



Division of Early Childhood Programs and Services

Head Start Parent Handbook

What Parents Need to Know





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Vision

The Calvert County Board of Education ensures excellence in education for our students through vigilant oversight, sound policies and meaningful community engagement.

Mission

The Calvert County Public Schools Head Start program mission is to provide a quality program with an integrated system of comprehensive, multidisciplinary services, to participating families and eligible children ages 3 to 5. Calvert County Public Schools Head Start recognizes parents/caregivers as the child's primary educator, nurturer, and advocate promoting school readiness and strengthening the capacity of parents/caregivers to become involved in program decision making and participating as volunteers.

School Administration

Daniel D. Curry, ED.D.
Superintendent of School

Mr. Anthony Navarro
Assistant Superintendent of Administration

Ms. Diane Workman
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Letter to Head Start Parents/Guardians

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Head Start! We are excited to have your child in our class. We are looking forward to an exciting and rewarding year. We have so many great things planned and a lot of ideas to share with your children. I know how much you care about your child's education, and I look forward to collaborating with you to help your child reach his or her maximum potential.

At Head Start your child will engage in learning experiences that promote growth and development in the areas of language and literacy, small and large muscle development, self-help, social-emotional and physical health.

We believe that you are the most important person in your child's life and we look forward to working with you throughout the year.

While at Head Start children will think, build, and create and as this process can be messy, it is a good idea to send in a change of clothes. Children will also have the opportunity to eat and snack with their peers in a family style setting and therefore will not need food sent from home as it will be provided by Head Start.

This is going to be a wonderful year and we look forward to getting to know and working with you closely during the coming year.

Sincerely,

Theresa Booker
CCPS Head Start Coordinator

Head Start Program

Calvert County Public Schools Head Start Program offers a program for three-year-olds that features a home visiting component as well as community play groups. Four-year-olds are introduced to a school environment as well as the center-based program that Head Start is known for.

Head Start is located at the following schools: Sunderland Elementary in the northern region of the county; Barstow Elementary in the central region of the county; and Patuxent Elementary in the southern region of the county.

Three-year-old program 36 participants received 90-minute weekly home visits with a Head Start Home Visitor who provided curriculum, books, and supplies for fun and easy lessons. Parents then spent time daily helping their child to develop school readiness skills. Group socialization was provided in each community. As a result, parents were empowered to become their child's first teacher. Participation in the three-year-old program guarantees enrollment for qualifying families in the four-year-old program. To qualify, children must be **three by September 1 and meet the Head Start income requirements.**

Four-year-old program 136 participants were offered half-day Head Start and half-day Pre-K instruction for a full day of services Monday through Friday. Families were also offered before and after care through Calvert County Public Schools. Additionally, children received round trip transportation from home to school and free breakfast, lunch, and snacks. To qualify, children must be **four by September 1 and meet the Head Start income requirements.**

In order to begin this new journey with the Head Start Program, parents need to provide the following information:

- Child's original birth certificate
- Child's Physical
- Original Social Security Card
- Proof of Income
- Valid State-Approved Picture Identification
- Immunization Record
- Proof of Residency in Calvert County
- Proof of Medical Insurance
- Child's Current IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or recent information regarding child's special need (if applicable)

Parents may register their children by contacting our main office at 443-550-8062. We, at Head Start, are excited to begin our new program serving the families of Calvert County.

Head Start Staff

Dr. Cheryl Yates	Executive Director
Theresa Booker	Director
Rachel Dyson	Educational Program Specialist
LaVonya Echols	Family Service Worker
Laura Parks	Office Assistant
Chelsea Jordan	Data Entry
Jennifer Kennedy	Home Visitor
Dalys Innocenti	Home Visitor
Brittany Vermes	Home Visitor

Barstow Elementary

Sylvia Parker	Family Resource Worker
Nicole Simmons	Instructor
Tiffany Gray	Instructional Assistant
Alphonso Willett Jr.	Instructional Assistant
Endia Butler	Transition Assistant
Dorene Chase-Sollers	Transition Assistant
Shamekia Chittams	Transition Assistant

Patuxent Elementary

Ann Hough	Family Resource Worker
Camille Tarr	Instructor
Naughty'a Younger	Instructor
Deana Davis	Instructional Assistant
Kim Underwood	Instructional Assistant
Mary Miller	Instructional Assistant
Lamar Johnson	Instructional Assistant
LaShonda Scott	Transition Assistant
Bernice Mackall	Transition Assistant
Clarice Maldonado	Transition Assistant
Danielle Pinto	Transition Assistant

Sunderland Elementary

Suzanne Saulten	Family Resource Worker
Jennifer Nelson	Instructor
Christina Diamond	Instructional Assistant
Crystal DuMond	Instructional Assistant
Amanda Adams	Transition Assistant
Kelsey Cox	Transition Assistant

Nondiscrimination Statement

Calvert County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, familial status, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

- Director of Student Services
- Director of Human Resources
443-550-8000

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the Office of Civil Rights Complaint Assessment System at: <http://ocrcas.ed.gov> or call 1-800-421-3481.

Anti-sexual, Anti-racial and Anti-disability Harassment Statement

Discrimination can manifest itself in behaviors such as bullying, harassment, or intimidation of individuals.

Calvert County Public Schools does not tolerate any form of harassment including, but not limited to, sexual, racial, or disability. Any individual (student, employee, or community member) who believes that he or she has been subjected to any form of harassment is encouraged to report the allegation of harassment. Students, parents and community members may report allegations of harassment to:

Ms. Kimberly Roof
Director of Student Services
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Employees may report allegations of harassment to:

Ms. Laveeta Hutchins
Director of Human Resources
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Calvert County Public Schools is committed to conducting a prompt investigation for any allegation of harassment. If harassment has occurred, the individual will be disciplined promptly. Disciplinary actions for students found to have engaged in any form of harassment may result in suspension or expulsion. Disciplinary actions for employees found to have engaged in any form of harassment may result in suspension or termination.

Calvert County Public Schools encourages all students, parents, employees, and community members to work together to prevent any form of harassment.

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the Office of Civil Rights Complaint Assessment System at: <http://ocrcas.ed.gov> or call 1-800-421-3481.

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Program Design and Management

The Head Start supervisor coordinates the implementation of grant requirements with the Policy Council (PC), Region III Office, and Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS). The above mentioned groups also maintains and nurtures contacts with other agencies that provide services to meet the needs of low-income families and their preschool children. The director and coordinator assess, evaluate, and update the program's goals, objectives, and outcomes to support the needs of Prekindergarten/Head Start parents.

Policy Council

Each Head Start school elects a parent delegate. Delegates work to keep other parents informed and help plan activities. New officers are elected in December and take office in January.

Parent delegates meet monthly at 6:30 p.m.

Meetings begin with orientation/training sessions in late September or early October. The budget meeting is held during the meeting in October and regular monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month thereafter.

Policy Council Officers

The elected officer of the Policy Council (PC) set the agenda for the monthly meetings and make recommendation to the total body.

Chairperson

Vice Chairpersons

Treasurer

Secretary

Community Action Board Representatives

Maryland State Head Start Representatives

PC Delegate for your Center:

Phone No:

PC Alternate for your Center:

Phone No:

Some out-of-pocket expenses are paid to PC representatives from the program Parent Activity Fund. The council updates the budget annually and determines the amount of reimbursement. All parents are invited to attend and to participate in the PC meetings. However, only elected representatives may vote.

The PC has subcommittees that plan and conduct activities related to the Prekindergarten/Head Start service areas, such as social services, education, disabilities services, and health. Other subcommittees focus on issues related to program operation.

Responsibilities of the Policy Council

- Prepares a budget for the Parent Activity Fund
- Participates in the program evaluations
- Supports action on child and family legislation
- Arranges programs with guest speakers
- Holds family outings and picnics
- Helps prepare the program budget and the project proposal
- Serves on service area committees
- Develops plans for recruiting children

School Readiness

Head Start provides a wide range of services to support children's readiness for school. School readiness means that children have the skills, abilities, and attitudes to make them successful in school. Parents are children's first and most important teachers. Parents, teachers, program staff members, and other family and community members all play a key part in preparing children for school.

Education and Early Childhood Development

Children do a great deal of playing in the Prekindergarten/Head Start program. Play is the work of small children; this is the way they learn. As each child prepares for success in kindergarten, he/she will do the following:

- Develop small and large muscles
- Listen to stories and look at books
- Paint, draw, and create
- Explore science materials
- Play house and act out stories and songs
- Listen, dance, sing, and make music
- Work puzzles and play games
- Recognize names, colors, and numbers
- Learn to share and cooperate

Head Start promotes children's emotional, intellectual, social, and physical growth.

A Typical Head Start Day

- **Opening**
Welcome song
Weather
Calendar
- **Whole-group Literacy Block**
Books and stories
Songs and rhymes
Alphabet
Language
- **Small-group Literacy Block**
Oral language
Concepts about print
Phonemic awareness
Letter knowledge
- **Center time**
Dramatic play
Literacy centers
Blocks-enhanced with props
Math/manipulatives
Science projects
Cooking
- **Mathematics Block**
Number concepts
Sorting and patterns
- **Outdoor play**
Physical motor
Social activities
- **Lunch**

Field trips expand the children's cultural experiences, broaden their horizons, and increase understanding of their own environments.

As a part of the safety curriculum, children will be taught personal safety techniques, including giving them permission to say "no" to adults, and encouraging children to tell an adult whom they trust when they feel their safety is threatened. Parents need to know that Maryland state law requires staff to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

Head Start's speech/language pathologists and psychologists have special early childhood education training; they provide services for children and families.

Play clothes are appropriate for Head Start. Sometimes children spill things on their clothing, get wet, or have accidents. Parents are requested to send a change of clothing labeled with your child's name to help keep him/her dry. Raincoats, boots, gloves, and other types of clothes need to be marked to prevent mix-ups.

Attendance

In order for each child to receive the most benefits from his/her Head Start experience, regular attendance is necessary. If your child is sick, call the school or Head Start Office and leave a message for the teacher. When your child is able to return, send a note with the child to explain his/her absences. Repeated lateness weakens your child's educational and social experience in Prekindergarten/Head Start. It is important that he/she attend school every day and arrive on time. Please keep your child's teacher or your family service worker informed of any illness or emergency. If your child is absent 10 nonconsecutive days in a month, you will be asked to meet with the family service worker to discuss the attendance issue.

Home Visits and Parent-Teacher Conferences

A Head Start Staff member will visit your home to meet with you before school starts in August. Head Start families will receive another home visit in February. Also, you will have two conferences-one per year. Parents can arrange to meet with their child's teacher at other times by calling the school to schedule an appointment.

Snow Days or Emergencies

In case of bad weather, CCPS schools may be closed for the entire day or school opening may be delayed. If school is closed all day, or if there is an early closing of school, all evening activities are canceled automatically, and there will be no Policy Council meeting or Adult Education classes. If school opening is delayed for two hours: see **Procedures for Changes in School Schedules in Emergency Situations.**

Procedures for Changes in School Schedules in Emergency Situations

- I. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will determine when schools will be closed for emergency purposes. In cases of inclement weather, the Director of Transportation and/or his designee will, after conferring with the Director of School Facilities, make a recommendation to the Superintendent regarding the status of schools.
 - A. Emergency Two-Hour Delayed Opening
 - i. Every effort will be made to make the decision to delay school opening prior to 5:00 a.m.
 - ii. Every effort will be made to begin notification to the public and CCPS personnel no later than 5:15 a.m.
 - iii. All school vehicles/buses will begin their a.m. trips two hours later than usual, as appropriate.
 - iv. Non-public school vehicles/buses will begin their a.m. trips two hours later than usual, as appropriate, unless the route is through another jurisdiction where schools have been closed for the day. In this case, non-public transportation is cancelled.
 - v. A.M. prekindergarten and special prekindergarten will be cancelled.
 - vi. A.M. Head Start will be picked up two hours late.
 - vii. P.M. prekindergarten students will be picked up at the regular time.
 - B. Emergency Early Dismissal
 - i. P.M. prekindergarten and Head Start will be cancelled.
 - ii. A.M. prekindergarten program, as well as students in the a.m. Head Start program who reside within the school's attendance area, will not be taken home at their usual times. They will remain at school, be provided lunch, and go home with students in grades K-5.
 - iii. Students who are bussed into a Head Start program from another school's attendance area will leave school at 11:00AM on the bus serving regional programs.
 - iv. If any jurisdiction along the route to or from a non-public school closes early, the school bus/vehicle under contract to CCPS will return students home early, even if CCPS remains in session for a full student day.
 - v. Unless otherwise announced all afterschool activities are cancelled when there is an emergency early dismissal.
 - C. Emergency Closing of Schools for the Day

- i. Every effort will be made to make the decision to close schools prior to 5:00 a.m.
- ii. Every effort will be made to begin notification to the public and CCPS personnel no later than 5:15 a.m.

School closing information is broadcast on local radio and television stations, and the CCPS website www.calvertnet.k12.md.us

Early Release Days

Head Start classes are scheduled differently on early release days. Your child's teacher will inform you of the times of departure. Also, a reminder will be sent before these early-release days occur:

See Current Year Calendar

Disabilities Services

Head Start is a federally funded program and mandates that children with disabilities must occupy 10 percent of the program's enrollment slots. Children with disabilities are coded and have one or more of the following medical diagnoses: deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind, speech impaired, visually impaired, intellectually disabled, multi-handicapped, orthopedically impaired, brain injured, autistic, and developmentally delayed. In addition to the child having a disability, there must be an educational impact, that is, the disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn.

Children with disabilities share Head Start classrooms with those who have no disabilities (inclusion) and receive all services and privileges enjoyed by all Prekindergarten/Head Start children. Classroom activities and experiences are adapted to accommodate children with disabilities whenever and wherever need dictates. Parents, educators, and children enjoy the inclusion model, as it is an instance when diversity is recognized and celebrated. Members of staff answer questions parents have about their child's development. Also, staff members provide parents with at-home activities that assist their child with a particular area of need.

If, through the screenings (educational, speech/language, vision, dental and hearing), they find that a child has special needs, parents will be notified of the screening results. Services needed may be provided through the Head Start or other CCPS programs. If your child needs more services or services other than those provided by the sources noted above, Head Start staff will help parents locate them.

Do you have any questions or concerns about your child's development?

- **Speech and Language:** Is he/she able to speak and understand language?
- **Cognitive:** Is he/she learning and developing in the same way as other children his/her age?
- **Gross and Fine Motor:** Is he/she awkward or clumsy in walking or using their hands?
- **Social/Emotional:** Does he/she get along with other children and adults?
- **Attention:** Does he/she have difficulty sitting still or paying attention?
- **Hearing or vision:** Do you have any concerns?

Notify your teacher if you have concerns about your child, or call the Head Start office at 443-550-8062.

Health Services

As a requirement for Head Start, all students must have a physical examination, state and federal required immunizations, and a dental examination. If your child does not have a source of health care to receive the physical examination and immunizations, please let your child's teacher, family resource worker, or the school nurse know so that we may assist you in getting these services. You may be financially eligible for state or local health and nutrition programs for your family.

All immunizations can be obtained at Calvert County Health Department. Please keep a record of the immunizations your child receives.

During the school year, your child will receive screenings for dental, hearing, vision, height and weight.

Head Start children receive a school breakfast and lunch each day at no cost to families.

Cooking and tasting activities in class give Head Start children other experiences with new foods and good nutrition. Parents are invited to help plan and cook with the children.

As a volunteer or visitor, Head Start parents are invited to share lunch with their children when they come to school

Family and Community Services

The Head Start program requires that each federally eligible family develop a Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) with a designated Head Start staff member. The FPA is a process for determining family strengths and needs and assisting families in achieving their personal goals.

Head Start staff form partnerships with other community agencies and link parents to support services such as employment, housing, food, clothing, family literacy, domestic violence, and substance abuse resources. Families are encouraged to complete this agreement to avoid duplication and coordinate services between Prekindergarten/Head Start and community agencies.

Emergency and crisis intervention is provided by Prekindergarten/Head Start family service worker, _____, assigned to your child's class. You may contact him/her at the Head Start office at 443-550-8062. Each family will receive a community resource directory to assist them with current and future needs. Both individual and family counseling are provided by the Calvert County Health Department. All information is confidential.

Each month, parents are invited to assist the family service worker and the teaching team in planning a parent education workshop at their children's school. Workshop topics include child growth and development, health and safety, parent involvement in basic skills, and personal safety.

Parent Involvement

In order to have a high-quality Head Start program, parents and staff need to share their talents, knowledge, time and energy so that children can receive the maximum benefits. Parents who participate in the program show their children that learning and sharing are important. Parents participate in the following ways:

- Helping to make decisions about the nature and operation of the program
- Electing one parent to be the center representative at the PC meetings
- Attending the PC meetings
- Organizing and running center meetings

- Planning ways to help the center and the program to operate effectively
- Working on the program budget and project proposal
- Helping with the annual program evaluation

Working in the classroom as a volunteer, observer, or paid employee, by doing the following:

- Visiting the classroom
- Chaperoning field trips
- Volunteering regularly in the classroom
- Gaining employment as a paraeducator, substitute paraeducator, family service worker, etc.

Developing activities for parents as follows:

- Planning and carrying out family activities
- Working with county and nonprofit organizations to improve communities
- Using community resources

Working with their children at home in cooperation with the Prekindergarten/Head Start staff as follows:

- Using games or activities at home that encourage children to learn
- Using techniques learned about child development

Volunteers

Parent participation in Head Start is extremely important and is encouraged. Parents support their children in Head Start by visiting, observing and helping in the classroom. Also, parents help by going on field trips, making suggestions to improve the program, and preparing classroom materials at home. If you can help as a regular volunteer, talk with your child's teacher and schedule the day of the week when you are available to volunteer in the class. If daytime hours are limited, you can discuss other ways you can help at home. Call the Head Start office at 443-550-8062 for more information.

Calvert County Public Schools uses Keep-n-Track for visitors and volunteers sign in and sign out. Since July 1, 2010, all visitors and volunteers are screened each time they enter a school or facility. All volunteers will need to complete an Online Volunteer Application before they may begin service as a volunteer in any school or schools. If completing an application online is not possible, paper applications are available in all schools. Applications must be submitted after the prospective volunteer has completed all parts of the application process. A signature will be required on all paper applications and the applicant will need to sign an Attestation Letter that he or she has read Calvert County Public Schools: Volunteering in Our Schools. ***Before volunteering in the classroom, please make sure you are entered into the Keep-n-Track System.***

Transportation

Please bring your child to the bus each morning and meet the bus each afternoon. If you are unable to meet the bus and you have chosen another responsible adult to do so (e.g., child care provider, grandparent), please notify your child's teacher or paraeducator in writing. If you or your designee fails to meet your child, he/she will be returned to school. If you or your designee fails to meet the bus three times, you must meet with the family resource worker.

Parent/Center Committee Meetings

Parents, teaching staff, and family resource workers cooperate to plan parent meetings that provide information and fun.

Your child will bring home invitations inviting you to attend parent/center committee meetings held at the school or at the community-based site. Often, child care is provided, or parents take turns caring for younger children during meeting time.

Each Head Start class has a parent committee to which all parents belong. The center committee meets monthly for the following:

- Assisting parents in getting acquainted
- Making decisions about the Head Start class volunteers and field trips, and assisting in planning the best possible program for students
- Providing two-way communication between the school and the Prekindergarten/Head Start program
- Sending/receiving concerns and information to and from the PC
 - Conducting center business
 - Share information on ----
 - how children grow and develop
 - enjoyable ways to help children learn
 - how to stretch food dollars and cook nutritious meals
 - crafts and skills
 - helping students learn at home

Calvert County Public Schools Head Start is a family program. We need your help in the classroom, on the PC, and in the total program.

Other Information

Healthy Families/HIPPY

Healthy Families/HIPPY is an exciting program for families with children from birth to 3 years old. The program provides many of the same services as Head Start, and some that are special to Healthy Families/HIPPY.

For more information about the program:

Contact: Healthy Families Office 443-550-8050

Child Care

For a referral for a high-quality child care provider in your area, call LOCATE, 877-261-0060.

Also, you may apply for financial assistance to pay for child care through the Purchase of Child Care/Child Care Subsidy (POC/CCS) 443-550-6900.

Child Care for students dually placed between Prekindergarten and Head Start is available at the school for information contact Calvert County Public Schools Child Care Central Office at 443-550-8041.

Words Often Used in Prekindergarten/Head Start

ACYF: Administration for Children, Youth, and Families – a federal agency that oversees the Head Start Program

Community representative: A person who serves with the Policy Council (PC) but is not a parent of a current Prekindergarten/Head Start child; often parents who have had children in the program previously or a representative of an organization or county agency.

Curriculum: The instruction framework that supports children’s learning.

Family Partnership Agreement (FPA): An opportunity for families, with support from their family service worker, to set family goals and develop a written plan with steps for follow-up and completion.

Grant: Money provided to finance the Head Start program, as described in a written proposal.

Grantee agency: The agency that receives funds for ACYF to finance the Head Start program--- Calvert County Public Schools.

Policy Council: The parent/center committee representatives who assist in policy making for the Prekindergarten/Head Start program.

Federal Review: the tri-annual Head Start program assessment conducted by the federal government.

School Readiness: A child has the skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for school success.

Self-Assessment: The program self-evaluation process conducted by parents and staff annually.