If you miss the summer screenings, they will be completed with your child during the school day. Trained ECS staff will conduct blood pressure screenings utilizing an evidence-based Blood Pressure Monitor. Teachers will review the results with you at your next scheduled conference or home visit.

### **Growth Assessment**

**When:** enrollment and annually

**Who:** Head Start children

**Why:** The growth assessment lets us know if your child is at risk of being under or overweight.

**How:** Staff will weigh and measure your child at summer screenings or within the first 90 days of school. The Health and Nutrition Specialist will notify you of the results.

### **Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment**

**When:** October, January, April

**Who:** all children

**Why:** *Teaching Strategies GOLD* lets us know how your child is progressing in 10 different areas of development. Teachers and Home Visitors use the assessment results to plan goals and activities for your child.

**How:** Teachers and Home Visitors will record your child's progress in the different areas three times a year based on their observations of your child's development and your input about your child's development. They will review the results with you at your next scheduled parent teacher conference or home visit and together you will set goals for the next quarter for your child.

### **Star Early Literacy Assessment**

*Star Early Literacy* is a computer-adaptive assessment that uses a series of questions to assess a child's early literacy and early numeracy skills through a simple process for preparation into kindergarten.

**When:** fall, winter, and spring

**Who:** all children in VPK

**Why:** The state of Florida requires that all children in a VPK program receive this assessment in order to measure their progress in key school readiness areas. The assessment measures phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency (including estimated oral reading fluency), and vocabulary as well as early number recognition, counting, and more. Teachers will use the assessment results to plan goals and activities for children who are on target for kindergarten.

**How:** Your child will take the assessment on a computer in the classroom. Your teacher will review the results at your next scheduled parent teacher conference or home visit.

### **Discipline Policy**

ECS uses *Conscious Discipline* techniques in the classroom to promote positive behavior. Teachers will use positive methods of child guidance including the following practices:

1. Plan ahead to prevent behavior problems. Anticipate problems that may occur and provide intervention or directions in advance. (Ex: Have activities prepared so children do not have to wait.)
2. Establish clear and simple rules that are age appropriate. Consistent reminders help reinforce limits. Rules should be stated in a positive way. (Ex: If a child is running, say, "We use walking feet. Running feet are for outside", instead of "Don't run!") Clearly state behavior expectations before a transition or new activity!

3. Be a model for the desired behavior. Treat all children with respect and politeness. (Ex: The teacher has a leaky paint container in her hand. She needs to get to the sink. She asks the children who are in line at the sink if she could please use the sink out of turn, rather than simply cutting in front of the children. They agree, and she remembers to thank them.)
4. Help children learn problem-solving skills. Give them the language they need to communicate feelings and needs to others appropriately. Work with them to come up with solutions to conflicts. "Tell John, I didn't like when you took the block out of my hand. Next time ask for the block."
5. Give hugs and caring. The key to discipline is establishing a nurturing connection with each child. Children need to know they are accepted and loved no matter how they behave.
6. Reinforce positive behavior. Remember to verbally focus on the specific behavior you wish to see repeated. (Ex: "Jessie, you have worked so hard to put all the blocks neatly on the shelf. That is helpful!") However, avoid giving tokens, treats, prizes, or rewards for behaviors.
7. Overlook small annoyances. Remember what is developmentally appropriate for children. Do not expect them to sit still, listen without distraction, etc. It is not expected or appropriate! Children learn through play! A "good" classroom is busy and purposeful...not quiet and stiff!
8. Offer positive alternatives to a negative behavior. If a child's behavior is unacceptable, suggest alternative choices. (Ex: If a child is throwing blocks, the teacher intervenes by telling the child that blocks are for building. If the child wishes to throw something, he/she can throw a bean bag, or a ball.)
9. Re-direct or divert the child. Substitute an appropriate activity for the unacceptable one. Some behaviors that are inappropriate are temporary, or situation specific. In these cases, it is best to alter the environment by redirecting the child to another activity. (Ex: Two children who are good friends have begun to get irritated with each other. Intervene before things get out of hand by engaging them in a new activity.)
10. Help children see behavioral consequences. Since young children are self-centered, it is hard for them to see beyond their own needs. Help them to move from thinking only of themselves, to thinking of others by analyzing the consequences of their actions. Discuss their behavior in a non-judgmental way and encourage them to think about its impact on people, objects and events. "When you push the chair, it could make Juan fall out. That is not safe. You may not push Juan's chair."
11. Use the Safe Place for calm-down time. It is not a time out. When a child is too upset to talk or listen, it may be necessary to remove the child from the situation to help the child reflect on their behavior. The teacher stays with the child to discuss what happened and to help the child regain composure using breathing techniques and calming strategies.
12. Implement Behavior Intervention Plan when necessary. ECS will use all resources available to implement strategies in the classroom to try and decrease an unwanted behavior. If necessary, we will collaborate with our Social Emotional Specialist, Director of Child & Family Services, Early Learning Specialist, CM, FSS, teacher and parent to create a behavior plan. If safety is a concern, a parent will be asked to pick up a child and not return until a behavior plan is created and reviewed in partnership with the parent.
13. Discipline may not involve the following:
  - a. Time out. There will not be any identified space, or chair, reserved for "time out". Children are not to be isolated indefinitely due to behavior problems. Time out may be used only if stipulated in an individual child's behavior plan by the Social Emotional Specialist.
  - b. Corporal punishment. The use of corporal punishment or physical force with children is prohibited. This includes hitting, pushing, shoving, spanking, shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, squeezing or biting. Demanding excessive physical exercise, excessive rest, or strenuous or bizarre postures. Compelling a child to eat or have in his/her mouth soap, food, spices, or foreign substances. Exposing a child to extreme temperature. Rough or harsh handling of children, including but not

limited to: lifting or jerking by one or both arms, pulling by the arms, grabbing children by the arm, shoulders, neck, forcing or restricting movement, lifting or moving by grasping clothing or covering a child's head.

- c. Threatening. Children will not be threatened with physical punishment or with a phone call to their parents.
- d. Verbal Abuse, Ridiculing or Degrading. There will be no name-calling, yelling, pinching, belittling, or comparison to other children. There will be no form of verbal abuse including abusive, profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks in front of the child or about the child or child's family.
- e. Withholding of meals, snacks, water or active play. Children will not be denied food, water and/or beverages, any other basic need or active play as a means of discipline. Food will also not be used as a reward.
- f. Denying rest. Children will not be denied rest as a means of discipline.
- g. Toileting. Children will not be subjected to discipline associated with toileting. Toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child are prohibited.
- h. Severe, humiliating or frightening. Children will not be subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating or frightening.
- i. Binding. The use of binding or tying a child to restrict movement or taping a child's mouth is prohibited.
- j. Emotional Abuse. Any form of emotional abuse including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring or corrupting a child is prohibited.
- k. Isolation. Isolating a child in an adjacent room, hallway, closet, darkened area, play area, or any other area where the child cannot be seen or supervised.
- l. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child.
- m. Placing a child in a crib/portable crib for disciplinary reasons.

### ***Suspension & Expulsion Policy***

If a child's behavior is the cause for a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications, with documented permission, ECS may temporarily suspend the child's enrollment. See the following situations in which temporary suspension may be requested:

If a child's behavior poses a safety concern (repeated, prolonged, destructive, hurtful behaviors to him/herself, others, or classroom materials) and is unable to be managed.

**-and/or-**

the safety of staff, children, and/or property is a concern.

In the situations listed above, the Center Manager must obtain permission from the extreme behavior reporting team by following the reporting procedures below. The Center Manager must be prepared and able to provide supporting documentation as justification for this request including a sample of incident reports, observations, completed CBC, consents as needed, and ASQ-SE's.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES**

Head Start/Early Head Start has a policy of open enrollment to all eligible children, including those with a special need. Lesson plans and daily activities will be individualized to fit the specific needs of each child, as well as serve the class as a whole. A Child Development Specialist makes regular visits to all programs and is available to support staff, parents, and individual children as needed. If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) individual goals will be set to assist the child in meeting those goals identified by the IEP/IFSP.

### **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SERVICES**

The Head Start/Early Head Start Social Emotional Services area promotes early childhood social emotional health through fostering healthy relationships among families, staff, and children. This component works to nurture children's social and emotional growth in order to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children.

A professional Social Emotional Specialist makes at least monthly visits to all programs and is available for staff and parent consultation. Classrooms are observed and guidance is provided on how to best promote social and emotional development. Individual support is provided to children as needed with parental consent.

Assistance is given in developing plans that address behavior that is of concern to the child's mental wellness. By giving attention to children's social and emotional learning, we help children in gaining relationships with peers and to grow to be responsible and caring individuals.

### **BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SERVICES**

In the case that a child needs additional behavior support, a Behavior Intervention Specialist will be available to provide further strategies. The Behavior Intervention Specialist works alongside Education, Child Development Specialist and Social and Emotional Specialist to support children who have challenging behaviors by applying BA based practices. The Behavior Intervention is upon request from the Child Development Specialist and Social and Emotional Specialist.

The Behavior Intervention Specialist makes monthly site visits to all programs and is available for staff and parent for intervention consultation. Classrooms are observed and guidance is provided on how to best promote healthy peer interactions. Individual support is provided to children as needed with parental consent.

Assistance is given in developing strategies/ intervention to address behavior that is of concern to the child's wellbeing. Strategies and Intervention will help children in gaining relationships with peers and to grow to be responsible and caring individuals.

### **HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES**

The overall objective of Health Services is to assist parents in meeting their child's medical, dental, nutritional, developmental, and mental health needs. This is done by reviewing and following up on your child's physical and immunizations as well as providing vision, hearing, dental, and developmental screenings as they become age appropriate.

Furthermore, classroom observations by staff and healthcare professionals enable program staff to assess and address the health, nutritional, developmental, and social emotional needs for your child. To truly strengthen your child's health services, it is critical to have a medical home with a regular medical and dental provider. Supporting you as you connect with these services while your child is in Head Start/Early Head Start will help with continuity of care for your child after Head Start. Early Head Start parents of infants are encouraged to communicate with staff what formula/foods your child has at home and what they can have at the center.

If a Head Start/Early Head Start child has a known food allergy, it is important to inform the center staff upon enrollment into the program and to provide medical documentation. The allergy will be posted, and the proper measures will be taken to ensure the environment is safe for the child. The Health and Nutrition Specialist will make necessary modifications, within ability, to the food provided for children with documented allergies.

All children who have specific health issues must have an Individualized Health Care Plan completed prior to their first day of school. The Family Advocate at each center will assist in the completion of an IHCP by your doctor.

### ***Medications***

Medications prescribed by a doctor may be given at the center only after the parent has completed the Medication Authorization form. Medications must be in the original container. Designated staff will administer the medication as directed and note any changes in the child's behavior and/or allergic reactions on the Administration of Medication form. At the completion of administering the medication, staff will review the Administration of Medication form with the parent and have the parent sign off. If your child's medication schedule allows for medication to be given before arrival at school, please ensure your child receives it before arriving at school. If medication is given only at home on a regular basis, please inform center staff of the medication, purpose, and possible side effects; see your FA to update your Health & Nutrition Questionnaire. An authorization to share information consent form will be given to you to sign in case we need to communicate with your child's pediatrician. Please also notify your child's teacher so that any behavioral changes and/or allergic reactions may be noted.

You will complete a Consent or Denial for Sunscreen & Insect Repellent. If consent is given, sunscreen may be applied to your child by staff. Insect Repellent will be applied only during public health warnings for insect borne diseases.

### ***Physicals & Immunizations***

A current physical and a current immunization certificate are required in order for you to be considered in compliance with the Head Start health policies and procedures. In accordance with State Child Care Facility Licensing regulations, **all children must have a complete Physical and Immunization record within 30 calendar days of the child's first day school.** Please see attached Florida EPSDT schedule. For Clarifications and Exception Explanations, see Health Section of classroom bulletin boards.

If your child's physical and/or immunization record expires during the Head Start/Early Head Start school year, you will be given plenty of notice by our staff so you can make an appointment with your medical provider to obtain a current record. In order to avoid an interruption ~~to~~ of your child's Head Start/Early Head Start experience, it is your responsibility to schedule and take your child for his/her immunizations **before** the immunization certificate expires. If the certificate does expire, you must obtain a current physical and/or shot record before he/she will be allowed to return to the classroom.

**\*Remember, all of the medical services information from your child's physical and immunizations certificate is necessary to allow the program staff to provide your child with the best possible Head Start/Early Head Start experience and follow-up services where necessary.**

### ***Dental Services***

Dental services may be offered at Head Start and Early Head Start sites. If your child is currently under the care of a dentist, you are encouraged to maintain services with that provider. In this case, parents need to complete forms identifying their child's dental service provider and allowing Head Start permission to access those records. This is necessary to ensure that all children enrolled in the Head Start program are connected with a dental service provider for services after the program.

For children receiving services in conjunction with the Head Start/Early Head Start program, Medicaid and



other insurance plans will be used to cover dental expenses. When neither is applicable, Head Start will assist families in applying for Medicaid, Florida Kid Care and other insurance programs to cover costs. When all of these payment options have been exhausted, Head Start may pay for dental services to the extent possible in accordance with Head Start Dental Guidelines and the Dental budget.

**Permission** is required for treatment. You will receive consent forms to sign in order for your child to receive treatment. Please return these forms to your child's teacher or Family Advocate. To decline dental services or any health screening services, please notify your child's Family Advocate or teacher and the denial form will be provided.

**Absences** on the day of a dental appointment are discouraged. If your child will be absent, it is your responsibility to notify his/her teacher so that the appointment may be used for another child. On the days your child is scheduled for the dentist or serving as an alternate, he/she needs to be in class on time.

### ***Referrals***

In cases where referrals are necessary for health concerns, the child's primary healthcare provider will be the first source of care. The Family Advocate, Health and Nutrition Specialist will assist parents when appropriate.

### ***Child Health Emergencies***

If a medical or dental emergency takes place, the center staff will contact parents directly and make a report to the Health and Nutrition Specialist, or other appropriate Head Start staff. In the event of accidents/incidents, staff will contact parents and complete a report which will require a staff and parent signature. This serves as the documentation that parents were informed of the accident/incident on the day of occurrence and any necessary follow-up.

***\*\*Parents, it is very important that you make sure your child's teacher is aware of changes in your phone number or those you designate as your emergency contacts. Please keep this information up to date at all times.***

### ***Daily Health Checks***

To assist in maintaining a healthy classroom environment for all children, the teaching staff will conduct a daily health check upon arrival. During this health check, staff will make a note of the general health and wellbeing of the children. If a child is found to have any symptoms listed in the short-term exclusion policy or contagious condition, children will not be allowed to remain at the center. If children become ill during the day the staff will contact the parents to pick up their child, depending on the severity of the illness. In these cases, parents will be expected to pick children up from school immediately.

Some contagious conditions that will make it necessary to exclude children from program participation are tuberculosis, impetigo, chicken pox, mumps, untreated pink eye, head lice or nits, and diarrhea. While these are examples of medical conditions that may require health treatment before a child can return to the classroom, other medical conditions may restrict a child from attending class until they are symptom free.

### ***Conditions of Short-Term Exclusion***

A child will be placed on short-term exclusion, which may include non-admittance, when the illness and/or injury is contagious and/or poses a significant health and/or safety risk to other children and staff. In rare cases, short-term exclusion may be extended to long-term or permanent exclusion from the program. When children in the home-based program show symptoms listed on the short-term exclusion policy, their home visit will be cancelled and rescheduled. Children will not be allowed to attend group socializations if they have symptoms listed in the short-term exclusion policy.

1. During the enrollment process, the FA will inform parents of the short-term exclusion policy and procedures.
2. Parents will receive a copy of the short-term exclusion policy in each enrollment packet and will sign that they have read and understand it.
3. Parents must inform staff if their child becomes ill from a communicable disease and of any other health/safety concerns.
4. Center staff will be informed regarding any accommodations needed in accordance with the program's confidentiality policy. Confidentiality will be upheld at all times when discussing any information with a parent about a child.
5. HNS may consult **with medical professionals regarding a child's condition** and re-admittance recommendations, with written parental approval for specific information.
6. If a child is suspected to having a communicable disease, teaching staff should isolate the child away from the other children and immediately contact the child's parent/guardian.
7. Parents/guardians will be asked to immediately pick up their children if the following signs, symptoms, or conditions are present or suspected. A child may not return without medical authorization and/or until 24-72 hours symptom free. In a case where covid-19 symptoms are present, exclusion will be in accordance with CDC/ECS guidelines.
8. Conditions that commonly require parameters from a physician detailing when a child may return include, but limited to:
  - Chicken pox
  - Strep throat
  - TB
  - Scabies
  - Impetigo
  - Meningitis
  - Ringworm
  - Hepatitis A

**Specific requirements are listed below:**

- a) Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound (**may return when released by physician**).
- b) Difficulty or rapid breathing (**may return when released by physician**).
- c) Stiff neck (If stiff neck is accompanied by fever, immediate medical care is required (**may return when released by physician**)).
- d) Diarrhea- more than one abnormally loose stool at the center within a 24-hour period (**may return when 24 hours symptom free**).
- e) Vomiting once at the center in a 24-hour period, vomiting that contains blood, or vomiting followed by severe cramping (**may return when 24 hours symptom free**).
- f) Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when in conjunction with any other signs of illness (**may return when 72 hours symptom free or when released by physician**).
  - An infant 2 months of age or younger with a fever should get immediate medical attention (**may return when released by physician**).
- g) An infant 2 months of age or younger with a fever should get immediate medical attention (**may return when released by physician**).
- h) Conjunctivitis (pink eye) (**may return when released by physician**).
- i) Rash on body undiagnosed (**may return when released by physician**); excludes diaper rash.
- j) Exposed, open lesions- open gashes in skin which may also be oozing (**may return when released by physician**).

- k) Unusual dark urine and/or gray or white stools (**may return when released by physician**).
  - l) Yellowish skin or eyes (**may return when released by physician**).
  - m) Head lice: a child with head lice shall not be permitted to return until child's head has been checked by staff and found to be lice and nit free on dry hair. See below.
  - n) Child is irritable in conjunction with 1 other listed symptom/condition, continuously crying, or requires more attention than staff can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of the other children.
  - o) Any other unusual sign or symptoms of illness (CM should contact Health and Nutrition Specialist with questions and to receive counsel)
8. The center staff will complete the Illness Notification form to be given to the parents. Both parents and staff must sign the form.
  9. The person who completes the form will document that the form has gone home with the parent on the Illness Tracking form.
    - a. Once the child is cleared to return to the center, the staff must complete the section on the form indicating the date of return and if follow-up is needed.
    - b. The Illness Tracking forms will be kept in a binder or file, separated by class.
    - c. The HNS will review the forms monthly to identify any concerns or patterns in illnesses at the center.
    - d. If a pattern is identified by center staff, the CM's will notify the HNS.
    - e. Once a pattern is identified, the HNS and CM will work together to determine what action, if any, is needed, including classroom observation and recommendations from the HNS.
  10. If the child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, the CM will notify the HNS. If there is a suspected outbreak of a communicable disease (2 or more children or employees have the onset of similar signs or symptoms within a 72-hour period), or when there is a case of a serious or reportable communicable disease diagnosed or suspected on a child or employee, CM will immediately fill out the Illness Trend form, notify the **Health and Nutrition Specialist, who will then notify the Health Department**.
    - a. If the local health department official or primary health care provider suspects that a child or staff member is contributing to transmission of the illness, is not adequately immunized when there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, or the circulating pathogen poses an increased risk to the individual, the child or staff person must not return until the health department or primary care provider determines the risk of transmission is no longer present.
    - b. Staff who work in the food preparation area may not return until the signs and symptoms of the disease have not been present for 48 hours.
  12. When a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, the CM will notify the HNS who will send flyer/letter to the CM to parents in the center that is affected.
  13. Depending upon the condition, children and/or staff will not be allowed to return to the center without physician authorization. The CM, FA or identified staff will explain the requirements to the parent and determine the correct actions based on the Short-Term Exclusion policy. If a parent brings in a letter from a licensed medical professional, the center must follow the recommendations for returning to the center.
  14. Center staff must follow the Short-Term Exclusion policy when it comes to their own children and not bring their children to the center when they meet the above conditions.
  15. In rare cases, short-term exclusion may be extended to long-term or permanent exclusion from the program if the child poses a significant health and/or safety risk to other children and staff.

**Head Lice:**

1. When lice or nits have been found on a child's head, teaching staff should isolate the child away from the other children and immediately contact the child's parent/guardian.

2. Follow same procedure for Illness Tracking Notification Procedures; the parent will bring the child back when the child has been treated and is nit -free on dry hair.
3. CM's will identify one staff member who is responsible for identifying head lice on children on dry hair.

**If you are asked to pick up your child due to illness, it is expected that you will arrive at the center within 60 minutes.** The center staff will complete the Illness Notification form to be given to the parents. ***When required the parent will provide the center staff with the note that releases the child to return to the center.***

### ***Influenza***

Childcare facilities are required to provide parents with information detailing the causes, symptoms, and transmission of the influenza virus (the flu) every year during August and September. You will be given this brochure at that time and asked to sign an acknowledgment stating you received the brochure.

### ***Appropriate Attire***

Please keep the following in mind as you prepare to send your child to school every morning. These are important safety issues! It is very important to send your children to school in appropriate clothing. Enclosed toe shoes are required to be worn in classrooms by children and staff. If your child is sent to school wearing open toe shoes or shoes without backs (i.e.: sandals or flip flops, etc.) they will be sent home. Also, shoes that have wheels on them (i.e.: Heelies, etc.) are not allowed to be worn on school property. We also encourage parents not to send children to school wearing large jewelry (i.e.: large hoop earrings, long necklaces or bracelets, etc.). This is not only a safety concern, but it also may be a distraction for your child as they learn and play throughout the day, and we would not want such items to get lost or damaged. Finally, hair beads are not allowed. They can fall out and present a choking hazard.

Important Reminder: Please ensure your child has an extra change of clothes that can be kept at the center at all times.

### ***Diapers and Wipes***

Early Head Start provides diapers and wipes for your child while they are at the center. It is very important that the diapers we provide are suitable to your child's needs. If your child experiences allergic reactions to certain brands of diapers, please notify the caregiver, Family Advocate or Center Manager.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Episcopal Children's Services has guidelines of acceptable conduct while on ECS property. It is expected that all parties involved with ECS will follow these basic guidelines and sign the Standards of Conduct form. We strive to have the best learning and safest environment for you and the children.

- 1) Parents will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family. Parents will refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- 2) Parents will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members. Parents will refrain from posting and sharing pictures of children in the program, other than their own, on social media.
- 3) Parents will use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in corporal punishment (i.e. spanking), emotional abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse or humiliation. Methods of discipline that

involve isolation, the use of food as a punishment or reward or the denial of basic needs are prohibited. **ECS/HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START PROHIBITS THE USE OF "TIME OUT."**

- 4) Any threatening physical contact or verbal abuse towards individuals connected with ECS will not be tolerated and may be grounds for immediate termination from the program.
- 5) **ECS does adhere to a "Smoke Free Environment." Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is prohibited on premises and during all activities supported by ECS.**
- 6) ECS prohibits theft, firearms, alcohol, explosives and illegal substances on the premises and during all activities supported by Head Start.
- 7) Parents will not participate in harassment or cause disharmony of any kind while on ECS premises (including parking lots) or during all activities supported by ECS.
- 8) Parents will refrain from using inappropriate language of any kind while on ECS premises (including parking lots) or during activities supported by ECS.
- 9) Parents are required to have on appropriate clothing and footwear while on the premises.
- 10) Parents will follow a "No Cell Phone" policy while in the center.
- 11) Parents will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication of any kind with ECS staff.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

#### ***PARENTS AND COMMUNITY***

Complaints from parents and the community should be taken to the Center Manager. The Center Manager will work with the complainant and other staff when needed to find a mutual agreement. If the Center Manager cannot resolve the complaint, he/she will then submit the complaint to the Manager of Center Operations who will make every effort to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is not resolved at this level, then the following steps should be taken:

- The person filing the complaint should submit a written and signed letter to the Director of Educational Operations.
- An appointment would then be scheduled to meet with the Director of Educational Operations in an effort to explain in detail the circumstances of the complaint.
- The Director of Educational Operations will make every effort to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is not resolved at this level, then the complainant should submit a written, and signed, document to the Senior Director of Educational Operations. The seriousness of the complaint may require involving the VP of HS/EHS and Policy Council, in which the Senior Director of Educational Operations may choose to do.
- If the Senior Director of Educational Operations, the VP of HS/EHS, and/or the Policy Council, does not resolve the complaint, then the complainant should submit a written, and signed, document to the Chief Executive Officer, who may choose to involve the agency's Board of Trustees. The decision made at this level is final.

\*Translation services will be arranged when needed for any family member wishing to make a complaint.

### **QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED BY PARENTS**

- Question:** Can I spank, hit, pull-on, yell at, etc., my children at the center?  
**Answer:** NO. On ECS property, all staff, parents, and guests must abide by our rules.
- Question:** How often must my child have a physical or Medicaid screening?  
**Answer:** Head Start is mandated to follow the Florida Well Child Check schedule which requires children to get a new physical every year.
- Question:** How do I obtain a Medicaid screening?  
**Answer:** Check with your Medicaid physician to whom you've been assigned.
- Question:** Is it necessary to tell anyone when my child has a problem?  
**Answer:** It is very important to notify the child's teacher and Family Advocate who will consult the appropriate staff (health, mental wellness, etc.) to assist in addressing the problem confidentially.
- Question:** Is it really necessary to get a doctor's statement when my child is ill?  
**Answer:** Yes. Please bring a doctor's statement whenever your child goes to the doctor for any reason.
- Question:** Will my child receive a certificate of completion?  
**Answer:** Yes, **all** children receive a certificate at the end of the school year with the number of years they have completed in the program.

### **MY RIGHTS AS A HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PARENT**

1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and the operation of the program.
2. To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for my family and myself.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom.
4. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start.
5. To be treated with respect.
6. To expect guidance regarding my child's individual development from the Head Start teachers and staff.
7. To take part in planning and carrying out the programs designed to increase my skills and chances for possible employment.
8. To be informed of community resources for health, social services, education, and the improvement of family life.
9. To have open communication between myself and center staff.

### **MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PARENT**

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
2. To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my child's life as well as the lives of my other family members and myself.
3. To take part in the classroom as an observer, a volunteer worker, or a paid employee; and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program.
4. To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parents and encourage their full participation.
5. Welcome teachers and staff into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their child's development at home, in relation to school experiences.
6. To work with the teachers, staff, and other parents in a cooperative way.
7. To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
8. To provide input which fosters positive change in the program, to defend the program against unfair criticism and to share in evaluating it.
9. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To become involved in community programs which will help to improve health, education and recreation for all.
11. To maintain open communication with Head Start staff and share important information.
12. To treat all staff with respect.
13. To see that your child arrives on time.
14. It is very important that your child attends class every day unless he/she is ill. If your child is ill please contact the teacher.
15. All children enrolled in Head Start must have current physical. Head Start will work with families to get these physicals with their Medicaid physician (if applicable) and other physicians in the community. All children receive hearing, and vision screenings through Head Start.
16. Make sure that your child's teacher and your Family Advocate are informed of any change in home address, phone numbers, authorized persons to receive your child, and any emergency information.
17. Attend parent meetings and participate in program activities; visit often.
18. Smoking, Vaping, (including E-Cigarettes), alcohol, drugs, and weapons are prohibited at the center, on field trips, parking lots, etc.