



Teaching Children, Empowering Families, Involving Community

Parent Handbook

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It is the mission of Putnam County Head Start to help students develop a love of learning in a safe orderly environment where individuality is respected and valued. It is our mission to encourage student achievement and wise decision making. We will help students realize their greatest potential by setting high achievement by faculty, parents and community working together to meet the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly complex and changing society.

Putnam County Head Start BOE

We appreciate your involvement with your child and hope that we can be partners with you in reaching goals you may have for your child and family. Together we can create a solid foundation to build strong children, families, and communities. If parents have any concerns or questions at any time it is recommended that the following chain of command be used until an answer or solution is found:

1. Child's Teacher
2. Head Start Director
3. Policy Council

My Child Will Be Attending the Putnam County Head Start for Early Childhood Education Experiences and Group Socializations.

The Center Phone Number Is: 706- 485- 8081

My Classroom Hours Are: Monday -Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.

The Putnam County Head Start Director Is: Ms. Christel H. Nelson

My Child's Teacher and Teacher's Aide Are: _____

Our Family Advocate Is: _____

My Child's Bus Driver and Bus Monitor Are: _____

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Putnam County Head Start Program. The staff and I are enthusiastic and honored to have you and your child as part of our program this school term. It is our desire to have your child become more creative and eager to learn through our quality services.

Putnam County Head Start has consistently provided quality education and family support since 1965. We are proud of our history and of our "adult" alumni who are making major contributions in our community today. Our program supports child growth and development by providing early education, health, nutrition and mental health services and by strengthening families through parent education, parent volunteer opportunities and linkages with community resources. This program also works collaboratively with the Special Education Preschool on-site to ensure services to children with special needs.

Through cooperation and open communication, we can help to make a difference in the quality of life for you and your child, and together, we can influence the direction of our future.

We look forward to knowing you better and helping your child develop to his/her fullest potential. Please help your child adjust by approaching this new experience with excitement and enthusiasm.

Please take time to review this handbook and keep it handy for reference. Using the guidelines will help make your Head Start experience more enjoyable for you and your child.

Ms. Christel H. Nelson
Head Start Director

Together we can "Build a Better Tomorrow for Children"

Putnam County Head Start
162 Old Glenwood Springs Rd.
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(706) 485-8081

Web Site: <http://pcpk.putnam.schooldesk.net/>

Putnam County Head Start Office Staff:

Christel Nelson, Director

Sandra Lawson-Riley, Nutrition/Family Service Manager

Martha Batchelor, Fiscal Manager

Marcus Swain, Education/Mental Health/Disabilities Manager

Valeria Hightower, Health & Safety/Family Services Manager

Shontell White, Parent, Family, Community Engagement
Manager

HEAD START EMPLOYEES CODE OF ETHICS

As a Head Start employee, I adopt the following principles as my personal code of ethics.

- I pledge to care for every child entrusted to me with love, understanding, and respect.
- I am committed to providing high quality child care in accordance with proven Head Start philosophy, goals, and objectives.
- I will protect and promote each child's physical and emotional well-being, mental capability, and social competency.
- I agree to reach out to each child and family, attempting to enhance their quality of life by recognizing their unique needs.
- I respect parents as the prime educators of their children and will endeavor to strengthen the bond among all family members.
- I promise to conserve and protect the property and resources of Head Start entrusted to me.
- I am continually aware of and take pride in my role within the community as an important influence on the lives of young children.
- I accept the responsibility of involving the community in all aspects of nurturing its future leaders.
- I will continue to improve my personal growth and skills as a child care professional through relevant training.
- I dedicate myself to maintaining high professional standards, safeguarding confidentiality, and performing with intelligence, commitment, and enthusiasm.

Adopted October, 1984 Adopted April, 1985
Region VI Head Start Association National Head Start Association

"PARENTS THINGS TO REMEMBER"

1. . For the safety of your child, it is required that the person bringing your child to school get out of the car and bring the child to his/her classroom. To enter through the main entrance (Primary School) a current hall pass **must** be presented to Primary Personnel. Check with Head Start personnel for your hall pass.
2. All children **must** be at the Center no earlier than 7:30 a.m. If you bring your child to school between 7:20 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. Please bring them to the cafeteria room. Head Start personnel will be able to assist you. If your child is late due to a doctor, dentist, W.I.C. visit, D.F.A.C. or other agency/business where you had an appointment, please bring them to Head Start office with excuses. (No Exceptions) After 9:00 a.m. your child will be absent for the day unless you bring an valid excuse from one of the above agencies.
3. In cases of emergencies Head Start needs to be able to contact parents. It is mandatory that we are able to contact the parent/legal guardian of all Head Start children at all times. Therefore, we **MUST** have the current home and business address and valid telephone numbers. Head Start requires parents to update contact information at least 3-three times during the year or as they occur.
4. Regular attendance in Head Start is a **MUST**. Please notify the Family Service Team if your child will be absent three (3) or more consecutive days. (Please see the full attendance policy on pages 9-10 of this handbook).
5. If your child is absent and no documentation/excuse is submitted to the Family Services worker, this is considered a unexcused absence. A note from the parent is not a documented excused absence (it is used for information purposes only). Three excused absence are allowed if there is a death in the immediate family.
6. Undocumented/unexcused absence (without an excuse), three (3) or more times may result in your child being dropped from the program.
7. When a child misses three (3) or more consecutive days from school without any notification, a Family Services worker may conduct a home visit to

determine the necessary action. Parents will be contacted regarding irregular attendance; if necessary a home visit will be conducted.

8. The child enrollment application **must** be current at all time, and we **must** have more than one emergency telephone number. Notify the Putnam County Head Start of any changes in your address and/or telephone number within twenty-four (24) hours of the change.
9. Parent/legal guardians **must** complete and sign an Authorization and Emergency Form on each child.
10. No Head Start child will be released from the classroom, bus or center at any time to anyone who is not listed on the Authorization and/or Emergency Forms. The police will be called and charges will be brought against the person who tries to take the child by force.
11. Each child **must** have an Authorization and Emergency Form on file signed by his/her parent/legal guardian. An authorization person **must** be 18 years old or older.
12. An adult (18 years or older) should bring your child to the bus stop each morning for the safety of the child.
13. One of the adults listed on the Authorization Form **must** meet the child **on time** each afternoon at the bus stop or Center. If none of the adults listed on the Authorization Form are there to pick up the child from the bus stop, the child will be brought back to the Center. If your child rides the Head Start bus in the afternoon and is brought back to the Center because none of the people listed on the Authorization Form were at the bus stop to pick up the child, or no **acceptable** arrangements have been made to pick up the child by 5:00 p.m., the appropriate authorities will be called.
14. You must have your child ready and waiting at the bus stop on time each morning. Also, be on time each afternoon at the bus stop to pick up your child. It is necessary to be at the bus stop at least ten (10) minutes before the scheduled time.
15. If your child is brought and left at the bus stop and/or at the Center **unattended**, the proper authorities/agencies such as the Police Department and/or the Department of Family and Children Services will be notified and the appropriate action taken and/or charges filed.
16. Your child **will not** be allowed to leave the Head Start Center or bus stop with anyone including the parent/legal guardian that appears to be intoxicated (drugs and/or alcohol). The child will be brought back to the

Center and/or held at the Center and the police will be called to take the appropriate action.

17. Transfer from one bus or bus stop to another will be made **only** if a child's home address changes or if the Transportation Department sees it as necessary.
18. All bus change request must be made in writing at the Head Start Center on the appropriate form from the Transportation Department. (Parent's signature and telephone number required) with the Transportation Department or authorized Head Start Personnel at least twenty four (24) hours in advance. Bus changes will be made primarily in cases of an emergency.
19. Write your child's name in his/her book bags, coats, sweaters, and other personal items he or she brings to school to help us identify items that we find. We will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.
20. **ONLY Head Start children** will be served breakfast, lunch and snack while at the Center.
21. Any parent wishing to eat lunch at the Center must sign in as a volunteer no later than 9:00 a.m. each day. (No Exception).
22. Parent/legal guardian is strongly encouraged to attend all trainings, meetings and volunteer regularly in the Head Start program.
23. When a parent/legal guardian comes for volunteer work he or she must present a current hall pass. (Hall passes may be obtained from the classroom teachers or the Head Start front office). Volunteers **must** stay in the classroom or work station and not roam around the building. You will be asked to leave the Center if you do not abide by the rules of the Program.
24. All parents, community volunteers, visitors, etc. must sign-in at the Head Start front Office before going to any part of the building; failure to do so will result in having the police called and the appropriate action taken.
25. If your child becomes ill or gets the Measles, Chicken Pox, Mumps, Lice, Impetigo, Ringworm, or Scabies, you will be called to pick him or her up. Your child may return only after he or she is cured or proper treatment has been given with a doctor's advice/doctor excuse. If your child had symptoms of any of the above before leaving home, please do not send him/her to school.
26. Notify the Health Manager immediately of any and all of your child's medical changes.
27. **NO SMOKING ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PREMISES.**

28. Absolutely NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL is allowed on Primary School property at any time. ALL violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.
29. Disruptive/rude behavior and using profane language **will not be tolerated** on the buses, at the bus stops, or in the Center from **anyone**. The police will be called and charges will be brought against the person/persons.
30. NO ONE including the parent/legal guardian or relative, will hit, spank, pinch, etc. any child while at the Head Start Center because it violates the Head Start Policies on corporal punishment and the appropriate legal action will be taken.
31. We do not know your child, therefore the teacher will pin a name tag to your child with his/her full name, address, and telephone number for the first two (2) weeks of school.
32. Remember, Head Start and the children need the parent's and community's participation to be successful. **BE A HEAD START VOLUNTEER.**

EXCLUSION POLICY

Condition	Exclusion of Cases	Exclusion from Contact
Diarrhea/Vomiting	Exclude until diarrhea has ceased. May return to school after one day with a written doctor's excuse and after child has been administered at least 3 doses of medication.	Exclude from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Chicken Pox	Exclude for at least 5 days and until all blisters have dried. May return to school with a written doctor's excuse.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received. Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, Leukemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection.
Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye	Exclude until discharge or redness from eyes has ceased. May return to school with a written doctor's excuse after child has been administered 3 doses of medication.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received
Mouth Sores	May return with a written doctor's excuse.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Head Lice	24 Hours after treatment has started. May return to school with a written doctor's excuse after 3 doses of medication.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse to received.
Scabies	May return to school after treatment is completed with a written doctor's excuse.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Hepatitis A	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before seven days after the onset of jaundice or illness. May return to school with a written doctor's excuse	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing. Child may return to school with a written doctor's excuse and after 6 doses of medication.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Measles	Exclude for at least four days after onset of rash. Must bring a written doctor's excuse to return to school.	Exclusion from contact with others until written doctor's excuse to received. Unimmunized should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case
Mumps	Exclude for nine days or until swelling goes down. Must bring a written doctor's excuse to return to school.	Must bring a written doctor's excuse to return to school.
Ringworms	May return to school in 3 days with a written doctor's excuse and after 3 doses of medication has been administered.	Exclude from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Pandemic Illness(s)	May return to school after 3 doses of medication administered with a written doctor's excuse.	Exclude from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received.
Strep Throat	May return to school after 3 doses of medication has been administered with a written doctor's excuse.	Exclude from contact with others until written doctor's excuse is received

PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START Program Policies and Procedures

Attendance

POLICY:

- To encourage regular attendance and assist families whose children are frequently absent.
- *This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1305.8*

PROCEDURE:

1. Each Putnam County Head Start program will have a written attendance policy. A copy of the policy will be given to and discussed with each parent during orientation.
2. Teaching staff will designate the reasons why children are absent on the daily attendance record. Attendance will be monitored monthly by office staff, using CHILD PLUS report # 2305.
3. If a program's daily attendance rate falls below eighty-five percent (85%), the causes of absenteeism are analyzed carefully by program staff and the Director. This will be done by using Child Plus report # 2305. Appropriate actions will be determined and implemented by the program to improve the attendance whenever possible.
4. It is the policy of this program to encourage regular attendance and to withdraw from the program children who are chronically absent without a medical reason or valid cause.

Valid reasons for absenteeism may include the following:

- ♦ child is hospitalized
 - ♦ child is unable to attend due to serious illness or injury
 - ♦ child has a contagious disease
 - ♦ death in child's family
 - ♦ illness of parent
 - ♦ child's attendance is affected by temporary family situation
 - ♦ child must receive medical treatment or therapy at the time when class is held
5. After three consecutive days of a child's absence or after a pattern of irregular attendance has been determined, parents are contacted by the appropriate staff. A conference with the family is held to determine how or if the program can assist in resolving problems which may be causing the child's absence. Contacts with the family emphasizes the benefits of regular attendance, while at the same time remaining sensitive to any special circumstances influencing attendance patterns.
 6. The program initiates appropriate family support procedures for all children with three or more consecutive unexcused absences.
 7. All contacts with the child's family as well as special family support activities provided by program staff are documented.

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8. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child in either the same or a different program option, the child may be withdrawn from the program. The child's slot is considered an enrollment vacancy.

Roll Call Sheets

1. Check the roll every day (Codes: A=Absent, TR=Tardy, V=Vacation, W= Withdrawn, E=Entered, T= Transitioned to new classroom).
2. Write in new children at the bottom of the list.
3. At the end of the month, teaching staff will tally attendance.
4. Teaching staff will move to the next month roll call sheet until the school year is completed.

Verification of Attendance

1. Teaching staff will complete an attendance record on each child by calling roll and recording absent or presence in attendance.
2. Teaching staff will complete an attendance/meal count form to report those students present, no later than 9:00am to Family Service Staff.
3. Assure that monthly average daily attendance rate does not fall below 85 percent.
4. Assure that absences due to illness are well documented.

Tardiness Policy

Students arriving to school on time are important. It allows the center staff and children to begin the day with little disruption. Tardiness affects meal counts, disrupts the classroom routine, and prevents children from receiving all the benefits the program offers.

1. If children arrive to center late they will be received in a normal manner. If a child is late more than twice in a given week, the parent must meet with the Family Service Staff to determine the cause of the late arrival.
2. The Family Service Staff shall determine if additional support is required to assist the family in assuring the prompt arrival of the child. If it is determined that additional services are necessary, the Family Service Staff shall refer the family to appropriate service for follow-up.
3. A tardiness form will be completed by the parent/guardian each time a child is late and sign by the Family Service Staff. All tardiness form will be kept in the absentee three ring binder in the Family Service Staff office.
4. Late arrival is defined as after 8:30am. Parents are asked to contact the Family Service Staff in the event the child will be late arriving to center.
5. When parents bring children to the center, they must sign the child in at the front entrance and physically escort the child to the classroom. All children must be released only to the classroom staff or designated staff person.
6. A parent who leaves the child at door without the knowledge of staff, the parent must be notified by the Family Service Staff the same day of the occurrences and advised of the danger of the situation and the correct procedure to bring the child to center.
7. The contact with the parent must be documented and filed.
8. When children arrive on the bus, the monitor on the bus will count all children before leaving the bus.
9. After children have departed the bus, the driver should check the entire bus to see if all children are off the bus.
10. Children will then be escorted inside the building by the bus monitor. Once inside the building children are greeted and escorted to the classroom or designated area by the center staff (designee or teacher) to prepare for breakfast.

DISABILITY SERVICES OVERVIEW

Putnam County Head Start Program is mandated to have a minimum of 10% of its enrollment for children with disabilities. These children are served in a mainstream environment in order to have the greatest opportunity to become as independent as possible. A full range of comprehensive services are available to help meet the children's development needs.

In order for a child to receive disability services he or she must have a suspected or a diagnosed disability. The Putnam County School System uses a diagnostic criteria for reporting disabled children in Head Start.

Children must be diagnosed by a licensed and/or certified professional. Examples of qualifying conditions as listed in the Disability Regulation are speech and/or hearing impairment, health impairment, visual impairment, emotional behavior disorder, orthopedic impairment, autism and traumatic brain disorder.

Parent involvement in our program is vital to our success. Parents of children with disabilities have the same opportunity. All components work closely together in the recruitment, assessment and evaluation of children with disabilities in order to give them a full range of comprehensive services throughout Head Start and the local school system.

IEP meetings are held with parents, teachers and a team of professionals to decide the best services for the child while at Head Start and also to aid with a smooth transition into public schools.

Head Start Disability Services assist children, parents and staff by:

- Recruiting children with special needs
- Screening all Head Start children
- Referring suspected disabled children for assessment and diagnosis
- Assisting parents and staff in the development and implementation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Providing transition services to disabled children entering kindergarten

What are we looking for?

- Speech and language delay
- Other developmental delays
- Physical and/or health difficulties

How does it work?

- Parents are notified of the results of screening.
- When difficulties are documented, parents are asked to give written permission for further assessment
- Parent are strongly encouraged to attend I.E.P. meetings.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICE

- Putnam County Board of Education
- Public Assistance/Medicaid Applications/Food Stamps
- The Department of Human Resources
- Office of Community Services
- Social Security Administration
- Pediatric Clinic

HEALTH SERVICES

- Putnam County Health Department 706-485-8591
- The Department of Family and Children Services 706-485-4921

NUTRITION SERVICES

- W.I.C. Women, Infants and Children Supplement
- Board of Education School Nutrition Program

DISABILITY SERVICES

Putnam County Public School Program for Exceptional Children

Putnam County Board of Education Special Needs Preschool Early Intervention

EDUCATION COMPONENT OVERVIEW

The Education Services Component provides for program activities that includes an organized series of experiences designed to meet the individual differences and needs of participating children, the special needs of children with disabilities, and the needs of specific educational priorities of the local population and the community.

Provisions are made to assist parents in understanding and using alternative ways to foster learning and development of their children.

Objectives of the Education Component:

1. Plan field trips:
 - Teachers interact through play situations to help facilitate learning while children are having fun.
 - Parents are invited to share their experiences in the classrooms with the children and teachers.
 - Community Resources are invited to participate in the classroom.

2. Integrate the educational aspects of the various Head Start components in the daily program of activities:
 - Nutrition, Health, and Mental Health are included in classroom experiences.

3. To involve parents in educational activities of the program to enhance their role as the principal influence in the child's education and development:
 - Various parent committees are asked to participate in every phase of the Education Component, including but not limited to, deciding on the curriculum, participating in screening applications, and interviewing for teachers and teacher's assistant, education managers, and family service workers.

4. To assist parents in increasing knowledge, understanding, skills and experience in child growth and development.
5. To identify and reinforce experiences that occurs in the home which parents can utilize as educational activities for their children.
 - Training is offered on activities in the home.
 - Teachers send newsletters each month which includes activities parents can do at home as it relates to the monthly theme.

What's required of Teaching Staff?

1. Schedule at least two (2) home visits per year.
2. Have at least two (2) parents/teacher conferences.
3. Send a monthly newsletter to parents informing them of activities being done in the classroom, activities occurring at the Center and activities parents can do at home with their children.
4. Have a weekly lesson plan for working with your children that is prepared a week in advance. This lesson plan is based on a monthly theme using several resources curriculums (Bright from the Start, Second Step, Creative Curriculum, etc.) parent input, and teachers' observations.
5. Encourage parents to volunteer and participate in planning for the children.
6. Attend several workshops and training each year to keep informed of appropriate practice, as it related to three (3) and four (4) years' olds. Teachers are required have a minimal of an Associate's (AA) degree.

HEALTH SERVICES COMPONENT OVERVIEW

HEALTH:

Head Start emphasizes the importance of early intervention, assessment and treatment of health problems. Each child receives a comprehensive health program including medical, dental, mental health, disability, and nutrition services.

Children enrolled in Head Start receive medical health screenings to identify possible health problems. When health problems are found, follow-up services are provided. Children recovering from a serious illness or contagious disease must receive written clearance from the physician prior to returning to school.

Parents should inform the Head Start staff of any current health problems. Prescribed medications, dietary needs or other special services requirements must be documented to ensure the child receives adequate accommodations. Parents who

take their child to the physician for immunization or other services must bring a copy of the results to the Head Start site for entry into the child's health record.

A. NUTRITION

The Nutrition Component of the Head Start Program is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the enrolled child and the family's nutritional needs with a complete follow-up plan that will provide food which will help to meet the nutritional services, and to bring the child, parent, and staff to a level of understanding of nutrition through education and other community agencies.

B. MENTAL HEALTH

Head Start knows the importance of promoting mental health. Therefore, we provide each child, family and staff member with mental health services to facilitate the emotional, cognitive and social development toward the overall goals of social competence.

We realize that mental health is a state of being that depends on where we live, our values, our expectation from life, and our physical health. We also agree that to be mentally healthy most of the following indicators should be present:

- a. The ability to act, to work and to make decisions
- b. The ability to play and to be playfully
- c. The ability to express a range of feelings from joy to the ability to be flexible and to understand that change occurs as we develop and grow
- d. The ability to know one's limits and strengths, and to have a sense of oneself
- e. The ability to love and be loved
- f. The ability to trust and be trusted and
- g. The ability to remember, and to use memory for a productive purpose.

We encourage teachers and parents to work together toward healthy and productive lives for themselves and the child. This can best be accomplished through a joint and cooperative effort in which teachers and parents put aside their own problems and simply focus on the child. Problems of parents and teachers are part of life and living and should be acknowledged in order to help children understand a variety of feelings and emotions. Children are constantly learning and attempting to understand the world around them through feelings, experiences, and modeling of others.

To help guide us in the right directions, we contract with mental health professionals who assist us in planning mental health activities; train staff and parents; periodically observe children and consult with teachers, parents and other staff.

HEALTH REQUIREMENT

Every child entering the Head Start program must meet certain guidelines. These include the following:

1. On the first day of school, each child must have on file a immunization certificate, current physical, and dental screening. Copies of certificates will be accepted.
2. (If there are religious or medical reasons why a child does not have an Immunization Certificate, the parents must provide a certificate of medical or religious exemption).
3. If there are religious or medical reasons why a child cannot eat certain foods or drink certain beverages, the parent will need documentation from a physician or religious leader stating the reasons.

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION

1. This program administers prescription medication ONLY.
2. All medication is to be labeled with the following information:
 - a. The child's full name
 - b. The name of medicine
 - c. Name of physician prescribing the medicine
 - d. Schedules of administration
 - e. Amount given per dose
 - f. Pharmacy's name
 - g. Date medication was sold.
3. A signed consent from the parent must precede the administration of any medication.
4. All medication is administered by the Health Coordinator or her designee.
5. Medicine should never be given to the child to bring to school or carry home. Bus monitor will return medication to the authorized adult meeting the bus.
6. Medication will be kept in a locked cupboard at all times.
7. In order to administer any medication, it will have to be taken four (4) times per day as specified by the physician to be taken a certain time of the school day.

PARENT PARTICIPATION IN HEAD START

There are at least four (4) major kinds of parent participation in the Head Start Program.

1. Participation is the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program.

- a. Parent Meetings:
 - (1) Parent Center Meetings are held bi-monthly or as needed
 - (2) The Policy Council Meetings are held the third week each month at 6:00 p.m. The Policy Council is the decision making body of the program. It is composed of a majority of parents who are elected by other Head Start parents. There are also on Community Representatives on the Policy Councils who are concerned about the well being of the Head Start Program.
2. Participation in the classroom as paid employees, volunteers, or observers.
 - (1) Volunteers actively work in the classroom or other areas in the Center.
 - (2) Parents are encouraged to go on field trips with their child's class.
 - (3) Parents are encouraged to participate in workshops and staff training sponsored by the Head Start Program and other community agencies.
 - (4) Parents who arrive at the Center by 9:00 a.m. and actively participate in the classroom, office, or cafeteria are allowed a free lunch.
 - (5) When a parent comes to volunteer or visit for a short period, he or she must first sign in at the front office.
3. Activities for parents which they have helped to develop.
4. Working with their children in cooperation with center staff members:
 - a. Parents can use the time when staff members visit their homes to:
 1. Get ideas about activities they can do with their children at home.
 2. Learn child growth and development which will strengthen their role as the primary influence in their child's lives.

VOLUNTEERS IN THE HEALTH COMPONENT

Volunteers may participate in a variety of activities in the Health Component. Every grantee is required to have a Health Advisory Committee that includes parents and volunteer health professionals. This group helps the Head Start program to identify resources to meet the health needs of Head Start families, to meet policy requirements, and keep the program aware of health issues in the community.

A dentist may offer dental cleaning and checkups, a nutritionist may plan menus, a home economist may offer cooking classes to parents, or a psychologist may provide mental health evaluations. Foster Grandparents can assist classroom staff

in providing individualized activities and attend to children with disabilities. They can escort children with disabilities from the Center to appointments.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Involvement

Parents are the most important influence on a child's development. An essential part of every Head Start Program is the involvement of parents in parent education, program planning, and other operating activities. Many serve as members of the Policy Council and committees and have a voice in decisions. Many parents also serve as volunteers in the classrooms.

Volunteers in the Parent Involvement Component

Parents have always been considered full partners in the Head Start Program. Parents must have a full voice in staff selection, budget authorization, and approval of all program plans. Parents fulfill this role as volunteers on the Policy Council and Center Committees, giving significant amounts of time in the process.

Parents also serve in other capacities, parents work as classroom assistants, lunchroom and kitchen helpers, custodial assistants, or office helpers. Additionally, many serve as chaperons and teacher assistants.

SERVICES PROVIDED

These are the services that will be provided to Head Start participants:

For the child:

1. Health screening (vision, hearing, nutrition, dental, medical and developmental screening and follow-up when needed)
2. Individualized Education Assessments
3. One-half to two-thirds of daily nutritional requirements (Center-based)
4. Learning experiences to enhance social, intellectual, physical, cognitive, and emotional development
5. Appropriate services for children with special needs

For the Family:

1. Parent training on topics such as child development, career development, child abuse, Health Fair, etc.
2. Parent-Teacher conferences and home visits
3. Assistance in contacting community resources

4. Parent activity/field trips
5. Volunteer opportunities
6. Parent orientation at the beginning of the school year
7. Written notice for parent when their child is scheduled to see a health provider
8. A written yearend report of all health services by their child and immunization

Family Services/Family Engagement

Based on the premise that home, community and school are inextricably linked and an event that affects one segment either directly or indirectly affect all, the Family Services Component is designed to serve as an avenue of continuity between each segment.

The Family Services/Family Engagement Component also serves as an advocate of Head Start Families and supports them in their efforts to become self-sustaining.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Putnam County Head Start Program recognizes parents as the first and primary educator of their children. Therefore, parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom or other areas of choice and to engage in home activities with their children. Parents are encouraged to participate in decision making in the program planning operation. It is the goal of the Parent Involvement Component to ensure that there is an opportunity for parents to participate in experiences and activities which support and enhance the parent's role.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGELECT

Pursuant to Georgia Code Section 19-7-5, which is the Georgia Law pertaining to Child Abuse and Neglect, it is the responsibility of Head Start Personnel to report any suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect to Child Protective Services which is a unit of the Department of Family and Children Services.

The Putnam County Head Start Program will maintain confidentiality of records concerning child abuse and neglect. Training will be provided during the year to all Head Start parents, and staff in the areas of child abuse and neglect.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The use of corporal punishment and/or total isolation of a child will not be tolerated in the Putnam County Head Start. Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force as a discipline measure. This includes, but is not limited to spanking, slapping, pulling of hair, etc. Isolations refer to separating the child from normal association with classroom activities as a punishment measure. Isolation includes, but is not restricted to confining the child in a small area, retaining the child in the classroom when other children go outside to play, or restricting the child from meals with his/her classmates.

ATTENDANCE

The Putnam County Head Start Program encourages regular attendance and strives to assist families in meeting any needs that may result in irregular attendance or frequent absenteeism.

If your child cannot be in school please contact the Family Services Staff, when your child returns to school he/she must have the absences documented by a doctor's excuse.

Excessive unexcused absenteeism will result in your child being dropped from the Head Start Program.

TRANSITION OVERVIEW

It is the goal of Putnam County Head Start to prepare families to enter and exit Head Start well prepared for the next stage of education.

Getting Ready: Parents make the best advocates for their children

Making sure families are receiving what they need to continue to public school and/or beyond Head Start with a good attitude about learning.

Getting Set:

Making sure children are immunized and have all the documents needed to enter kindergarten. We also encourage parents to prepare and think about what the next year may be like for their child. We also visit the Kindergarten classes the child might be attending the following year.

Go:

Parents are aware of their child's shortcomings and aspects. Parents are ready to go on to the next learning institution with confidence and pride. Our goal is to prepare parents with enough information about their child's next learning institution and

what kinds of things to expect so that the transition is smooth for them and their child.

Tracking:

The Transition Team along with the Director will be responsible for tracking our children up to third grade. A transition committee is formed with teachers, parents, community leaders, and school officials to help with this process.

FAMILY LITERACY COMPONENT OVERVIEW

The Family Literacy Plan for this program is designed to serve both Head Start parents and staff by collaborating with the Putnam County Board of Education.

This program seeks to serve three levels of needs indicated by pre-screening each participant. These levels are;

- I. Those parents that are unable to read at a functional level
- II. Those parents that seek to obtain their *General Education Diploma (GED)*
- III. Those parents and staff members that need assistance and/or tutoring to successfully complete some means of secondary education.
- IV. Head Start staff members needing to improve reading comprehension and writing skills to maintain employment

These services may be offered on site depending on the spaces available with the existing agencies already mentioned.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:

Head Start programs are required by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to establish and maintain information and a record system with adequate safeguard and security measures to preserve the confidentiality of personal and private information collected from Head Start families and children as a result of their participation in Head Start. Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations now contains regulations to protect the confidentiality of data.

It is necessary to obtain "personally identifiable" information about children and their families, in order to provide a comprehensive Head Start program which provides appropriate services to children and families and to retain the necessary documentation for fiscal accountability of funds.

RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Confidential information will be released to other agencies and/or persons only with written parent consent and only for purpose of securing needed services for Head Start children and families.

Examples of the kinds of situations where information would be released with written consent of the parents:

- (1) Providing important background information and screening results to professional diagnostician under consultant contract for diagnostic services
- (2) Providing information to a multi disciplinary team for development of the IEP and placement of the child with disability
- (3) Providing information to other agencies/persons from whom Head Start is securing special services to supplement regular Head Start services
- (4) Providing health and education assessment data and appropriate program information for subsequent placement of a Head Start child into public school, or other preschool program

RELEASE OF INFORMATION WITHOUT WAIVERS/INFORMER CONSENT

Emergency circumstances require the release of confidential information without the consent of parents. Information may be released without parental consent in the event of a safety or health emergency. The decision to release such information must be based on the threat to health or safety of the child; the need for the information to adequately deal with the emergency, and the extent to which time prohibits contacting parents for information release consent.

Parents will be notified of such incidents as soon as possible after the occurrence by the Head Start Director or the assigned responsible person.

PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS/COMMUNITY

The term "**grievance**" means a program related dispute or a parent expressed feeling of dissatisfaction with aspects of his/her relationship with program policies, procedures and working relationships with staff.

PARENTS RIGHT TO FILE GRIEVANCE

1. Parents/community has the right to express their grievances without fear of restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, reprisal, or retaliatory action. This principal also applies to any parent taking part in

the presentation of a grievance either as a witness or as a parent representative.

2. It is the responsibility of the Parent Coordinator to hear promptly and courteously all grievances registered in good faith by parents, and to try to clarify misunderstandings and make reasonable adjustments of any complaints that arise in day-to-day relationships. All problems will be settled whenever possible, at the lowest level.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IN FILING A GRIEVANCE

1. The parent/community will discuss the grievance with the Parent Coordinator. If the grievance cannot be settled at this level or if the parent is not satisfied with the results of discussion he or she (the parent) will:
2. Present the grievance in writing to the Director. The Director will notify the Policy Council Chairperson of the complaint and proceed as outlined.
 - a. Establish a grievance file which will be maintained until such time as the grievance is settled.
 - b. Will consult with both the parent and Parent Coordinator to gather all relevant information concerning the nature, circumstance desired, results of the grievance, and in addition will determine the outcome of the discussion of the grievance.
 - c. Will serve as a mediator while the grievance is settled.
3. Secure a written response to the grievance from the Parent Coordinator. If the grievance cannot be settled by the Head Start Director to the satisfaction of the parent or representative, the Head Start Director will advise the parent of their rights to appeal the decision to the Executive Director.
4. Again, the Head Start Director will act as mediator by presenting the grievance and its settlement to this point. If the grievance cannot be settled by the Executive Director or if the parent is not satisfied with the decision he or she may:
5. Appeal the decision of the Executive Director by having all grievances and settlements presented to the Policy Council and again, the Head Start Director will act as mediator by presenting the grievance and settlement of the Policy Council.
6. Parent/community volunteers may attend Policy Council Meetings upon request of the Council.

- a. Parents appealing grievance decisions to the Policy Council will have the right to be heard before the Policy Council upon request of the Council. This right shall include the right to present statements and evidence, to answer questions, and to be represented by members of the parent body.
- b. Hearing will be presided over by the Chairman of the Policy Council. The hearing will be informally conducted and technical rules of evidence will not apply. A quorum must be present. The Policy Council will have the right to call its own witnesses. A summary of a signed statement will be accepted for the records. A copy of the summary together with any exception taken hereto will be made available to the parent.
- c. If the parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Policy Council, he or she may:
 - 7. Appeal the decision to the Board of Directors whose determination will be final.
 - a. A grievance in writing must contain sufficient detail to identify and clarify the basis for the grievance and will specify the relief requested by the parent. It should contain the following information:
 - 1. The specific action of the incident on which the grievance is based, the date the action or incident occurred (if known) and the date the parent first learned of the action. (if applicable),
 - 2. The reason on which the parent bases his/her belief that the action was unjustified or that he or she was treated unfairly; or the specific policy, (Organization, Regional Office, other controlling agency) or written Agreements provision which was violated and how it affected the parent.
 - 3. Corrective action desired by the parent.
 - 4. A belief summary of the results of the parent's attempt to obtain satisfactory adjustment.

GRIEVANCE FILE

- 1. Will be initiated by the Head Start Director upon his/her involvement with the grievance and maintained until satisfactory adjustment.
- 2. Will be independent, separate and distinct. The file will contain: The parent's original grievance, the written replies, subsequent appeals to higher authorities and any other action, correspondence of information related to the grievance and to decisions concerning these.

3. This file will be the official mechanism through all steps in the grievance and appeal procedure.

RESPONSE TO GRIEVANCE

1. The Director will ensure that all grievances will be settled at the lowest level possible; also the parent will receive satisfactory adjustment.
2. The Policy Council will ensure that all grievances will be settled within a period of 45 days from the date of filing to the determination of the Policy Council (if needed),
3. Appeals to the Board of Directors will be conducted on nights of regular schedule Board Meetings.

COMPONENT OVERVIEW

Transportation is available to children in the Putnam County Head Start Program using five (5) forty-eight (48) passenger buses.

Bus routes are determined by using the target areas identified in the Community Needs Assessments for the County by which we recruit children for this program.

Pick-up and drop-off points are determined by giving priority to accessibility and the child's safety.

The Head Start Director has the authority to draw and enforce boundaries for transportation with the assistance of the Transportation Coordinator.

IDENTIFICATION

During enrollment parents are required to complete a Transportation Card indicating the address, telephone number, and directions to their home (if needed) to determine, whether transportation is needed and where transportation is to be provided if different from the indicated address.

ROUTES DETERMINATION

After receiving the transportation cards, the first step is to divide them into general area categories. Next, they are further divided by specific street categories. These are then aligned by logical sequence for pick-up. Care is taken to ensure the number of children does not exceed the bus capacity and that the children are not riding on a route for an extended period of time.

Previously used routes and stops are used wherever possible. Safety and accessibility are always prime concerns and determining factors. Once routes are decided, bus monitors and drivers are assigned. Tentative routes and time are determined during the initial phase prior to the bus and driver assignments. Assigned bus drivers will drive the route at least three times to determine the exact time required to complete the route and the proper stop location for safety. Adjustment in route, location, and time will be made as necessary and when possible throughout the year.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Initial notification to parents is made by letter advising them of the bus number, route locations, and time of pick-up and drop-off. Changes requested after the initial assignments will be made in writing (Bus Change Form) by the parent to the Transportation Coordinator. A copy of the bus change (time and/or stops) will be provided to the parent, teacher, and bus driver. Changes requested by parents will be effective at least twenty-four (24) hours after the request.

BUS CHANGE REQUEST PROCEDURE

Parents requesting changes after initial bus routes are determined must complete a bus change request form at the Head Start Center. The Transportation Coordinator will make every effort to satisfy the request by placing the child at the most convenient and safe stop. Under extreme circumstances new stops will be added with the routes and times being adjusted accordingly. All route changes must be coordinated with the driver to ensure safety, accessibility, and additional time required if appropriate.

AGREEMENT FORMS

PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START BUS AGREEMENT

Classroom Number _____

As the parent/legal guardian of _____, who attends Putnam County Head Start Program. I understand that it is my responsibility to make sure that my son/daughter is picked up each day by the designated time from the bus stop and/or Center by a previously designated and authorized (See Authorization Form) adult)18 years or older).

If for any reason I or my designated authorized adult representative is unable to pick up my child/children from the bus stop by the designated time. I understand that the Head Start bus will transport my child back to the Center and it then becomes my responsibility to pick up my son/daughter from the Center no later than 2:30 p.m. If the child/children do not ride the bus, he or she must be picked up from the Center no later than 2:15 p.m. If the parent works or attends school, a later pick up time must be arranged with the Head Start Director before the child/children is brought back to the Center.

I further understand that if I have not contacted the Head Start Director or other Head Start Administrative Staff on duty to make an acceptable arrangement to get my child/children home before 5:00 p.m. (bus riders) and 2:15 p.m. (pick up/non bus rider), the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) and the Putnam County Police Department will be notified. DFACS will be alerted at 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. that emergency foster care may be needed and criminal neglect charges may be brought against the parent/legal guardian for failing to pick up the child/children.

If no satisfactory arrangements are made by the above stated times, I realize that my son/daughter will be placed in police custody and taken to the Department of Family and Children services for an emergency foster care.

In the event that my child/children are left or brought back to the Head Start Center, three or more times; I understand that my child may be suspended from the bus for a minimum of three (3) days and may be dropped from the program and the proper authorities will be notified.

I have read and I agree to the follow the above procedure in order that my child may participate in the Head Start Program.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Putnam County Head Start

162 Old Glenwood Springs Rd. Eatonton GA 31024
Main Office- Tel: 706-485-8081 Fax: 706-485-8424

Ms. Christel Nelson, Director

Transportation Agreement

This is to certify that I give Putnam County Head Start permission to transport my child: _____, from: _____

Eatonton GA 3102 at _____ (a.m.) to Putnam County Head Start Program located at 162 Old Glenwood Springs Rd. Eatonton GA 31024 at _____ (a.m.)

In the afternoon my child will be transported from Putnam County Head Start Program located at 162 Old Glenwood Springs Rd. Eatonton GA 31024 at _____ (p.m.) and delivered to _____ Eatonton GA 31024 at _____ (p.m.) on the days indicated by my mark below:

___ Monday ___ Tuesday ___ Wednesday ___ Thursday ___ Friday

_____, is authorized to receive my child. In the event the authorized person is not present to receive my child; the following procedures are to be followed: _____

In the event my child is not to be transported as outlined above, I agree to notify the Putnam County Head Start Program at 706-485-8081.

Parent Signature, _____ Date: _____

**PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START
FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

Between

PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START and _____
(PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN of (CHILD))

PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START will provide:

- Full-day child development/education services to Child on non-holiday weekdays during the nine month school year;
- Health and dental screening for Child and assistance with treatment as necessary and appropriate;
- Mental health screening for Child and assist with treatment services as necessary and appropriate;
- Nutritious meals and snacks to Child and nutrition assessment and counseling as needed;
- Parent education and involvement opportunities on a regular and ongoing basis;
- Transition services as Child progresses to public school or other child development programs;
- Comprehensive family support services to the Child's entire family, including the identification of goals, objectives, and action steps necessary to accomplish them;
- An opportunity for Child to brush teeth daily.

PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START may:

- Provide transportation for Child for field trips or medical and dental emergencies. I understand that additional field trip permission forms will need to be returned so that my child may participate;
- Disclose Child's health, family, educational and other records to the HEAD START program, its agents and employees, and/or to providers of human services for the provision of services;
- Utilize photographs of Child for training, advertising or publicity purposes published in media and whatsoever including electronic publication;
- Disclose records related to Child and family for the purpose of review and inspection by auditors, monitors, or other representatives of organizations that provide funding for the goods and services received by Child or myself in connection with the HEAD START program.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (Continued)

NOTICE: BY COMPLETING THIS FORM, YOU ARE ENROLLING YOUR CHILD IN A CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ENROLLMENT, YOU MUST ABIDE BY THE REGULATIONS ESTABLISHED BY HEAD START.

*The parent/guardian consents and agrees to the following
(Please initial each statement for which you are providing consent.):*

The Parent is expected to:

- _____ Update emergency and contact information on the HEAD START emergency card whenever necessary;
- _____ Provide the Child's health history, including medical conditions and other information as requested;
- _____ Participate in developing Child's educational goals and family goals;
- _____ Participate in home visits during the school year by the classroom teacher and social service staff;
- _____ Ensure Child's regular attendance and contact the center when absences are necessary;
- _____ Abide by HEAD START tardy and late pick-up policies.
- _____ Follow through with plans of action formed in conjunction with HEAD START staff;
- _____ Cooperate and work in partnership with all HEAD START components that may interface with Child or Child's family;
- _____ Participate in center parent meetings, volunteering, and family activities.

The Parent/Guardian understands that HEAD START services may be suspended, terminated, or transferred should any of the following conditions exist:

- Child presents a health or safety risk to himself/herself or others;*
- Parents/Guardian's words or actions (or the words or actions of the child's other family members or representatives) are perceived to represent a physical threat to staff, other parents, children or volunteers;*
- Misrepresentation related to the information concerning household or family structure, employment or family income, or a major change in that information that is not promptly reported to HEAD START.*

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____