

**Early Childhood Programs**  
**Head Start/Early Head Start**



**Parent  
Handbook  
2020-2021**



**Pasco County Schools**

Providing a world-class education for all students

Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent of Schools

## **Welcome to Early Childhood Programs!**

**2020-2021**

You are your child's most important teacher and we thank you for the opportunity to partner with you in the continued development of your child! When families involve their young children in daily learning by talking with them, playing with them, and reading to them from birth, children have:

- Higher literacy skills
- Better peer interactions
- Fewer behavior problems
- Greater motivation and persistence during learning activities

In other words, children whose families involve them in learning at home are more successful in school!

### **DISTRICT VISION**

Our vision is for all children to achieve success in college, in career, and in life.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission statement is "Serving families so that all children can learn and grow in a healthy, nurturing environment."

### **THE LADYBUG**

Ladybugs have become very popular. In recent years, we have chosen the "ladybug" as a symbol that represents our program. The ladybug reminds us of our mission to serve families so that all children can learn and grow in a healthy, nurturing environment. The ladybug is colorful and friendly. Many cultures believe the ladybug brings good luck. It is not harmful to people or the environment.

In fact, ladybugs are used to protect plants from harmful insects that could destroy an entire garden. A ladybug in your garden will allow it to grow and flourish.

Likewise, our children, our most precious possessions, are the flowers in our garden and we are their ladybugs. We help and protect them so they will grow to become productive members of our community and society



## **PROGRAM OPTIONS**

The Early Childhood Programs Department administers the Head Start, Voluntary Prekindergarten and Early Head Start programs.

***The Head Start Program*** serves families of children, ages three to five. Comprehensive services including health, mental health, social services, and child development are provided in collaboration with elementary schools where the classrooms are located.

***The Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program*** is a state funded preschool program that is available for children in Florida. All four-year olds who enroll in Head Start are dually enrolled in the VPK program.

***The Early Head Start Program*** serves expectant families and children up to 36 months. Comprehensive services including health, mental health, social services, and child development are provided. Many families are served in the home-based program option. Families visited in the home receive weekly 90-minute home visits and participate in socialization groups, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, families will receive virtual visits which will typically last 30 minutes. In addition, the Early Head Start program offers a center-based program, which includes classroom services located at elementary schools.

## **UNIQUENESS OF HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START**

Families who have applied and are accepted into the Head Start/Early Head Start program receive comprehensive services. Federal Head Start Performance Standards provide the guidance that ensures high quality in all areas of service to our families. The Head Start/Early Head Start program provides opportunities for families to enhance their lives and that of their children. This is often accomplished through a variety of partnerships with community agencies and groups that work with program staff to successfully assist and support families.



## **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment in Head Start, Early Head Start, or VPK is a continuous process and begins with an application process. Head Start and Early Head Start program applications are individually screened for eligibility based on a School Board and Policy Council approved procedure. VPK applications are completed in conjunction with the Head Start application.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance and participation in classroom activities are keys to success in school. Children are more comfortable when they arrive on time and begin to participate with their friends in a consistent daily routine. The Head Start program is funded by both state VPK and federal Head Start/Early Head Start funds. The VPK law requires that parents verify their child's attendance monthly. Your child's teacher will provide attendance calendars (known as Long Forms) at the end of each month. The attendance calendars will indicate your child's actual days present by an **X for each day your child attends school**. As the parent/legal guardian, you are required to verify, sign and return the calendar to your child's teacher. Our program must keep these Long Forms for state documentation purposes.

**Head Start and Early Head Start School-based Attendance:** It is important that your child attend school unless they have an excused absence. When a child is absent, you must notify the teacher and send a note explaining the reason for the absence. Head Start/Early Head Start rules state that staff are required to ensure the well-being of your child each day. If your child is unexpectedly absent, please call your child's classroom **within an hour of class start time so they know not to expect your child. If you don't notify the teacher that your child is not coming to school, we will call you or your emergency contacts.**

If your child has a pattern of absenteeism or has an irregular pattern of attendance, program staff are required to contact the parent/guardian to create a *Family Attendance Plan*. If your child is in excess of five (5) consecutive days, whether excused or unexcused, an attendance alert letter will be sent. Research teaches us that children who are often absent, from school, even when it is excused, have a lower probability of graduating high school due to the cumulative impact of lost learning. We also know that good attendance habits start early. **A consistent pattern of absence may result in withdrawal from the program.**

**The following reasons for a child's absence will be marked as *Excused*:**

- Illness of child
- Life threatening illness or injury to the child's family member
- ***Major*** illness in the immediate family of the child which requires hospitalization or bed rest
- Death in the immediate family of the child
- Religious holiday of the child's faith
- Physician or dental appointment
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation
- Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation; subpoena)
- Special education or related services as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1401 (2004) for the child's disability
- Required Head Start appointments with medical/dental providers (considered present offsite)

**Early Head Start Home-based Attendance:** The weekly home visit is very important. We are required to offer you 46 home visits annually. If you miss a home visit, we are required to offer you a make-up visit. Please notify your Home Services Worker if your child is sick or if a home visit needs to be rescheduled. Your Home Services Worker will ask you to sign the In-Home Services Contact sheet to make sure a home visit was made or rescheduled. If your child misses two (2) consecutive home visits, program staff are required to create a *Family Attendance Plan* with the parent/guardian. A consistent pattern of missed home visits may result in withdrawal from the program.

**BUS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Pasco County Schools provides transportation services **on a limited basis**. Early Childhood Programs follows guidelines and procedures of the Transportation Department. When first riding the bus, all children must wear a special bus tag that includes:

- Child's name
- Telephone number
- Teacher's name
- Emergency telephone number
- Home address
- Bus number
- Child's bus stop number

The school busses that transport preschool children are required to have at least one bus monitor on board at all times. It is necessary that all parents and children complete a vehicle and pedestrian safety training.



Head Start programs with transportation services are required to have vehicles equipped with height and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems. A **child safety vest** will be issued to your child and must be worn to ride the bus. At the end of the school year, whether your child is transitioning to kindergarten or remaining with Head Start, the vest will need to be returned to Transportation Services. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, all children 2 years and older will wear a mask on the bus.

Early Head Start center-based program will have assigned car seats, which meet federal guidelines, on the bus. The car seats will remain on the bus and will be cleaned by staff. Parents need to note the following:

- Children will need to be able to ride in a forward facing car seat
- Families will need to be able to bring the child to existing bus stop; bus stops may change throughout the year or be eliminated
- The amount of children who are in car seats on the bus may be limited
- This year children 2 and older must wear a mask when riding the bus due to the Covid-19 pandemic as well as in the classroom

### **IMPORTANT!**

For the safety of your child, Pasco County School Board policy requires that a parent/guardian or other individual, 18 years or older, who has been designated in writing by the parents or legal guardian on the emergency card must **remain with the child until he/she boards the bus in the morning and be at the bus stop to meet the child in the afternoon.**

**If there is not an approved person at the stop, the driver is instructed to return your child to school.**

**EMERGENCY NUMBERS MUST BE KEPT CURRENT!**

### **Pedestrian Safety**

- Children must be accompanied by a parent while crossing the street.
- Walk in the cross walk.
- Always walk when crossing the street.
- Stop at the curb and look left, look right, and then left again.
- Watch for turning cars, buses, motorcycles, and trucks.
- Listen for cars that you may not be able to see.
- Listen for sirens and never cross the street when an emergency vehicle is coming with sirens on, even if the walk sign is lit and the light is green.
- When it is wet, be extra careful crossing streets.
- At traffic lights, wait for the green light or WALK sign.
- Stop at driveways. Watch for cars backing out.
- Always obey crossing guards.
- Never play in or near streets.

- If there are no sidewalks, always walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic. Stay as far off the road as possible.



The above pedestrian safety guidelines are performance standards set forth by the federal government that must be met.

Families are required to view the pedestrian safety videos and resources located on our program website under **Important Links:** [http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/ecp/required\\_documents](http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/ecp/required_documents)

### **SAFETY PRACTICES**

The Pasco County Schools is committed to keeping your child safe. We have regular safety drills for fire, tornado and lockdown. Sites have fences and many have a resource officer on duty. Every person visiting the school site needs to show identification and will be screened by the Raptor system at most sites. The Raptor system is a computer-based system that allows the county to conduct background checks of visitors and helps ensure a safe environment for your child. Each school site has specific procedures and requirements to ensure the safest possible learning environment.

### **PARENT, FAMILY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Early Childhood Programs partners with parents, families and the community to provide the very best services to children and families. Being engaged with your child's education supports school readiness. When Parents accept the role of being their child's first and most important teacher, children are more successful in life.

We use the Family Partnership Agreement process to identify strengths and needs of families. We engage in positive, goal-oriented relationships primarily in the areas of:

- Family Well-Being
- Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peer and Community and Families as Advocates and Leaders

Our program provides support and services that build on the individual strengths of families. Your assigned family advocate will assist you in identifying strengths and needs in your family on your first

home visit. You will be able to discuss individual needs and set a goal. We commit to partner with you and support you in reaching your goal by providing resources, materials, and follow up.

### **VOLUNTEERING AND VISITING**

**Head Start is a parent participation program! We want you to become engaged. However, Volunteering and Visiting the classroom will not be possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools will limit access to classrooms to protect children and employees.**

In order to protect the safety of all children, all visitors will be required to sign in at the school's office when arriving on campus. All visitors and volunteers who plan to go beyond the front office of the school site are required to show picture identification in order to be registered into the Raptor System at most elementary sites. The identification will be scanned and checked against the Sexual Offender/Predator database. If a visitor/volunteer is approved, the Raptor System will print out a badge for the visitor/volunteer to wear while on campus; during future visits, the picture identification need not be produced.

One way you will be able to volunteer and earn volunteer hours is to attend monthly virtual zoom parent meetings, become a Policy Council Representative for your school and attend educational trainings offered by the program or the community (ex. car seat training offered by Johns Hopkins hospital). Look for information throughout the year regarding opportunities to get engaged!

***When you take interest in your child's development, you are telling your child:  
"Your education is important to me, and I want to be a part of it."  
Remember, you are your child's first teacher and best advocate!***

### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

Keeping families informed is a high priority of the program and another way we keep parents engaged. Some methods for keeping parents involved include home visits, parent conferences, newsletters, social media, email, and informational bulletin boards in each classroom, Check the ECP Facebook page for regularly for notices and information about community resources, events and activities. Please check daily with your child for school or classroom notices that may have been sent home in the backpack.

\*Daily home notes are sent home with children enrolled in the EHS center-based option.

\*Weekly home notes are offered and sent home with children enrolled in the Head Start/VPK option.



## CURRICULUM / DAILY ROUTINE

### HEAD START/VPK

The Head Start program offers a research-based, comprehensive, developmentally appropriate curriculum. This curriculum supports purposeful teaching and meaningful learning experiences. Children learn best through play, experimentation and when they are encouraged to extend their thinking. Below is an example of components of a developmentally appropriate Head Start day:

#### **Our Daily Routine:**

- Large Group:** This is where we meet and greet each other, sing songs, learn and practice social skills and enjoy movement activities. Experiences to enhance language, literacy, mathematics, science and other developmental skills are also offered during this time. These can be scheduled throughout the day.
- Meals:** Meals are served family style by sitting with the teacher around the table. The teacher will serve the children their food and children can ask for second helpings of the foods they like. This is a time where we talk about different foods, textures and taste, the importance of eating nutritious foods, and caring for our bodies. Children learn to try new foods as well as develop new vocabulary. Teachers have pleasant conversations with each child during meal times. Teachers will model language, manners, and sitting at the table for meals with the children.
- Small Group:** Staff individualize learning experiences for your child, which can be done in small groups or individually throughout the day to meet the needs of your child. Observations are noted during this time to share with parents and to use in assessing where children are in an area of their development
- Outside Time:** Children are offered a teacher-directed activity that relates to the curriculum and movement activities that promote large muscle development. Children may choose to play daily on the playground equipment, tricycles, and outside toys and materials.
- Planning:** Throughout the day, children are asked to tell the teacher which interest area they plan to go to and what they plan to do there. (Children need time to become familiar with the process, which helps to promote goal setting. Goal setting is a lifetime organizational skill).
- Choice Time:** Interest areas include: block, art, book, science, math, reading, dramatic play, music, and writing. Children can choose interest areas to investigate and to explore materials and actions, and to interact with their peers and adults. The adults follow the children's lead and ideas, while encouraging give-and-take communication with children. A problem-solving approach is used when children have social conflicts.
- Review:** Throughout the day, adults listen to children as they talk about their choice time activities in order to promote language development; did the child do what he/she planned to do?
- Rest Time:** Teachers help children to relax and rest by rocking, patting their back, and playing soft music as they rest. Rest time is approximately one hour. Children who do not sleep are given a book or quiet activities until rest time is over.
- Snack:** Teachers sit with the children and lead discussions with small groups or individual children. Snacks are nutritious.

(Note: \*Handwashing and bodily care occurs throughout the day.)

## **EARLY HEAD START CENTER-BASED**

The Early Head Start program offers a research-based, comprehensive, developmentally appropriate curriculum. This curriculum supports purposeful teaching and meaningful learning experiences. Children learn best through play, experimentation and when they are encouraged to extend their thinking.

**Arrival/Departure:** This is a time to acknowledge the child's feelings about separation and reunion.

**Mealtime:** This is a time to support the child's interest in feeding him/herself. Caregivers join the toddlers at the table during mealtime to create a "family-like" atmosphere.

**Diapering/Toileting:** The caregiver will schedule toileting or diaper changing around the child's exploration and play.

**Nap Time:** Caregivers schedule naptime around each child's individual needs. Caregivers help children to relax and rest by rocking, patting their back, and playing soft music as they rest. Rest time is approximately one hour.

**Choice Time:** This is a time when toddlers can investigate and explore materials and actions, and interact with their peers and caregivers. Caregivers pay close attention to children as they explore and play. The adults follow the children's lead and ideas, while encouraging give-and-take communication with children. A problem-solving approach is used when children have social conflicts. Toddlers are encouraged to put materials away after choice time.

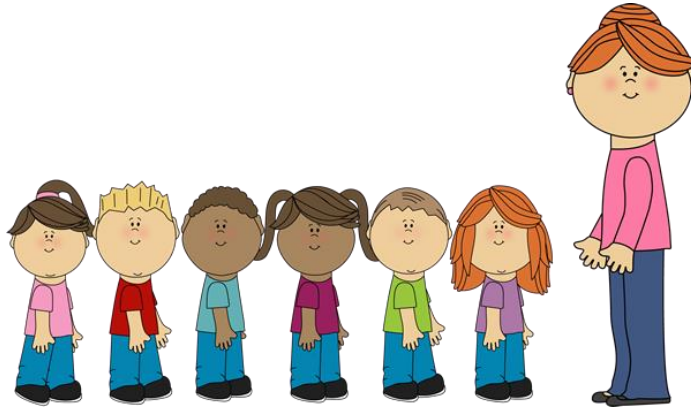
**Outside Time:** Caregivers provide a variety of experiences and materials for children in the environment that will focus and encourage fine and gross motor development. All other areas of development are also supported. Caregivers encourage children to observe nature.

**Group Time:** Caregivers will provide active group experiences. Adults will gather materials and offer them to the children, while respecting the children's choices and ideas about using the materials. Caregivers will comment specifically on what they see a child doing and interpret children's actions and communications for other children. The children's actions let the adult know when group time is at an end. This is also a time to provide movement and music experiences.



### **ADULT/CHILD RATIO**

Each Head Start/VPK classroom has a Florida certified teacher and an instructional assistant/paraprofessional assigned to a maximum of 18-20 children ages three to five. Early Head Start classes are staffed by at least two caregivers with a maximum of eight (8) children in the class.



### **EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED**

The Home-based program offers a research-based, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate curriculum to support parents and expectant parents in planning and providing purposeful teaching and learning experiences for their children. The home advocate tracks the child's development, shares reports and sets developmental goals with the parent, and models activities for the parent to use during the week to achieve the goals. The advocate also supports the parent in addressing the overall health and well being of the child or expectant mother. The program is required to provide 46 home visits each program year. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, a weekly visit will be held virtually using zoom or other virtual method and must take place with a parent/legal guardian or the expectant mother. The parent actively participates with their child as the staff member models using language, critical thinking, and social emotional skills with the child. The program is also required to provide two socializations per month for infants, toddlers and their parents. The purpose of the socialization meetings is to support child development by strengthening the parent-child relationship by providing age-appropriate learning activities for parents and children to enjoy together with other families and children. This year socializations will be offered virtually.

### **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

An online assessment tool is used in the program to follow the progress of your child. The assessment domains are aligned with State Standards and the objectives are intended to lay the foundation for kindergarten readiness. Your child's teacher will use this assessment tool to help individualize experiences for your child.

Your child's progress will be assessed in the following school readiness domains:

- Approaches to Learning
- Language and Literacy Development
- Cognition
- Social and Emotional Development
- Perceptual Motor and Physical Development

The focus is providing your young child with responsive caring by:

- Supporting you as the primary educator of your child
- Building a trusting relationship with you and your child
- Individualizing for your child
- Creating environments that support and encourage exploration
- Ensuring children's safety and health
- Developing partnerships with families
- Observing and documenting children's development in order to plan
- Recognizing the importance of social-emotional development
- Appreciating cultural, family and individual differences
- Support to build a foundation of lifelong learning
- Supporting dual-language learners
- Including children with disabilities

### **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS**

Head Start regulations require that developmental screenings will be completed for each child within the first 45 calendar days of enrollment. Our program uses the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and the Ages & Stages: Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2). These screening tools will provide a quick check of your child's development. The ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 address communication, motor, personal-social, problem solving, and social emotional development. Screening will be completed with your consent and in collaboration with staff. Hearing, vision, and speech screenings will also be completed. The information gathered will identify your child's strengths and areas of possible developmental concerns. We use this data to plan your child's learning activities and promote school readiness. Staff will share screening results with you and offer activities to support your child's development at home.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Early Head Start/Head Start program staff is committed to providing a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for each child. Children who enter Kindergarten with appropriate social-emotional adjustment are better prepared for success in the elementary grades. From your child's first day of school, staff teach class routines and expectations while promoting positive relationships and helping children make friends.

The Creative Curriculum series, Conscious Discipline philosophy, and strategies from the Center for Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) are used to help our children develop social-emotional foundations. These approaches are applied in the classrooms and can be reinforced at home. Our program interventionists, coaches, and mental health coordinators are available to provide assistance to families regarding social-emotional development and wellness. Training for parents on the approaches mentioned, as well as other social-emotional topics will be offered during parent meetings and socializations.



At times children may need more support to engage in appropriate behaviors. Our program has provided training for our staff to prevent challenging behaviors by fostering positive child-adult interactions, reinforcing behavior expectations, and teaching self-control and problem-solving skills. Regular communication and intentional planning between parents and staff help promote positive behaviors and adjustment. Some strategies used to guide children's behavior include:

- **State Expectations Positively** – State expectations using positive language. Instead of saying “Don’t run”, say Use walking feet to be safe”.
- **Natural and Logical Consequences** - Consequences that naturally or logically follow an inappropriate choice. For example, if a child is throwing blocks he is showing that he is not able to play with them appropriately. The teacher will remind him that blocks are for building, support appropriate block use, and let the child know if he/she doesn't use blocks appropriately he will be asked to choose a different interest area.
- **Choices** – To give children a sense of control and help them develop decision making skills, offer 2 choices.
- **Redirection** – An adult gives an instruction which distracts a child from the challenging behavior and redirects child to a more appropriate activity.
- **Calming** – Model and teach deep breathing to help children calm down when anxious or upset. Once children are calm they are able to think clearly and make appropriate decisions.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Within the program, confidential information will only be shared with Pasco County Schools' employees who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Our program strives to protect everyone's right to privacy.

### **MEDIA RELEASE NON-CONSENT FORM**

During the school year, your child may be photographed or videotaped for instruction, general education purposes, or presentations. If parents do not give permission for their child to be photographed or videotaped, they must complete the media release non-consent form.

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

Each teacher/caregiver visits each child's home at least twice a year, however, this year, visits will be virtual due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Family Advocates participate in some of the home visits. During the visits you will hear about your child's growth and development. In addition to the home visits, there are two parent conferences at school scheduled to give parents additional opportunities to provide input into their child's education plan. The parent is given information regularly regarding their child's growth and development, including progress on school readiness skills. Families are encouraged to provide input and participate in screening, assessment, and individualizing for their child. Families are also partners in goal setting for their child. Parents also may give input to the curriculum.

### **NUTRITION**

Head Start/Early Head Start has a partnership with the District School Board of Pasco County's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) department. FNS provides breakfast and lunch for children, which must conform to standards recommended in the USDA meal planning requirements and Head Start Performance Standards. FNS provides food accommodations for children with medical conditions, food allergies, and religious food preferences (when possible). The program provides family style eating for breakfast and lunch, which incorporates a variety of food that broadens each child's food experiences and enhances educational development. If your child needs a food accommodation, please ask a staff member for an FNS Special Menu Request form.

#### ***Parents/guardians will:***

- Support the nutritional requirements and guidelines of the program.
- **Not** provide **ANY food** from home for their child's breakfast and lunch. Food accommodations will only be made for documented medical conditions, religious preference requests and IEP/IFSP when possible.



- Inform program of any medical condition or food allergy prior to child's entrance into the program and have the official Food and Nutrition forms completed by doctor if a food accommodation needs to be made. These forms can be obtained from Head Start/Early Head Start staff.
- Inform program of any religious preferences by completing a Special Meals Request form, which can be obtained from Head Start/Early Head Start Staff. Completion of this form does not guarantee dietary preference.

Please be aware that your child's taste buds are still developing. Introducing new foods and texture is important in developing good eating habits in young children. Celebrations are held only as a part of the program activities, however, we cannot accept sweets, candy, cakes, cupcakes etc. due to our nutritional guidelines in the classroom and for socialization events.

### **FIRST AID AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Your child must have an Emergency Card on file at the school site signed by the parent/guardian, which provides emergency numbers and lists any chronic health problems. You should report any food allergy or special diet to school staff at enrollment, or as soon as possible. In an emergency, the first qualified person to recognize a medical problem will give your child first aid.

Preschool children who are ill will be sent to the clinic with a staff member. The clinic assistant or appropriate staff will apply first aid to minor cuts, scrapes and bruises (ice pack, wash with soap and water, bandage if needed). A clinic pass is sent home that day to let you know of the first aid administered or the staff will contact you by phone or email. If you cannot be reached, the school staff may contact the doctor or dentist listed on the Emergency Card, if necessary, for instructions.

**Keep your child's Emergency Card current (address and telephone numbers at which you or your designated representative can be reached during school hours). If staff determine that the child needs care beyond the care that school staff can offer, the administrator may designate and instruct school staff to contact 911.**

## MEDICINE

Prescription medication that must be given during school hours can be administered through the school clinic. In such cases, parents or guardians must complete the **Authorization for Medication** form at the school site. The parent or guardian may bring up to a two-week supply of the medicine to the school, where it will be kept in a locked container to be dispensed only by authorized persons. The medicine must be in the original prescription container labeled with:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child's name</li><li>• Name of drug</li><li>• Directions concerning amounts to give</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time of day to be taken</li><li>• Doctor's name</li><li>• How long child must take the medicine</li></ul>
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If possible, you should adjust your child's medication schedule to allow you to give your child the medicine at home, with the doctor's approval. **Nonprescription drugs, such as aspirin, cold tablets, and cough drops will not be given at school unless accompanied by a doctor's note.**

**DO NOT SEND MEDICATION WITH YOUR CHILD ON THE BUS!**

**EMERGENCY NUMBERS MUST BE KEPT CURRENT!**



## ILLNESS

Children should **stay at home** whenever they have any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever over 100 degrees**
- **Vomiting, earache**
- **Ear or eye drainage**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Nasal discharge that may indicate an infection**
- **Contagious skin condition**



Parents will be called to pick up their children when the above symptoms are present and will follow the District's Covid-19 policies for quarantine and return to school.

## **HEALTH SCREENINGS AND DENTAL SERVICES**

The program requires that each child's height, weight, vision, hearing, and blood pressure be screened within the first 45 days of enrollment. Hemoglobin is also typically screened during the first 45 days and a lead blood test is collected at 12 and 24 months.

Another important requirement of the program is for a dentist to examine each child's teeth after 12 months of age within the first 90 days of enrollment. This necessary treatment **MUST** be completed by the end of the school year. Please **make your child's first dental appointment right away** if a dentist has not seen him or her within the last 12 months. If financial assistance is needed to meet this requirement, please contact your Family Advocate.

The program teaches the children how to take care of their teeth by:

- giving each child a toothbrush and teaching them the proper way to brush
- Sending home educational materials to families
- encouraging parents of infants to wipe their child's gums
- Encouraging parents about the impact on baby teeth when allowing children to go to bed with a bottle

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Any evidence of child abuse and/or neglect must and will be reported to the Department of Children and Families. The abuse hot line number is 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Florida law requires that teachers and other personnel who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected are to immediately report such knowledge or suspicion. The Parent Help Line provides families with counseling, information, and referrals. The Parent Help Line number is 1-800-FLA-LOVE (1-800-352- 5683).

### **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Early Childhood Programs complies with the District School Board of Pasco County Policy regarding Equal Educational Opportunities. The policy requires that the right of a student to participate fully in classroom instruction and extracurricular activities shall not be abridged or impaired because of age, sex, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, handicapping condition, pregnancy, parenthood, marriage, political beliefs, social and family background, or for any other reason not related to his/her individual capabilities.

### **HARRASSMENT**

The District School Board of Pasco County is committed to taking steps to create and to ensure an education and work environment free of harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, marital status, disability, or handicap. For the purposes of education, harassment includes:

1. Any slurs, innuendoes or other verbal or physical conduct reflecting on an individual's race, religion, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, marital status, disability, or handicap which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment; has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with the individual's school performance or participation; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's education.
2. The denial of or provision of aid, benefits, grades, rewards, faculty assistance, services, or treatment on the basis of sexual advances or requests for sexual favors.
3. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Any student (or parent of a student) who believes that he/she has been denied participation in or access to an educational program or activity, or has otherwise been discriminated against due to age, sex, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, handicapping condition, pregnancy, parenthood, individual capabilities, or who believes that he/she has been the subject of harassment, may file a grievance according to the procedures established in School Board policy, Student Complaints and Grievances.

In any case which involves alleged sexual harassment, nothing in this policy or in any other policy or procedures shall require the individual alleging sexual harassment to present the matter to the person who is the subject of the complaint. For additional information related to the above policies, or for a copy of the grievance procedure, contact the principal of the school.

### **RESPECT AND CIVILITY POLICY**

The District School Board of Pasco County believes that a safe, secure, nurturing and civil environment is essential to accomplishing its mission to create a community which works together so all Pasco County students will reach their highest potential.

This policy promotes mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among all district employees, students, parents and the general public. The policy is not intended to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. Rather, it is intended to maintain, to the extent that is possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free workplace for students, families, and staff, that is free of disruptive, demeaning, intimidating, threatening or aggressive behaviors.

1. District staff will treat students, parents, fellow staff members and members of the public with respect and will expect the same in return.
2. District staff will not conduct business with those who use obscenities or otherwise speak in a demanding, loud, insulting or threatening manner.
3. Volatile, hostile or aggressive actions and words will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in these activities may face penalties up to, and including, criminal prosecution.

(F.S. 1001.41(2))



***Head Start/Early Head Start  
Parent and Family Engagement is the Cornerstone of the Program***

**Parents/Guardians:**

- ✓ Are their child's first teacher
- ✓ Attend monthly parent meetings
- ✓ Participate in parent conferences
- ✓ Participate in parent conferences and visits
  - ✓ Set family goals
- ✓ Send child daily to school and on-time
- ✓ Follow all School Board procedures

**Each school needs a parent to:**

- ✓ Represent their school at monthly Policy Council meetings
  - ✓ Participate in Health Advisory meetings