



KCHS Centers

Danville
808 East St.
Danville, OH 43014
(740) 599-7122

Fredericktown
124 High St.
Fredericktown, OH 43019
(740) 694-1188

Gambier Child Care Center
119 Meadow Lane
Gambier, OH 43022
(740) 427-2519

New Hope Early Education Center
11700 Upper Gilchrist Rd.
Mount Vernon, OH 43050
(740) 397-9304

Northgate
20 Northgate Dr.
Mount Vernon, OH 43050
(740) 397-3454



The Ohio Department of Children and Youth has awarded the Step Up to Quality Gold Award, which is the highest possible rating, to all five KCHS centers for exceeding state licensing standards and providing high-quality early childhood services.



KNOX COUNTY HEAD START INC.

School Family Guide

2025-2026

Funded in part by:



United Way of Knox County



KCHS Administrative Offices
790 Fairgrounds Rd., Ste. 200
Mount Vernon, OH 43050
(740) 397-1344

Welcome to Knox County Head Start, Inc.

A National Head Start Center of Excellence

Knox County Head Start, Inc. (KCHS) was founded in 1965 as Kokosing Day Care Centers. KCHS was one of the original Head Start programs in the United States, affiliated in the late 1960s with Kno-Ho-Co Community Action, and reorganized as a stand-alone non-profit, Kokosing Early Childhood Centers, in 1978. In 2001, the agency's name was changed to Knox County Head Start, Inc. 2025 marks 60 years of service to Knox County!

Knox County Head Start offers comprehensive early education and care services throughout Knox County, with centers in Danville, Fredericktown, Gambier, and Mount Vernon, and home-based education across the county. KCHS provides high-quality Early Head Start and Head Start, child care, parent education, family services, health, mental health, and nutrition services.

In September 2010, KCHS was recognized as a National Head Start Center of Excellence for our partnerships in support of Conscious Discipline® and Conscious Discipline for Parents™. We are one of the first ten programs in the United States to achieve this designation. There are only nineteen Head Start Centers of Excellence in the United States.

We reference the “School Family” repeatedly throughout this guide, including in its name, the School Family Guide. This language comes to us from Conscious Discipline®, and its founder, Dr. Becky Bailey. Dr. Bailey encourages us to move beyond the traditional “factory” model of education that is dependent upon imposing standardized efforts with specific timelines for all children. This model conflicts with what we know about human development: that we all learn best in the context of healthy relationships, and that we may develop on our own timeline. Dr. Bailey encourages us to use the metaphor of a happy family – not to replace each child’s family – but to signify that in our school we are focused on creating a positive school climate that promotes the healthiest development for each child, for each educator working with children, and for families engaged in our programs.

A core value of Head Start is the strong belief that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children. We know that a child’s early years are critically important. Each child is rapidly developing; he or she is learning to talk, to manage his or her body, and to get along with others. Each child is a unique individual who develops at his or her own pace. By matching activities and expectations to his or her developmental age, Knox County Head Start educators partner with families to support each child’s need to learn about and to master the environment while building on his or her strengths.

By providing family-style meals and comfortable spaces for sitting, our warm setting allows children to feel confident, safe, and at home. In this secure and engaging environment, they can begin to master the skills necessary for learning in kindergarten and success in life.

Our programs are supported at the federal level through direct grant funding of Head Start and Early Head Start programs from the US Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families. The Ohio Department of Education provides funding for food service under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), passed through from the US Department of Agriculture. Funding for children receiving childcare subsidy is provided under contract with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY).

Locally, KCHS benefits from generous support from the United Way of Knox County, the Ariel Foundation, and the Knox County Foundation. We are thankful for these funders and for our partners, including the Knox County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Knox Public Health, Behavioral Healthcare Partners of Central Ohio, the Freedom Center, Kenyon College, the Ariel Foundation, the Knox County Department of Job and Family Services, the Knox County Educational Service Center, Mount Vernon City Schools, and The Village Network.

We hope this year brings success for you and your family. Thank you for trusting us to care for and educate your child.

Our Leaders, Our Mission

Administration

Executive Director.....	Peg Tazewell
Associate Director.....	Jessica Collins
Fiscal Officer.....	Felisha Goldsmith
Human Resources Director.....	Julie Mickley
Fiscal Program Coordinator.....	April Hull
Fiscal Specialist.....	Andrea Adams
Fiscal Assistant.....	Emily Dudgeon
Administrative and Community Engagement Coordinator.....	Danielle Tedrow-Moffat
Administrative Assistant/Receptionist.....	Aimee Chapman

Coordinators & Specialists

Education Coordinator	Kristin Wagner
Family Engagement Coordinator.....	Susan Trent
ERSEA Coordinator (Enrollment)	Anna Yoder
Recruitment & Health Data Specialist.....	Mary Martin
School Nurse.....	Kathy Bomba
Child Development Specialist (Teacher Mentor).....	Christie Perkins
Child Development Specialist (Teacher Mentor)	Hillary Ramsey
Parent Support Initiative (PSI) Coordinator.....	Susan McDonald

Mission Statement

Committed to the future of Knox County and its changing and diverse needs, Knox County Head Start works in partnership with the community to provide quality early childhood education, childcare, and family services. Our purpose is to engage children, families, and staff in reaching their full potential.

Values Statements

We value families: fathers, mothers, and primary caregivers as the first and most important teachers and advocates for their children.

We strive to make a difference through the education, care, and support of our children, families, and staff by:

- Committing to provide quality services.
- Hiring, training, and retaining competent staff
- Providing opportunities for personal and professional growth
- Developing and nurturing trusting personal and professional relationships built on honesty and open communication.
- Acknowledging and seeking diversity through our program design
- Creating and maintaining healthy and productive community partnerships

Program Options

Your child will be enrolled in one of the many program options Knox County Head Start has to offer. The following pages share our program options. If you are interested in a different option for your child, please reach out to your family advocate or the ERSEA (enrollment), Data and Grants Coordinator.

Enrollment

KCHS is excited that you are part of our School Family™. As a parent or caregiver of a child in our program, you have met the eligibility requirements for enrollment. You will be asked to update your Child's Enrollment and Health Information (Form JFS 01234) yearly and submit any other information necessary to keep your child's enrollment information current. Annual updates are required by state licensing.

Recruitment for all age groups will continue throughout the program year. If there are no openings available, your child will be placed on a waiting list at their respective center.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

CHILD ENROLLMENT NOTES:

Your child's file must have a completed Child Enrollment and Health Information for Child Care form on file prior to his/her first day of class.

All children enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start programs must have on file:

- Age Verification
- Current Physical
- Current Immunization Record

Withdrawal Policy

When withdrawing your child from a full-day, full-year childcare classroom, a written two-week notice must be given to the Center Administrator. Families will be charged a withdrawal fee equal to two weeks' tuition for withdrawing a child or children without prior notification.

Your child may be withdrawn from the program if attendance or participation falls below 90%. (See Attendance Policy). We will work with you to determine barriers and engage in a Family Partnership Agreement to support the education process. If your child is withdrawn due to lack of participation, he or she will be placed on the waitlist and may be eligible for re-enrollment when there is an opportunity available.

Early Head Start

Early Head Start (EHS) is a federally funded community-based program for low-income families. Its mission is simple: to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, to enhance the development of very young children, and to promote healthy family functioning. EHS serves pregnant moms and infants and toddlers with prenatal, home-based, or center-based services year-round.

If your child is enrolled in an Early Head Start program, he or she will remain eligible for the program until he or she turns three years old. Seven months prior to your child's third birthday, you will be asked to update enrollment information. You will be requested to provide your current income prior to transitioning to a Head Start program. Your family advocate or home educator will work with you to review and update all forms for preschool, including the DJFS Child's Enrollment & Health Information form.

Full-Day, Full-Year Early Head Start and Head Start with Child Care

Full-day/full-year (FD/FY) Early Head Start, Head Start, and child care services are educationally based and support the healthy development of the whole child. Services are provided for children ages six weeks to five years at centers located in Fredericktown, Gambier, and Mount Vernon. KCHS' Gambier Center provides school-age services, including before- and after-school care, and a school-age summer camp.

If your child is enrolled in the full-day, full-year Head Start, Early Head Start, or child care program, he or she will remain eligible for those services until he or she is eligible for kindergarten, as long as all required eligibility requirements have been met. These requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Current year's income does not exceed the federal income guidelines (EHS to HS or 3rd-year HS children).
- The Ohio Department of Children and Youth Child Care application is up-to-date and renewed as needed.
- You are eligible for full-time child care reimbursement, and your child's attendance is consistent.
- Your payments or co-payments are current.

School-Year-Based Head Start Classes*

Head Start (HS) offers comprehensive, federally funded preschool in half-day and six-and-a-half-hour school-year-based classrooms and via home-based services. We prepare children for kindergarten while providing nutritious meals as well as educational and social/emotional development, focusing on health, mental health, dental support, and family engagement. *(*Please note the schedule for these classrooms may be modified due to excessive illness or staffing concerns.)*

If your child is enrolled in the half-day, 6.5-hour, or home-based Head Start program, he or she may remain eligible in the program until he or she is eligible for kindergarten, if your family continues to be Head Start eligible. If your child is age-eligible for a third year of Head Start, you will be asked to provide the previous year's income.



Enrollment Note:

Please note that there is no guarantee of enrollment when transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start if your family does not meet eligibility requirements. Should your child not qualify for Head Start, KCHS will work with you to locate an appropriate preschool program.

Home-Based Program Options

Knox County Head Start offers home-based education services for pregnant moms and parents with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (ages 0-5). Home educators will visit with each parent and child in their homes for 90 minutes each week and help parents support their child's healthy development and create learning opportunities for children using daily routines and materials within the home. Both Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) home education programs offer socialization opportunities at least twice a month to build connections between families and to provide children opportunities to play with other children their age.

The EHS home-based program serves pregnant moms, infants, and toddlers. The HS home-based preschool program may be an option for three-year-olds who are not ready for the classroom, or for children who have severe challenges that prevent their success in the classroom.

The home-based programs:

- Involve parents directly in the education of their children.
- Emphasize supporting and encouraging each family's goals and objectives, attaining and/or strengthening self-sufficiency.
- Strengthen parents' knowledge about the development of their children and help parents to support their child's healthy development.
- Help children grow to their maximum potential physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally with regularly scheduled and developmentally appropriate educational experiences.
- Broaden opportunities for families to learn about techniques and resources to maximize their potential as a family to learn together.

PAC Times (Parent and Child)

Our home-based programming offers multiple socialization events, called Parent and Child (PAC) times, each month for families to gather, bring their child(ren), and participate in activities. These PAC times promote socialization and prepare children for transitioning to the classroom through play and learning.



Partnership & Communication



The Importance of Communication

Communicating regularly with your child's educator, family advocate, and/or center manager is the best way we can partner with you to meet your child's and family's needs. You know your child best, and you can help us learn how to work best with your child. Please bring concerns to your child's educator as soon as you can or speak directly with your child's center manager.

If you have not received a response from your child's educator or their manager, and/or if you are seriously concerned about your child or any issue in the center and want the administration of KCHS to know about it, please use the Parent Communication and Grievance form provided at the center, and available on the agency website (www.knoxheadstart.org). It is important that we know if you have serious concerns about our services – we always want to improve how we serve your family.

How You Can Communicate with Us

- Call, text, or leave a note for any of the staff working with your child and family. These people are:
 - Teacher/home educator
 - Family advocate
 - Center manager
 - Coordinator or Specialist
- Request a meeting with the teacher and/or center manager
- Use the Parent/Community Grievance Communication Form

Some of the Ways We Will Communicate with You

- Classroom mailboxes, family mailboxes, and/or at the front desk in child care centers
- Flyers and notices posted in the center.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.)
- Class Dojo
- Phone calls
- Text messages
- Email
- Home visits
- Family Fun Nights
- School Family™ Roundtables
- Monthly connections
- Flyers
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Incident/Injury Reports
- Symptoms Reports
- Communicable Disease Fact Booklet (see linked booklet)

In the event of an emergency center staff must be able to reach you, or one of your child's emergency contacts. Please be sure your contact information is always kept current.

Keep Us Informed of Changes

Please inform staff members of any changes to your household and contact information. These changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Family member moved in or out
- Phone numbers
- Address
- Email addresses
- Emergency contacts
- Authorized individuals to pick up your child
- A new medical provider, doctor, or dentist
- Employment



Parent/Community Grievance Procedure

Communicating concerns (first steps)

Knox County Head Start, Inc. (KCHS) encourages parent and community input regarding our program. If you have a concern, we ask that you speak directly to your child's teacher or center manager to have your concerns resolved. KCHS employees will document these conversations in Child Plus, our information management system.

If you feel that your concerns are not being addressed by your child's teacher or center manager, you may share concerns directly with Associate Director Jessica Collins (jcollins@knoxheadstart.org), who supervises all center managers. If you consider your concern an emergency, please feel free to contact the Executive Director, Peg Tazewell, by calling (740) 393-6972 or via email at ptazewell@knoxheadstart.org.

Grievance process (if concern not resolved or if immediately raised to grievance)

If we are unable to successfully address your concerns, you may elect to move on to the grievance process. The Parent and Community Grievance Form is available at the center, or you may access the form on our website:

<http://www.knoxheadstart.org>

Procedures for parent and community members to communicate grievances or concerns with KCHS programming are as follows:

1. You may complete the attached form and email, fax, or mail it to the executive director. You may also send the information in an email if that is helpful, or you may phone in the concern, and the staff person taking the call will complete the form and forward it to the executive director. In the absence of the executive director the associate director or human resources director will be designated to oversee this process.
2. Once the executive director or designee receives a grievance, they will make every effort to contact the concerned individual within 48 hours, but at a minimum will be in contact within 10 working days. The executive director will work to resolve the concern.
3. If after 10 working days, the executive director or designee cannot resolve the issue, and the parent or concerned person wishes to move to the next step:
 - a. The executive director will work with the Knox County Head Start Board of Directors and Policy Council to bring together the Grievance Committee to consider the concerns raised.
 - b. This meeting will occur within ten working days, and the committee may elect to interview the individual who filed the grievance, as well as other concerned individuals to resolve the concern.
 - c. The KCHS Grievance Committee, at its discretion and if funds are available, may request the participation of a professional mediator.
 - d. Decisions of the KCHS Grievance Committee are final.

If the concern relates to the violation of a law or risk of danger to a child, the concern will be brought to the attention of KCHS Executive Director immediately.

Parent Code of Conduct

It is the expectation of Knox County Head Start that Head Start, Early Head Start, and child care families will abide by our Code of Conduct.

While on-site:

1. Adults will not leave children unattended in the building or vehicles.
2. All parents, whenever possible, will establish a “hold hand” policy with their children when walking between the parking lot and the building.
3. Visitors will not play loud music in the parking lot or create loud disturbances.
4. All parents and staff will drive at a maximum safe speed of 5 mph while in the Head Start parking lot.
5. All visitors will respect the building, parking lot, grounds, supplies, and equipment and will clean up after themselves and their children while on site.
6. All visitors are to dress appropriately while at school, whether visiting, volunteering in the classroom, or dropping off their children. Please avoid clothing with obscenities or references to drugs/alcohol, or clothing that is revealing.
7. Visitors will not smoke or bring alcohol or other drugs onto the property, including in the parking lot.
8. Visitors will refrain from inappropriate or excessive displays of physical affection with others.
9. All adults will treat ALL others with whom they encounter respect and dignity. They will refrain from loud talking or shouting, cursing, name-calling, quarreling, verbal or physical fighting, making displays of anger, or making rude remarks to staff, children, or other visitors/parents.
10. All adults conduct themselves as a positive role model and set a good example for the children in our care.
11. Adults will refrain from yelling at or hitting their children while on site.
12. All adults will follow the directions of Knox County Head Start Staff, including administrators, teachers, custodial and kitchen staff, and bus drivers and aides.

Parent and family engagement:

1. All parents and authorized adults will make a concentrated effort to keep themselves aware of important Knox County Head Start guidelines and regulations.
2. Parents will be supportive of the goals of the classroom and the school in assisting their child.
3. Parents will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and staff members. Names of children/family members, photos, or video(s) should not be shared with any family outside of their own, without permission.
4. Parents will work to ensure their child arrives on time and attends their scheduled program hours consistently, except for absences outside of their control (illness, travel, etc.)

Social Media and Public Broadcasting:

Our official agency and center or program option pages on Facebook provide a forum to share program information and updates, community resources, and relevant news stories. While we encourage you to engage and interact on our Facebook pages, we also ask that posts be respectful of our students and staff.

Knox County Head Start discourages parents and community members from taking their concerns/grievances to social media. This practice is generally unproductive and may lead to rumors and misinformation. Parents are expected to behave in a civilized nature online and on social media platforms and will not engage in any of the following behaviors on their personal social media pages, in closed groups (e.g., groups set up for school parents to communicate with each other) or on our agency and site-specific pages:

1. Posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents, students, and the school or its employees
2. Posting names, photos, and videos of other children/families in the program
3. Raising queries, concerns, and complaints
4. Posting anything malicious about the school or any member of the school community

Parents and community members are encouraged to take their concerns/grievances to a staff member and/or administrator (following the program Grievance Procedure as found on page 9).

The Code of Conduct has been established by the Knox County Head Start Policy Council to promote a safe and healthy environment for all of the children, families, and staff of Knox County Head Start. Policy Council Approved July 20, 2023.

Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct may be prohibited from entering Agency and Program facilities and may be subject to termination of services.

Your participation in the program indicates your agreement to abide by the parent code of conduct and other policies as outlined in the school family guide.

Video/Audio Surveillance

All Knox County Head Start licensed child care centers are equipped with video surveillance cameras, and some cameras in the center have audio capabilities. Video/audio surveillance is used to ensure the safety and security of Agency students, staff-student families, and facilities owned and operated by KCHS, and to deter, detect, and prevent crime that may harm Agency students, staff, or properties. These cameras are for internal purposes only, and video/audio footage may only be reviewed by a KCHS coordinator, center manager, specialist, or director as authorized by the executive director. Your entrance into a KCHS facility assumes your consent to video/audio surveillance in all areas except where families and staff have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as in private offices or restrooms.

Bad Weather and Calamity Policy

During the school year, when local school districts close due to bad weather, we will close our school-year-based classrooms at Danville and Northgate. We will only close our full-day/child care and 6.5-hour classrooms when Knox County has declared a Level 2 Emergency or if area businesses/government offices are closing. Non-essential businesses must close at a Level 3 snow emergency. Please be aware that we may close early or remain closed under a Level 1 or Level 2 snow emergency if conditions appear to be unsafe or quickly worsening based on current conditions and forecasts.

If water or power disruption creates an unmanageable or unsafe situation, your child's center will be closed. If safe accommodation can be made despite a lack of power or water, centers may remain open.

School Closings/Operating on a Delay

If local school districts operate on a delay due to weather, classes may be delayed based on road conditions. Check your center's Facebook page, email, and Class Dojo.

If, for some reason, we use all our scheduled snow days, classes may go on as scheduled. Our goal is to keep the schedule as consistent as possible without interruption for your child's learning. All communication regarding class schedules will take place via Class Dojo, email, and social media, or you may contact the center directly.

Parent Note

KCHS will inform you of school closings or delays through Class Dojo and the center Facebook group. Please make sure that you keep your information updated so that you do not miss any important information!

Center Program Information

Posted at each center on the Parent Bulletin Board will be, at a minimum, the following information:

- Center name, address, and phone number
- Days and hours of operation
- Center goals and philosophies
- Staff/Child ratios and group sizes
- Sample of daily program schedule for all hours of operation for each age group of children the center is authorized to serve.
- Center manager/administrator hours
- Detailed alignments to the Head Start Early Learning Framework, Ohio Early Learning Development Standards, Teaching Strategies Gold, and Conscious Discipline.

Arrival & Departure Policy

Communication during the arrival and departure at the centers is essential to ensure that every child is safe and supervised at all times. Staff members will assume responsibility for each child upon arrival in the designated classroom.

Arrival

Children must be dropped off within 5 minutes of the class start time. When parents/adults bring a child to the center, they must follow the sign-in procedure for that center and accompany the child into the classroom. Staff must be made aware of the child's presence before the parent/adult departs. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the staff person is aware of the child entering and exiting the classroom for pick-up and drop-off.

Departure

When parents/guardians pick up a child, they must follow the sign-out procedure. See your center insert (front pocket) for more information. Parents/guardians must let staff members know when they are removing their child from the classroom, playground, or gymnasium.

CHILD SAFETY NOTES:

- Do not leave your car running in the parking lot while picking up or dropping off your children.
- Please have your picture ID available during pick up at the center.
- Children will be released only to a parent/guardian or to designated persons whose names are listed on the Authorization for Pick Up Form.

Child Release Policy

Children will be released to a parent/guardian or a designated person who has been listed on the Authorization for Pick Up Form. When picking up your child, your designated person will be required to present picture identification to staff members who do not recognize your assigned person. People under the age of 16 are not permitted to pick up a child from the center without prior approval from the center manager.

Please let everyone on your child's Authorization for Pick-Up Form know that they will be asked to show identification when a child is released to them. When you need to add or remove a designated person, please inform your child's teacher or family advocate.

Authorization for Pick-Up Form

Your child is required to have an Authorization for Pick Up Form before the first day of class. This form includes the following information:

- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of all authorized individuals
- Relationship to child
- Emergency contacts and release to contacts

We will ask to see photo identification for any authorized pick-up person whom we are not yet familiar with.

Any person not included on the Authorization for Pick Up Form will not be permitted to pick up your child under any circumstances. You are encouraged to update the Authorization for Pick-Up Form as often as necessary to maintain accurate records of who can and cannot pick up the enrolled child. ***Persons under the age of 16 are not permitted to receive a child from the center without prior approval.***

If we have not reached you or no one agrees to pick up your child, or no one comes for him/her one hour after class has ended, staff will contact Knox County Children's Services for further instruction. Knox County Head Start must give Knox County Children's Services your child's name, as well as your name, phone number, and address for contact purposes.

PARENT NOTE: EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

- Please update your Authorization for Pick Up Form whenever you have a change in who is allowed to transport your child from school in the event of an emergency.
- You are allowed to refuse authorization to transport your child to the nearest hospital in case of emergency. In this case, you must give written instructions concerning the transportation of your child.

Photo Policy

While participating in our family or classroom events, we understand that you will want to have pictures of your child engaged in activities with friends. While we encourage taking pictures of your child with your cell phone, video camera, or digital camera, we do ask that you refrain from taking pictures of other children in the classroom. If you do have pictures of the other children in the activity, we ask that you do not post any pictures (or names of other children) on your social media pages such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok.

Newsletter, Flyers, and Educational Materials

Periodically, your child may bring home a School Family™ Newsletter, flyers, or educational materials. This is one of several ways KCHS works to communicate with you. You will learn about your child's health and development, community resources, agency events, Policy Council news, and helpful ways to support your child and family.

Custody Agreements and Authorized Persons

Communication between KCHS and you is important for the success of your child in school. All enrolled children whose parents operate under the guidance of a custody agreement directed by the courts must provide custody papers during the enrollment process. These court documents will remain in the child's file for guidance and communication concerning your child.

- If at any time a question arises regarding transportation, enrollment, medical issues, etc., the staff of KCHS will operate under the guidance of the custody papers provided to the agency.
- The custodial parent will be communicated with by the KCHS staff. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to communicate with the non-custodial parent regarding items affecting the enrolled child.
- If a custodial parent and non-custodial parent agree that they both want to be given information, a written request must be signed and submitted to the center manager/administrator at the enrolled child's center for consideration.
- Under a Shared-Parenting Agreement, KCHS will communicate with both parents regarding your child's participation and progress, development, health, nutrition, or safety concerns.
- KCHS will follow the current custody agreement on file when releasing your child.

Family Engagement & School Readiness



KCHS believes that you are the first and most important teacher in your child's life, and we will work with your family in preparing your child for school. Family engagement or parent involvement describes all the ways that you are involved in your child's education. Knox County Head Start offers many Family Engagement opportunities, such as home visits, family goal setting, parent/teacher conferences, Family Fun Nights, training, volunteering in your child's center/classroom, participation in School Family™ Roundtables, and Policy Council membership.

School Readiness means that your child has the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for learning in life. Knox County Head Start uses *The Head Start Approach to School Readiness*. This means that KCHS strives for your child to be ready for school, for your family to support and advocate for his or her learning, and for schools to be ready for your child. Head Start is a leader in the early childhood field with a strong, clear, and comprehensive focus on all aspects of your child's healthy development. These areas are physical, social/emotional, language, approaches to learning, and cognitive development (such as literacy, math, science, and social studies).

Head Start Parent and Family Engagement Goals

1. Family Well-Being	Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.
2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships and Positive Parenting Program (PPP)	Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.
3. Families as Lifelong Educators	Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
4. Families as Learners	Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.
5. Family Engagement in Transitions	Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/ HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.
6. Family Connections to Peers and Community	Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.
7. Families as Advocates and Leaders	Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

Attendance

Attendance Policy

Your child's participation in the Head Start program regularly is important for many reasons. Most importantly, your child will learn and develop best with a consistent schedule and full participation in each day's lessons and learning. Center activities, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences are very important to your child and family. Interruptions, such as extensive absences, may prevent your child from getting the most benefit from the program.

KCHS strives for all children to maintain a 90% attendance average. Your family advocate will automatically contact your family to check in one hour after the start of class time (10:00 a.m. for full-day, full-year classes). We will be reviewing your child/children's attendance monthly.

If your child's attendance is below 90%, we will ask you to create a family partnership agreement, allowing us to support you in getting your child to school consistently. During this process, we will look at all the possible solutions to continue serving your child. Some possible solutions may include changing to another program option that works better for your family or home visits with your child's teacher until your child can return to the classroom. Your child may be withdrawn due to chronic absences. If this happens, your child may be placed on the waitlist and may be re-enrolled when an enrollment opportunity is available.

Absences

Please notify the center if you and/or your child will not be attending class, scheduled home visits, and/or parent-teacher conferences.

Excused absences include:

- Medical appointments
- Foster care visits
- Short-term exclusion for contagious conditions
- Weather conditions
- Transportation problems
- Death in the family
- Religious holiday
- Regularly scheduled visit with a non-custodial parent

Child Attendance Note:

Please contact the center before class starts if your child will not attend.

Your Family Advocate will automatically contact your family to verify attendance after one hour of the classroom start time (10 am for Full Day/Full Year classes). If we do not hear from you, we may reach out to the listed emergency contacts.

If your family is struggling with ways to consistently get your child to and from school, please contact your family advocate, who can help you work on some solutions to your transportation challenges.

Family Engagement

Family Goal Setting

Once enrolled and receiving Head Start services, you will meet with your family advocate to jointly develop family goals. The family goal-setting process (family partnership agreement) will help your family to think in a specific, concrete way about what you want and need for your family and your child, and what it will take to reach your goals. Every goal is treated as unique and important, and you and your Head Start School Family™ will build on family strengths to address opportunities and challenges in your growth and development together. Your family advocate will continue to work with you in reviewing progress, as well as addressing any additions or changes you wish to make as you move forward.

Volunteer Opportunities

You are encouraged to participate in the program by volunteering in your child's classroom, participating in the School Family™ Meetings at your child's center, becoming an active member of the Policy Council, or in other ways that may fit into your busy schedule. Please discuss volunteer opportunities with your child's teacher, family advocate, or center manager.

School Family™ Roundtable

Every KCHS center has a parent group that meets at your child's assigned center. You are a member of this group. At KCHS, we call this meeting our School Family™ Roundtable. The School Family™ Roundtables are opportunities for discussion and planning of center activities and training, as well as allowing time for parents to get together to share ideas and interests. The Roundtable is a great place to learn new skills, meet other parents, become involved in your child's education, and learn more about Knox County Head Start.

Please note that School Family Roundtable Meetings will be in-person when safe, or virtual if need be, due to an illness outbreak.

Classroom Events

Each classroom will offer a classroom event (in-person when safe, or virtual if enhanced health precautions are needed) for you to attend and engage in an activity with your child during classroom hours. Events and activities will be focused on one of the following learning domains: Approaches to Learning, Social & Emotional Development, Language & Communication, Cognition, Physical Development, Mathematics, and Science.

Family Fun Nights

Our Knox County Head Start School Family™ values the chance to spend time with our families in our school environment. We host events regularly to provide an opportunity for your child and your family to interact with and engage in center-based fun with our staff through family-oriented activities at each center. A meal and activities for children and families will be available, as well as information regarding school readiness and updates about KCHS. All family members are encouraged and welcome to attend.

Examples of our Family Fun Night events:

- Harvest Festival: Fall crafts are made by children and parents.
- Make-It-Take-It Night: Age-appropriate crafts and items are made by the children that they can then give away as presents to family and friends.
- Cooking with Kids: Fun and nutritious snacks are made by the children. Nutritional information is provided for parents.
- Annual Art Show: Children's art collected over the year is displayed in a "gallery" for all to view.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NOTE:
End-of-the-year celebrations are held at each center and involve planning by the staff and parents to acknowledge transitions, such as going to kindergarten. Activities will focus solely on the children and will be developmentally and age appropriate.

Policy Council

You can help set the direction of Head Start in Knox County! The KCHS Policy Council is a leadership group made up of current Head Start and Early Head Start parents and community representatives. The Policy Council is like a Parent Teacher Organization in a school but differs in one important way: the Head Start Policy Council has regular opportunities to contribute to agency decisions. The Policy Council helps the Board of Directors and the Executive Director to guide the agency. Members of the Policy Council help the leadership of the agency understand the ideas and the needs of parents in our program. As a member, you give us the perspective of a parent when we are considering changes to our program.

The Policy Council must be made up of at least 51% of current Head Start program (including Head Start and Early Head Start) parents. Often, former parents may continue to serve for a time on the Council to lend their experience to current parents, and community members serve as well. If you are a parent of a child enrolled in the full-day, full-year program but not identified as a Head Start or Early Head Start child and are interested in serving on the KCHS Policy Council, you must complete an application to serve as a community representative on the Policy Council.

The Policy Council specifically gives input and recommends approval to the KCHS Board of Directors:

- Head Start programs funding applications or changes to funding applications.
- Head Start program budgets.
- Head Start program policies and procedures.
- Program design and direction for KCHS.

Council members are elected to the Council by all parents voting for representatives from their center or program option for home-based families. Parent representatives must have children currently enrolled in KCHS. Parents continue their term of service until a new Council is seated each October, even if your child has transitioned to kindergarten. Federal regulations limit each member to serving a combined five one-year terms.

Due to the nature of involvement by the Policy Council, much of what is discussed in the meeting is confidential. We review the confidentiality policy with all members, and they are required to sign a confidentiality agreement each year. Additionally, members may not have either a financial or personal conflict of interest with KCHS. (Immediate family members may not be employees of the agency, nor may we contract with members or their immediate family).

Participating in the Policy Council helps build skills in advocacy, leadership, public speaking, professionalism, democratic process, and rules of order. Participants gain an understanding of Head Start Program Performance Standards, budgets, grants, child outcome data, human resources procedures, and much more.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NOTE:

As a member of the Policy Council, you can:

- Learn more about the programs that serve your child.
- Meet other parents in our program.
- Develop leadership & job skills.
- Work with community members & the KCHS Board of Directors.
- Contribute to the growth of Knox County Head Start.

Members may serve for a maximum of five years on the Council and must be re-elected annually.

Elections are held in late September or early October, with the first meeting typically held the third Thursday of October.

Meetings are held the **third Thursday of each month** at the **New Hope Early Education Center in Mt. Vernon, from 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and there is a Zoom option for participation as well.**

Either direct child care and dinner are provided for members, or a child care stipend is provided if child care is not available.

Child Development & School Readiness



KCHS School Readiness Goals

Teachers will consider your child's individual needs and abilities to best support his/her progress towards these goals, always with respect to your child's home language.

If you have questions about these goals, contact your child's teacher or the Education Coordinator at 740-397-1344.

Early Head Start:

Birth to One Year (0-12 months)

1. Shows interest in, interacts with, and develops personal relationships with other children.

Your child will show recognition of familiar children through actions or behaviors, such as smiling, reaching, touching, or making sounds directed to the child.

2. Demonstrates effective and efficient use of large muscles to explore the environment.

Your child will use each new posture (raising head, rolling onto back, sitting) to learn new ways to explore the environment. For example, sits up to be able to reach for or hold objects.

3. Uses non-verbal communication and language to engage others in interaction.

Your child will use facial expressions, including smiling or using gestures or sounds, such as cooing or babbling, to engage familiar adults in social interaction.

One to Two Years (12-24 months)

1. Shows interest in, interacts with, and develops personal relationships with other children.

Your child will participate in simple back-and-forth interactions with another child. Interacts with a few children on a regular basis, and knows some of their names, likes, or dislikes.

2. Uses an increasing number of words in communications and conversations with others.

Your child will imitate new words or signs and use some words or signs for naming or making simple one-word

requests, such as saying or signing "milk" when asking for a drink.

3. Uses increasingly complex language in conversation with others.

Your child will initiate and participate in conversations by babbling and using gestures, such as blowing kisses, waving, or by using words or signs. Communicates mainly about objects, actions, and events happening in the here and now.

Two to Three Years (24-36 months)

1. Imitates and engages in play with other children.

Your child will join in play with other children by sometimes taking turns or doing joint activities with a common goal, such as building block structures with others or pretending to eat together.

2. Uses non-verbal communication and language to engage others in interaction.

Your child will use words, signs, phrases, or simple sentences to initiate, continue, or extend conversations with others about feelings, experiences, or thoughts.

3. Attends to, reports, and uses some rhymes, phrases, or refrains from stories or songs.

Your child will say or repeat culturally and linguistically familiar rhymes, phrases, or refrains from songs or stories.

Detailed alignments to the Head Start Early Learning Framework, Ohio Early Learning Development Standards, Teaching Strategies Gold, and Conscious Discipline are posted on the parent bulletin board.

Head Start:

36-48 months-Preschool 3's by 48 months
48-60 months-PreK 4's by kindergarten entry

Preschool 3's (36-48 months)

1. Expresses himself in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways.

Typically uses three- to five-word phrases/sentences when communicating. With some prompting, can offer multiple (two or three) pieces of information on a single topic.

2. Demonstrates awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sounds.

With support, your child will distinguish when two words rhyme and when two words begin with the same sound.

3. Identifies letters of the alphabet and produces correct sounds associated with letters.

Your child will show an awareness of alphabet letters, such as singing the ABC song, recognizing letters from one's name, or naming some letters that are encountered often.

4. Associates a quantity with written numerals up to 5 and begins to write numbers.

Your child will begin to understand that a written numeral represents a quantity and may draw objects or use informal symbols to represent numbers.



PreK 4's (48-60 months)

PreK 4's (48-60 months)

1. Manages emotions with increasing independence.

Your child will have an expanding range of strategies for managing emotions but will sometimes look to an adult for support. They will show increasing skill in managing emotions independently.

2. Demonstrates awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sounds.

Your child will demonstrate rhyme recognition, such as identifying which words rhyme from a group of three. Can count syllables and understand different sounds in spoken words.

3. Identifies letters of the alphabet and produces correct sounds associated with letters.

Your child will recognize and name some letters in the alphabet, including letters in their name. They will identify the sound of many recognized letters.

4. Can understand the relationship between numbers and quantities.

May point to or move objects while counting objects to 10 (one-to-one correspondence). Understands that the last number represents how many objects are in a group.

5. Associates a quantity with written numerals up to 5 and begins to write numbers.

Your child will understand that written numbers represent quantities of objects, and information symbols, such as a tally, represent numerals. May begin to write numbers up to 10 with adult support.

Detailed alignments to the Head Start Early Learning Framework, Ohio Early Learning Development Standards, Teaching Strategies Gold, and Conscious Discipline are posted on the parent bulletin board.

Curriculum

Knox County Head Start, Inc. is required to implement a written plan, known as the curriculum, that is “consistent with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn.”

KCHS, with support and approval from the KCHS Policy Council and Board of Directors, uses The Creative Curriculum® for infant, toddler, and preschool classroom-based programs. The infant/toddler curriculum focuses on daily routines and experiences while individualizing the curriculum planning for each child. The preschool curriculum is a framework addressing academic content as well as focusing on the child’s interests and creativity in the classroom. Our home-based program utilizes the Parents as Teachers (PAT) curriculum.

Knox County Head Start classrooms implement techniques from Conscious Discipline® in our classrooms. Conscious Discipline® is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline® encourages adults to examine and begin to change their attitudes and behaviors, recognizing that we cannot teach skills that we do not have ourselves! The adults, in turn, change the lives of children. Conscious Discipline® is a way of organizing schools and classrooms around the concept of a School Family. Each member of the family—both adult and child—learns the skills needed to successfully manage life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, communicating effectively, being sensitive to others’ needs, and getting along with others.

KCHS also utilizes Building the Primary Classroom as the curriculum in school-age classrooms at the Gambier Child Care Center, with extensions up to grade five that are tied to the 4th and 5th grade Reading, Writing, Visual Arts, and Physical Education standards. Building the Primary Classroom provides a framework for building the classroom environment, positive relationships with students, partnerships with families, and classroom communities that support the development of competent, successful learners. School-aged children will participate in a program that provides both structured and unstructured time, with a variety of activities to spark and expand children’s interests. At the request of parents, staff and volunteers will help with homework or specific activities to support each child’s elementary school curriculum.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a philosophy driven by the belief that individuals with disabilities can and should be integrated into all aspects of community life. The 1993 Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children defines inclusion as:

A value that supports the right of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in a natural setting within their communities. A natural setting is one in which the child would spend time had he or she not had a disability. Such settings include but are not limited to home and family, playgroups, child care, nursery schools, Early Head Start & Head Start programs, kindergartens, and neighborhood school classrooms.

While KCHS has long been a mainstream placement for children with disabilities, today the focus is on inclusion. Just being in the same classroom is not the only way a child with a disability becomes a valued member of the group. Programs such as KCHS create environments that are responsive to the diverse needs of all children.

Child Assessment

Your child will be assessed three or four times (depending on your program option) during the program year using the online tool Teaching Strategies Gold for children enrolled in a center and DRDP for children enrolled in the home-based program. This tool is a list of goals and objectives from the Creative Curriculum®, giving the classroom staff a road map to determine where each child is developmentally. Assessments are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards. This enables educators to track your child's progress and provide information to plan experiences for your child individually and as part of a group. The assessment information will be shared with you during the Parent/Teacher Conferences and/or home visits throughout the year.

Teacher and Family Advocate Home Visits

An important way you will participate in the Head Start program is by inviting your child's teacher and/or family advocate to come into your home for a home visit. This visit is another way to communicate, connect, and get to know your family better. The visit will consist of the teacher talking with you and interacting with your child. Together, you will discuss goals for your child and your family, family strengths, any needs you may have, and ways that we can connect you to the resources available in our community. In addition, activities may be planned to include all members of the family. This visit can enhance your child's relationship with his or her teacher and your relationship with the center staff. Teachers will complete a minimum of two educational home visits each year.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences help to build strong bridges between the learning that goes on at home and within your Head Start School Family™ environment. For this to happen, you and your child's teacher need to share information with each other. You need to know what is going on in the other's experience with your child, the teaching strategies that each uses, and each other's concerns and goals. Therefore, we ask that you participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences. These conferences are scheduled two times per year at your child's center. Your child's educator will call or send a list of the dates and times that you may choose from to schedule your Parent/Teacher Conference.

School Readiness Goals

Individual School Readiness Goals are created with your child's teacher and you to focus on your child's development of the skills they will need to be successful in a school setting. These plans are written in partnership with families so that everyone is working together to help the children achieve these goals.

Having a concrete written plan that breaks down a large goal into smaller steps allows you and your child's teacher or home educator to see progress as children master each step on the way toward the goal. These goals help to lay the foundation for learning goals that children will set in elementary school.

Pets in the Classroom

Knox County Head Start implements The Creative Curriculum® for the infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms. The Creative Curriculum supports living things in the classroom and encourages educators to include pets in the Discovery Area. Knox County Head Start permits specific traditional classroom pets in the classrooms, including fish, hermit crabs, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, and rabbits.

The following criteria need to be followed for any pets to be allowed:

- The education coordinator approves that the pet is appropriate for the classroom.
- The pet presents no threat to the health or safety of children or staff.
- All pets will be properly housed and cared for. If it becomes apparent that the animal is not being cared for responsibly, it will be expected that this will be corrected immediately. A second incident will result in the pet being removed from the classroom.
- Children will not be directly exposed to animal urine or feces.



- The classroom teacher will be responsible for the care of the pet during weekends and holidays.
- Children and staff must wash their hands with soap and water immediately following physical contact with the pet.
- Visiting pets may be allowed with approval from the education coordinator.
- Parents will be informed of all classroom pets and visiting pets.
- Teachers will educate the children in their classroom on the appropriate handling of pets.

Clothing

For your child to enjoy the school experience at KCHS, please dress him or her for the weather. Children are active and sometimes messy. It is important that your child is dressed appropriately and wears comfortable clothes. Dress your child in clothes that can get dirty. Children learn as they play, and important parts of their play will include activities in which they will get dirty. We will offer water play, painting, and outdoor play during your child's school day, and clothing will get dirty.

Please provide a complete change of clothing for your child in the event of an accident. Clothing will be kept in your child's cubby/classroom and will be used as needed.

CHILD SAFETY NOTES:

- Please send a complete change of clothing for your child.
- Clothing will be kept in each child's cubby/classroom and used as needed.
- For your child's safety, flip flop shoes may not be worn to school. Flip flops create a tripping/falling hazard.



Outdoor Play / Water Activities

We will go outside every day that the weather allows. This time may be spent on the playground or on a walk. **Parents should send their children to the center in clothing appropriate for the weather.**

Circumstances that might cancel or shorten outdoor play are:

- Chill factor below freezing (25°F)
- Steady rain or downpour
- Storm watch or warning periods
- Heat advisory or temperatures exceeding 90°F



Nap & Rest Time

KCHS has implemented an intentional, age-appropriate approach to accommodate children's need for a nap or rest. Full-day and 6.5-hour program options will provide the opportunity for a regular time every day for children to rest or nap. Your child will not be forced to rest or nap. Classrooms will offer an alternative quiet learning activity for children who do not need or want to rest or nap. Please check your child's classroom schedule to see when the rest or nap period is scheduled.



Infant/Toddler Programs

Infant/toddler room staff will maintain a written record for children under 12 months old that is given to the parent/guardian daily, which includes:

- Food intake
- Sleeping patterns
- Times and results of diaper changes (at minimum every 2 hours)
- Information about daily activities

Each infant and toddler will be assigned a primary caregiver to ensure consistent care.

Children will be placed on their backs to sleep unless a Sleep Position Waiver is completed and signed by the parent/guardian and your child's physician.

Infant/Toddler Sleep Procedure

To provide the safest sleep environment possible, the following procedure shall be followed for any child sleeping in a crib.

Tired or sleeping infants

- Infants are on-demand sleepers, so watch for cues of becoming tired (ear pulling, eye rubbing, hair tugging/twirling). Upon noticing these cues, follow the individual child's bedtime routine.
- Once an infant is asleep, they are to be placed in their crib. At no time shall an infant sleep in a car seat, bouncy seat, on the floor, or in any place that is not their crib.

Safe sleep environments

- To provide the safest sleep environment possible, we follow the ABC principle (Alone, Back, Crib).

ALONE - No toys, bumper pads, stuffed animals, or blankets in the crib

BACK – Babies are always placed on their back when placed in a crib

CRIB – Infants enrolled may only sleep in an approved crib while in our care

- Sleep Sacks are available in the classroom for use while infants sleep in their cribs. No blankets will be used in cribs.
- Once an infant can roll over, they may no longer be swaddled (arms wrapped in a sleep sack).
- When an infant is in a crib, you should have a clear view. Nothing should be hanging on the sides of the crib that could prevent visual checks or that could fall or be pulled into the crib as the infant sleeps.
- Each infant should be assigned their own crib using a picture of the infant, a name card, or both.



Birthday Celebrations

Knox County Head Start wants to celebrate your child's birthday as much as you do. Celebrations will take place monthly in each classroom during snack or lunchtime. The nutrition staff will provide a special food item for the celebration. Due to the number of children with allergies, no outside food items may be brought into the classroom.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION NOTE:

No outside foods can be brought into the classroom.

Non-Food Ideas:

Puzzles/Books
Educational or cultural toys
Toothbrushes
Notebooks, pencils, crayons, markers
and/or erasers

Holidays & Celebrations

The Creative Curriculum supports exposing children to various customs in a respectful and developmentally appropriate way. In extending this approach to celebrations, KCHS advocates for the planning of holiday activities that are reflective of children's needs, interests, and age levels. All celebrations will be connected in a meaningful way to the lives of the children. Children will be allowed to express themselves individually, in ways of their choosing.

The following guidelines are to be used for holiday and celebration planning:

- Decisions about which holidays to celebrate will be made by each teacher/home educator and will reflect the needs and interests of the children in his/her classroom. **Center managers will approve all holiday celebrations in advance, with information sent to the education coordinator.**
- Holiday celebrations will include the familiar and unfamiliar, and the celebrations will be implemented in a variety of ways, including reading books, having discussions, inviting a guest to talk about a personal tradition, introducing food, music, and art activities linked to a celebration, and encouraging families to share their holiday traditions and customs.
- KCHS respects the rights of all parents to individually determine their child's religious upbringing and influences; therefore, religious aspects of any holiday will not be taught. The historical meaning of a holiday will be given in a developmentally appropriate manner if children ask directly for information.
- Pre-cut holiday items are not to be used when studying holidays. Holiday celebrations should be supportive of the curriculum implemented in the classroom, not "take over" the daily activities.

Field Trips

The safety of your child is extremely important while on field trips. Some centers are in locations where walking field trips are possible. Other field trips might be taken using a Head Start bus. When your child's classroom schedules a field trip, you will be notified and asked to complete a permission slip for your child to participate. Field trip procedures exist to address emergencies and to ensure your child is safe.

What you can expect from Knox County Head Start while your child is on a field trip:

- Your child's teacher will be responsible for the attendance of all children while on the field trip (including on the bus, if bus travel is a part of the field trip, and at each stop the bus may make).
- All children participating in the field trip will wear a name tag stating the center's name, address, and phone number.
- Staff will be assigned a specific group of children they will be responsible for while on the field trip.
- Any field trip that is considered routine (e.g., weekly library visits) will require a permission slip before the first trip.

As a volunteer on a field trip, you can expect to:

- Drive to and from the field trip (your child may ride with you).
- Assist staff members with their assigned group.
- Have fun!

Transitions

Transition is defined as a change between different centers, classrooms, teachers/home educators, or activities. Your child will go through many transitions during his or her educational experience, for example, from home to the classroom, from classroom play to lunch, from classroom to playground, etc.

Your child may experience major transitions in his or her life, such as a new baby in the family, the loss of a loved one, a move to a new home or new school, from Early Head Start to preschool, or preschool to kindergarten. School transitions can be an exciting time, one that can provide new opportunities for your child and family; however, they require adjustment. Your child may need to adjust to leaving you for the first time, new teachers, school family friends, different schedules, and routines. You and your child may find that you experience separation anxiety. Your family may need to adjust to participating in home visits, parent/teacher conferences, and center/classroom activities.

All children and families adjust during transitions. The amount of time required for these adjustments varies. It is normal to experience some uncertainty, and with that, some stress during transition.

Full-Day, Full-Year Transitions

If your child is enrolled in the EHS home-based, EHS center-based, or HS full-day option, he/she will experience many transitions. Your child will experience the transition from the home to the center and from an infant/toddler classroom to a preschool classroom. You will remain a partner in your child's transition from classroom to classroom and program option to program option. You will be notified in advance of transitions and will have the opportunity to provide input into the timing and duration of the transition periods. Regular communication between parents and teachers will allow smooth transitions.

Early Head Start Transition to Head Start - (Infant/Toddler to Preschool Classroom)

Transitions from EHS to preschool begin when your child is 29 months old. Your child's EHS home educator or family advocate will discuss your options and identify your choice for your child. Your child may transition into preschool home-based services, 4-hour, 5-hour, or 6.5-hour classroom, or a full-day Head Start classroom. You may choose to transition your child into another community preschool program. Your home visitor or family advocate will work with you as you decide what is best for your child.

Head Start to Kindergarten Transition

Knox County Head Start will work with you and your child as he/she is preparing to transition to kindergarten. You will have the opportunity to attend a Kindergarten Transition Meeting held by the staff at your child's center. These meetings may take place in collaboration with local elementary schools.

KCHS will work with your family by:

- Providing you with information regarding your child's progress on his or her School Readiness goals.
- Answering questions you may have about the kindergarten transition.
- Helping you to sign your child up for kindergarten registration.
- Providing information regarding which elementary school your child will attend.

With your permission, KCHS will share information about your child's progress with their kindergarten teacher by sharing a transition skills summary report that shows how your child is developing skills that are important to kindergarten readiness.

We will also ask your permission to reach out to your child's elementary school for their kindergarten readiness assessment scores. When we are able to receive these scores, we can see how well we assisted you in preparing your child for kindergarten and make adjustments to our program when we identify concerns.

Knox County Head Start wants your child to leave our program prepared for success in kindergarten. We will support you to do whatever it takes to help the transition to kindergarten be as smooth as possible.

Social & Emotional Development and School Readiness



Conscious Discipline®

Knox County Head Start uses Conscious Discipline, ® created by Dr. Becky Bailey, as the framework for classroom and behavior management. This program, which is based on current brain research and sound knowledge of child development, focuses on helping children feel emotionally safe and connected with teaching staff and with their friends at school. This school readiness approach is helpful for children to be more cooperative, to be able to remember what they have already learned, and to be better able to learn new things. We do this by striving to create a healthy School Family™ within our classrooms, centers, and agency.

Conscious Discipline® views all conflicts and problems as opportunities to learn and teach. Through Conscious Discipline®, each child in our School Family™ can learn the skills needed to successfully manage life challenges as they occur throughout the daily routine with the guidance provided by our trained teaching staff.

As you visit your child's classroom, you may notice several classroom structures and strategies that we use to help children learn the Seven Skills of Conscious Discipline. These skills are:

Composure	Positive Intent	Choices
Encouragement	Empathy	Assertiveness
	Consequences	

KCHS staff work hard to practice the Seven Skills of Conscious Discipline® each day in the classroom. As the teachers use the skills, they are better able to help children learn these skills. We believe that to be effective in helping children change or improve their behavior, it is important for adults to be conscious of their own behavior and the intention behind their behavior, thus being the adults that they want the children to become.

We often find that the children in our classrooms take the language of Conscious Discipline® from the classroom and use it at home. You may hear your child use the words "Be a S.T.A.R." or "I wish you well." Throughout the school year, you may hear your child expressing himself/herself using the language of the Seven Skills of Conscious Discipline. ®

There will be information about Conscious Discipline® sent home to parents in newsletters and articles throughout the school year. You can also learn more at www.consciousdiscipline.com.

The Skill of Composure

"Be a S.T.A.R."

Smile
Take A Deep Breath
And
Relax

Teaches your child to calm himself/herself when upset.



The Skill of Empathy

"We Wish You Well"

Teaches your child to accept and process his/her feelings and to see the world from others' perspectives.

Used in classrooms for children when they are absent or are having challenging moments.

Learning Self-Regulation: The Student Support Plan & Intervention Meetings

For children who exhibit chronic behavior challenges, Knox County Head Start utilizes Conscious Discipline® as the blueprint for the intervention process that includes a partnership between parents and educators. You will find more information regarding this below.

Occasionally, your child may struggle with keeping calm and safe in his or her classroom or at home. When struggles are preventing him or her from learning or creating unsafe conditions in the classroom, a student support plan might be the answer.

Realizing that all children are at different developmental stages and react differently to behavior management strategies, every effort will be made to individualize student support plans to fit your child's needs. The goal will always be to assist your child in eliminating the unproductive behavior in a way that is understandable to him or her and to help him or her learn to replace this behavior with an acceptable behavior.

Should your child exhibit a behavior that is ongoing and disruptive to the classroom or interrupts the learning for the child or others, the following steps will be taken:

1. Once your child's teacher has identified a problem behavior, he or she will have a conversation with you and the center manager or family advocate to discuss strategies that will help your child correct this behavior. A student support plan will be designed that will take into consideration the concerning behavior, your child's developmental level, and individual needs. If the center manager is not available, the teacher can contact the education coordinator. A copy of this plan will be given to you, the center manager, the classroom staff, and the education coordinator. *In the case of repeated dangerous behaviors such as injuring children or teachers, or running from adults, we may move a child immediately to an intervention plan.
2. Follow-up will occur within 2-4 weeks. At this time, it will be decided if the strategy is helping correct the problem behavior. If not, adjustments to the plan will be made. Bi-weekly (more if needed) follow-ups by the teacher will continue until the behavior has been corrected or reduced to an acceptable level.
3. In the case where your child's behavior cannot be corrected or reduced to a manageable level by using the above method, you will be contacted to schedule an Intervention Meeting.
4. At the time of the Intervention Meeting your child's teacher, center manager, education coordinator, and you will develop a more comprehensive individualized intervention plan for the child. This meeting may also include the agency's mental health consultant.
5. Follow-up meetings will be held every 2-4 weeks until the behavior is corrected or reduced to an acceptable level. Family members must be actively involved in the behavior intervention process, attending the meetings regularly and working on goals at home.
6. Once the behavior has been corrected, the intervention meetings will be discontinued.
7. When the intervention team feels that an outside mental health referral would be the most effective approach to helping your child effectively change behaviors, a referral can be made at any time during the student support plan process.

PARENT NOTE:

In the case of severely aggressive behavior that puts your child, other children in the center, or an employee's safety at imminent risk, KCHS will contact you or your child's emergency contacts to pick up your child within 30 minutes.

In this event, the education coordinator, center manager, or your Family Advocate will contact you to schedule an Intervention Meeting to discuss the incident and develop an Intervention Plan to support your child.

All efforts to help children learn the skills necessary to be successful in the educational environment will be approached in a positive and consistent manner. The Knox County Head Start staff is trained in the philosophy of Conscious Discipline® and will utilize the principles of this philosophy as they work to help children manage their behaviors.

The KCHS Education Coordinator and/or Mental Health Consultant will be available for individual observations of children, as well as consultations with teachers and parents. At all times, KCHS will make every effort to ensure the safety of children and staff.

In extreme cases involving a lack of safety, a child may be transitioned from the classroom to a home-based option or a more appropriate setting.

PARENT RESOURCE NOTE: Therapeutic Services

Knox County Head Start will collaborate with parents and local mental health providers, including The Village Network, Behavioral Healthcare Partners of Central Ohio (BHP), Knox County Community Health Center, Nationwide Children's Hospital, and other area organizations to support mental health interventions to children who have experienced trauma or who are struggling to adapt to the classroom or home environment.

A portion of the education coordinator position is funded with assistance from the United Way of Knox County to guide the process of connecting children and families with appropriate mental health resources. All referrals and follow-ups will be made only with parent/guardian permission.

KCHS has partnered with The Village Network to provide direct therapeutic services to children and families enrolled in Knox County Head Start programs. One therapist works directly with students. After funding for this partnership was ended by the State of Ohio, KCHS is seeking other funding for the 25-26 school year.

Children may benefit from play-based therapeutic activities provided by a trained, licensed social worker, either in offices or in your child's center when permitted. Therapists may also provide in-home supports as appropriate. **The Village Network's providers are trained in NMT – the Neurosequential Model of Therapy and KCHS' educators will be trained in NME – the Neurosequential Model of Education –** under this partnership.

KCHS participates in Community Teams and Family Teams when families who receive services from multiple local partners come together to support individual family goals. These teams may provide guidance, support, and resources in the short-term for families who are experiencing unique challenges. Please reach out to your child's family advocate for more information.

KCHS serves as the lead agency for the Parent Support Initiative (PSI) of Knox County, and many KCHS employees are certified to deliver Triple P – the Positive Parenting Program – in Knox County. Triple P serves as KCHS' research-based parenting curriculum. Specific educational activities are available for Knox County parents online and in person, and the current schedule is available at: <https://www.triplep-parenting.com/oh-en/free-parenting-courses/other-triple-p-regions/positive-parenting-in-knox-county-oh/> and please follow the Parent Support Initiative on Facebook!

Guiding Children’s Developing Self-Regulation Skills

Knox County Head Start employees support the development of self-esteem by expressing respect, acceptance, and comfort for children, regardless of the child’s ability to self-regulate. Developmentally appropriate guidance demonstrates respect for children. It helps children develop self-control and find solutions to classroom conflicts/crises.

KCHS employees will not engage in behaviors that maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum:

- A. Corporal punishment or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force feeding, or dragging;
- B. Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities;
- C. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child’s self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child; and
- D. Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet a child’s basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to, leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as punishment, or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment.

Children learn self-control when KCHS employees treat them with dignity and use child guidance techniques such as:

- Setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior (indoors and outdoors)
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity
- Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children solve their own problems
- Patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed
- Modeling desired behavior
- Focusing on appropriate behaviors

If a KCHS employee consistently demonstrates the strategies mentioned in this section but still must deal with frequent disruptions or an occasional severe behavioral problem, the following five-step method may be used:

1. Tell the child the behavior that is expected.
2. Assist the child in getting to the classroom “safe place” to help the child gain self-control or, if necessary, accompany the child into the hall.
3. The adult will assist the child in gaining self-control by utilizing Conscious Discipline® techniques.
4. Once the child has calmed down, the adult will acknowledge the child’s feelings and help the child problem-solve what he/she could do differently.
5. Once the child is ready to rejoin the group, the teacher will assist the child to be successful in doing so.



Health/Nutrition & School Readiness



Screenings, Assessments and Follow-up

Knox County Head Start provides a range of developmentally appropriate screenings, assessments, and follow-ups for your child, along with nutrition services. Our goal is to ensure that your child's individual needs are identified and met. These services are offered to all children served at KCHS.

Your child is required to have current immunizations at enrollment. You will be asked to provide a current physical within 30 days of your child's first day of class, and annually thereafter.

Knox County Head Start will provide screenings for your child prior to his/her first day of class whenever possible, or within 45 days of his/her first day with your permission. You will receive a written summary of the results of these screenings after they are completed.

During the first 45 days of school, your child will receive developmental, social-emotional, hearing, and vision screenings. Your child will be assessed on an ongoing basis by the classroom staff using an age-appropriate tool. You will receive a summary of all screenings completed on your child during the year.

The list of screenings your child may receive:

- **Growth Assessment:** This measures your child's height and weight. These measurements tell us if your child is growing at the average rate for his/her age. Your child's BMI percentage can help identify possible problems with his or her growth.
- **Vision Screening:** This screening tells us how well your child sees and how well his/her eyes move together. Vision difficulties can lead to learning problems.
- **Hearing Screening:** This screening tells us if your child can hear different levels of volume and pitches. Not hearing well can lead to learning and behavior concerns.
- **Speech Screening:** This screening assesses your child's abilities in the areas of voice, articulation (pronouncing sounds), fluency (stuttering), and language (understanding and using words). Speech concerns can affect learning language, as well as literacy skills.
- **Developmental Screening:** This screening will identify your child's strengths and needs in specific developmental areas appropriate to their age. This screening tells your child's teacher how to plan individual experiences to support your child's learning.
- **Lead Screening:** This screening lets you know the lead level in your child's blood. High lead levels can cause anemia, learning difficulties, and other medical problems.
- **Hemoglobin Screening:** This screening tells us if the body has enough hemoglobin (a red protein) and iron in the red blood cells. The red blood cells (hemoglobin and iron) carry oxygen throughout the body. Anemia, or low iron levels, can slow a child's energy, growth, and development.
- **Blood Pressure:** This screening tells us how hard the heart is working. High numbers tell us the heart is working too hard, and low numbers tell us the heart isn't working hard enough.
- **DECA:** This screening will identify your child's strengths and needs in the social-emotional area. This will help you and your child's teacher to support your child in the best way possible

CHILD HEALTH NOTE:

It is your responsibility to submit all health exams, screenings, immunizations, and treatment documents to your family advocate, home educator, or center administrator.

Immunizations

Immunizations are vaccines or “shots” that protect children from serious illnesses. Immunizations are important for your child’s health. KCHS staff can provide you with a schedule of when immunizations are due (see insert). It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to submit updated immunization records.

Children will not be allowed to attend a center unless immunizations are current. Immunizations may be waived by the administrator for religious reasons upon submission of the parent or guardian’s written request for exemption or medical reasons upon submission of a physician’s or certified nurse practitioner’s written request for exemption.

If a waiver/exemption is on file or your child is not up to date on immunizations, KCHS may be required to limit attendance. This will occur if a positive case of a communicable disease (for which there is a vaccination) is identified at your child’s center. KCHS will seek guidance from Knox Public Health, and your child may be excluded from attending for 21 days after the start of the last known case in the center.

It is your responsibility to submit a copy of the updated immunization record to your family advocate, home educator, or the center administrator.

Well Child Check/Physical

A current Well Child Check/physical must always be in your child’s file. If your child’s physical has expired, and a new one is not provided, then he/she will not be permitted to attend the center until a current physical is provided to your center.

It is important that you submit a copy of the current well-child check/physical to your family advocate, home educator, child care provider, or center administrator. Your child’s physical is a thorough checkup of your child’s overall health and development. This exam can lead to early identification and treatment of health problems. The medical professional should discuss your child’s health history, developmental and family history, and any special concerns. The physical should include measuring your child’s overall growth, including, but not limited to:

- Height and weight
- Blood pressure
- Skin appearance
- Eyes and/or vision
- Ears and/or hearing
- Nose
- Mouth
- Head circumference (until age 2)
- Oral health
- Heart
- Lungs
- Abdomen(stomach)
- Genitalia

Observations of your child’s:

- Behaviors
- Appearance
- Speech
- Motor skills

Screening tests may include:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Hemoglobin
- Tuberculosis
- Urine analysis
- Lead

CHILD HEALTH NOTE:
Knox County Community Health Center offers pediatric counseling, dental and medical services. Make an appointment at any of the Mount Vernon and Danville locations by calling 740-399-8008.

For more information, visit
www.knoxhealth.com



CHILD HEALTH NOTE:			
Well Child Check Schedule:			
2 Week	6 Month	15 Month	30 Month
1 Month	9 Month	18 Month	3-18 Years (Annually)
2 Month	12 Month	24 Month	

Blood Screenings

Hemoglobin/Hematocrit (Anemia)

Our bodies need oxygen for energy and growth. Red blood cells, which contain hemoglobin and iron, carry oxygen throughout the blood to the body. Anemia is when the body does not have enough iron/hemoglobin. **The Hemoglobin/Hematocrit** screening is a blood test, usually a finger prick, to check the amount of hemoglobin in the blood. If your family physician gives you a prescription to complete blood work, it is very important that your child has this done as soon as possible. **Anemia can delay a child's growth and development. Early diagnosis and treatment can help improve a child's health and development.**

Treatment for anemia might include:

- Nutritional counseling and dietary changes
- Iron supplements or iron-enriched vitamins

Lead

Lead is a metal that is poisonous and very dangerous for young children. It can cause anemia, learning difficulties, or other medical problems. The lead screening measures the level of lead in the blood. Children between the ages of three and six years old must receive a screening blood lead test if they have not been previously screened for lead poisoning.

Treatment may include:

- Removing the source of lead
- Nutrition counseling
- Iron supplements
- Medication to remove the lead from the blood
- Follow-up testing of child's blood
- Referral for developmental testing

CHILD DENTAL NOTES:

If your child's dental exam indicates that additional dental work is needed (cavities, extraction, or caps on teeth), our staff will work with you to help your child receive the treatment he/she needs.

If you need assistance locating a dentist, please contact your child's teacher/family advocate/home visitor.

Blood Pressure

This screening tells us how hard the heart is working. High numbers tell us the heart is working too hard, and low numbers tell us the heart isn't working hard enough. What's considered normal blood pressure changes as children grow.

Dental

KCHS collaborates with local dentists and the Knox County Community Health Center to provide dental examinations and assists your family in establishing a dental home for you and your child if you do not have a primary dental provider. Knox County Community Health Center will also determine if children are up to date on dental care using standards from the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment guidance, as well as the Head Start Performance Standards. You will be given the opportunity to provide (or decline) consent. Our staff will assist you with completing the necessary documentation, including any health or dental family history, insurance information, and permissions.

You will need to provide a dental exam for your child within 90 days of his/her first day of class or home visits. This exam will remain current for 12 months. **The American Dental Association recommends that a child have an oral examination at the eruption of the first primary tooth, no later than 12 months of age, and semi-annual examinations thereafter.** Regular dental visits will help your child stay cavity-free and protect overall dental health.

If your child is enrolled in the Early Head Start program, your child's family advocate or home educator will encourage you to schedule your child's first dental exam by 24 months of age. It is important that you submit your dental exams to your child's family advocate and/or home educator.

Each year, KCHS centers arrange with area dentists to provide dental screenings for children who have not yet received a dental exam. A dental screening involves visually inspecting the condition of the teeth and gums. The purpose of a dental screening is to identify potential problems that could have serious consequences if left untreated. **A dental screening does not replace the required dental exam.** Families are responsible for scheduling an annual dental exam for their preschool child with their family dentist. A dental exam includes teeth cleaning and fluoride treatment.

Toothbrushing*

In accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommendations, KCHS classroom teachers provide daily oral/dental care and use fluoride toothpaste for children over two years of age. KCHS will support you and your child by:

- Providing your child with a toothbrush and the opportunity to brush his/her teeth every day as part of the classroom's daily routine*.
- Collaborating with the Knox County Community Health Center, dental hygienists provide hygiene instructions that will improve your child's brushing and lead to cleaner teeth and healthier gums.
- Providing a list of local dentists to establish a dental home.
- Providing support and resources if your child needs a follow-up visit to complete their dental treatment; and
- Providing the needed forms to take with you for appointments.

How you can help your child have healthy teeth:

- Make sure your child has regular dental check-ups.
- Brush twice a day at home with a fluoride-containing toothpaste
- Teach your child to brush both the teeth and gums, up and down.
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride-containing toothpaste; always supervise and make sure they spit the toothpaste out.
- Limit or avoid fruit-flavored juice and sugary drinks, especially at bedtime.
- Complete follow-up treatment when needed.

****Please note that toothbrushing may be suspended when there is an outbreak of illness. If toothbrushing is not taking place routinely, toothbrushes and toothpaste will be sent home quarterly to families to use during their daily routines.***



Nutrition

Knox County Head Start's child nutrition services help you meet your child's nutritional needs and establish good eating habits. These habits will nurture healthy development and promote lifelong well-being. KCHS will provide one-third to two-thirds of your child's daily nutritional needs. KCHS maintains a quality nutrition program as evidenced by compliance with USDA CACFP requirements in monitoring visits and triennial audits.

Our nutrition program provides your child:

- Growth screenings (heights and weights) conducted at a minimum of two times per year
- Menus showing each meal component and serving size by age group
- USDA CACFP-approved meals
- Food items high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt
- Nutritionist support to address any nutritional needs
- Referrals to community agencies such as WIC
- Approval of menus by a registered dietitian

KCHS serves healthy meals approved by the USDA's CACFP Program. KCHS's best practice is to serve fresh fruits and vegetables whenever possible. When that is not possible, we will serve frozen fruits or vegetables before serving canned foods to lower the sodium content in children's diets. Under CACFP rules, cereals cannot have more than six grams of sugar per dry ounce. Yogurt must not have more than 23 grams of sugar per six ounces. We are required to serve one serving of whole grain daily; however, the best practice is to serve whole grains as much as possible.

If your child is enrolled in the half-day program, he/she will receive breakfast and lunch or lunch and snack. If your child is enrolled in the 6.5-hour or Full-Day program, he/she will receive breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack.

The five food groups are: Fruit, Grain, Lean Meat/Poultry, Milk/Yogurt and Vegetables/Beans.

For specifics regarding meals, U.S.D.A. food requirements, etc., please visit:

fns.usda.gov

Knox County Head Start is a sponsoring organization of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As a result, the program receives meal reimbursement from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Ohio Department of Education. Breakfast, lunch, and a healthy snack are provided at the center. Knox County Head Start practices family-style dining at each meal whenever possible.

Why are healthy eating habits important?

Research tells us that the way young children eat, move, and sleep can impact their weight now and in the future. Healthy habits start early in life. Parents are their children's best role models for healthy eating habits. Encouraging and supporting very young children to enjoy active play and choose healthy foods can set a lifelong pattern of healthy, active living. Students with healthy eating and exercise habits have better attendance, improved concentration, fewer behavioral concerns, and greater overall achievement in school. Knox County Head Start will provide monthly resources with some suggestions to encourage your child to grow healthy. Pick one, try it! If it doesn't work for your family, choose another!

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Special Diets

If your child has a special dietary need, KCHS will require that a Special Diet form be on file prior to the first or next class day. A special diet is recognized by the agency when the child has a medical diagnosis or a cultural/religious reason. The form can be obtained from your center manager/family advocate.

CHILD NUTRITION NOTES:

If your child is on a special diet (that includes supplemental foods or a modified diet), please notify your Family Advocate/Center Manager immediately. You will be asked to fill out a Special Diet form for our nutrition staff and your child's teacher.

More ideas for birthday or holiday celebrations:

- Plan/teach art and/or craft activity. Share one or two cultural activities.
- Volunteer in your child's classroom on his/her birthday.
- Read your child's favorite book to his or her School Family™.

Classroom Safety

To ensure the safety of your child and his/her school family, we ask that you do not bring in any outside food. This includes goody bags filled with food items for holidays or birthdays. Celebrations will take place monthly in each classroom during lunch or snack time, and a special food item will be provided by the nutritional staff at each center for each classroom.

Some children may have allergies; food served for each classroom does not contain items that children may be allergic to, like peanuts, when we are made aware of an individual child's allergy.



Policies & Procedures



ODJFS Center Parent Information

The facility is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. This license is posted in a conspicuous place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing childcare are available for review at the facility upon request.

The administrator and each employee of the facility are required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the facility, or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall notify the administrator of his/her presence.

Contact information for parents/guardians of the children attending the facility is available upon request. This information will not include the name, telephone number, or email of any parent/guardian who requests that his/her name, telephone number, or email not be included.

Recent licensing records, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire department, are available upon written request from the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The center's licensing inspection reports for the past two years are also available for review on the Department of Children and Youth's website at: <https://childcaresearch.ohio.gov>.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Individuals working with children are mandated reporters and are required by law to make a report to the Knox County Department of Job and Family Services (KCDJFS) if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect (**Section 215.421 G of the Ohio Revised Code**).

Each Knox County Head Start employee must complete training and sign a statement to verify that they have not been involved in any previous incident of child abuse and/or neglect, nor have they been convicted of child abuse and/or neglect. The training provided to KCHS staff allows them to assess a situation within a family that would require them to make a report to the KCDJFS. Fingerprinting and a criminal background record check are completed on all employees at the time of hire. No person is hired until this procedure is complete. No person is left alone with children until the results are received.

Knox County Department of Job and Family Services will determine the appropriate action and may decide to investigate. It is this agency's job to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is valid and to work with the family to meet the needs of the child. KCHS will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Knox County Head Start encourages families to utilize the Children's Services division of ODJFS as a resource before discipline gets out of hand. Knox County Head Start is concerned with the health, safety, and well-being of all children and parents enrolled in our program.



CHILD SAFETY NOTE:

If you find it difficult to remain in control when disciplining your child, please call Knox County Children Services at (740) 397-KIDS.

Supervision of Children

All children will be supervised by a parent or authorized adult upon arrival and departure from the center. Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their child before they drop off and after they pick up their child from the classroom. Staff members will assume responsibility for each child upon arrival in the designated classroom. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised. Children will be within sight and hearing of staff members at all times. This includes awareness of and responsibility for the activity of each child and being physically present and near enough to intervene if needed.

Classroom Ratios

Classroom ratios are the number of adults present to the number of children in the classroom.

<i>When multiple requirements conflict, KCHS uses the strictest (shown with a *).</i>			
Age Group	Head Start Requirements (During center-specific HS/EHS designated hours)	DCY Licensing Requirements	Step Up to Quality Requirements
Infants (1-12 months)	*1 staff to 4 children Max group size: 8	1 staff to 5 children, or 2 to 12 Max group size: 12	2 staff to 10 children Max group size: 10
Infants (12-18 months)	*1 staff to 4 children Max group size: 8	1 staff to 6 children, or 2 to 12 Max group size: 12	1 staff to 5 children Max group size: 10
Toddlers (18-36 months)	*1 staff to 4 children Max group size: 8	1 staff to 7 children Max group size: 14	1 staff to 6 children, or 2 to 12 (18-30 months) Max group size: 12 1 staff to 7 children, or 2 to 14
Mixed infant/toddler age group (0-36 months)	*1 staff to 4 children Max group size: 8	Goes by age of youngest child on the roster (see above for specific age groups)	1 staff to 5 children Max group size: 10
Preschoolers (36-48 months)	1 staff to 10 children Max group size: 20	1 staff to 12 children Max group size: 24	1 staff to 11 children Max group size: 22
Preschoolers (48-60 months)	1 staff to 10 children Max group size: 20	1 staff to 14 children Max group size: 28	1 staff to 13 children Max group size: 26
Mixed preschool age group (36-60 months)	1 staff to 10 children Max group size: 20	Go by age of youngest child on the roster (see above for specific age groups)	1 staff to 11 children Max group size: 22
School age (kindergarten to age 11)	n/a	1 staff to 18 children Max group size: 36	1 staff to 17 children Max group size: 34

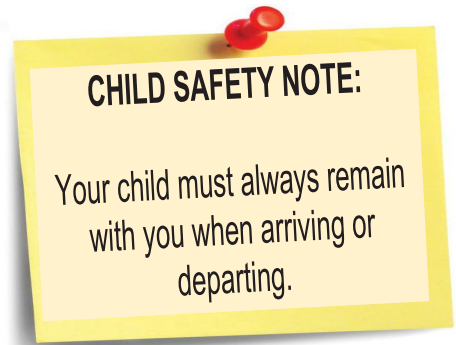
*Early Head Start classrooms with three qualified caregivers may adopt a one staff to three children ratio, with the maximum group size of nine.

Center Fees and Tuition

Center fees and tuition information is found in individual tuition contracts signed by parents/guardians at enrollment, annually, or any time fees/tuition are updated.

Parking Safety

- Please do not leave children in vehicles unattended.
- Do not leave your car running in the parking lot while picking up your children or dropping them off.
- Parents/guardians must park in the designated area of the parking lot to drop off and pick up children.
- Children must always remain with parent/guardian until they are safely with their teachers.
- Children may not enter the building by themselves.



Policy of Confidentiality

It is important to develop relationships of trust and respect with families. KCHS staff, parents, and volunteers must accept the responsibility of holding in confidence any information about children, their families, and their situations. The only valid reason for sharing information with parent permission is to increase an understanding of the child or his/her family or the situation, to improve the services provided, or to coordinate programs. Files of children containing assessment and health data, family background, and other information are open to the child's parents for review, upon written request. Partner agencies can see a file only with written permission from the parent/guardian. You can request an Authorization to Release Information form from your family advocate.

In the event of a court-issued subpoena or a request by Child Protective Services, your child's file will be released without your permission. We will notify you when the file has been released.

Children's Records

The information in your child's record is considered confidential. KCHS will keep your child's file in a locked filing cabinet at his or her center. KCHS will not release any information about your child without written permission on file.

After your child has left our program, if you would like a copy of your child's file, we ask that you provide a written request that includes the following:

- The date of the request
- Your child's name and date of birth
- Your name and relationship to the child
- What documents you are asking for
- The reason you are requesting records

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE:
We will not release your child's record to you or anyone else without written request and consent from you or a court order.

The ERSEA, Data and Grants Coordinator will respond to your request. It will take approximately 48 hours to retrieve a file that has already been archived.

In the event of a court-issued subpoena or a request by Child Protective Services, your child's file will be released without your permission.

Weapons Policy

While the Ohio Revised Code allows concealed carry weapons with a concealed handgun license, Ohio child care licensing regulations allow the owners of licensed facilities to prohibit the carrying of concealed weapons in agency facilities.

Accordingly, ***Knox County Head Start prohibits weapons of any kind from being carried into our facilities***, except for weapons carried by a law enforcement official who can document that his or her jurisdiction requires ready and immediate access to the weapon. Should law enforcement enter the building with a necessary weapon, that weapon must not be accessible to children at any time.



Incident/Injury Procedure

A major responsibility of staff is to ensure the health and safety of each child enrolled in our programs. Staff are alert to the safety needs of the children in their care, anticipate possible hazards, and take necessary and appropriate measures to prevent injuries. To prevent injuries, KCHS will take precautions for each age group. Broken classroom toys or equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible; small toys or other objects that could be a choking hazard to infants and toddlers will not be placed in their classrooms, and hazardous playground equipment will be marked off to prevent children from being hurt until it can be repaired.

If your child gets hurt while in the care of KCHS, you will receive an **Incident/Injury Report (DCY Form #1299)** for your child. This report will be sent home with your child, and you will be asked to sign the report. Additionally, the person completing the form and the center administrator (or designee) will sign the form.

You will receive this report when any of the following occur:

- An illness, accident, or injury that requires first-aid treatment
- A bump or blow to the head
- Emergency transport
- An unusual or unexpected event that jeopardizes the safety of children or staff, such as a child leaving the premises unattended.

The center manager or designee must speak with a representative from the licensing office within 24 hours in the event of:

- Death of a child at the center
- Serious incident, injury, or illness as defined below
- An unusual or unexpected event as defined below

Serious Incident, Injury, Illness, or Unusual Event

A Serious Incident, Injury, Illness, or Unusual Event includes any situation occurring while a child is in the care of the provider that requires emergency medical treatment or professional consultation, or transportation for emergency treatment. In the event of serious injury or illness, staff will remain calm, the child will be cared for, 911 will be called, the parent/guardian will be notified, and a staff person will accompany the child if he or she is transported for emergency treatment. If a child is transported for emergency treatment, the child's health and medical records shall accompany the child. A KCHS employee will stay with the child until the parent/guardian assumes responsibility for the child's care.

This also includes an unusual or unexpected event that jeopardizes the safety of children or staff, such as a child leaving the premises unattended.

Minor Incident, Injury, or Illness

A minor incident, injury, or illness includes an injury or an illness, or any unusual or unexpected event that results in a child being able to return to normal activity, or when basic first aid is given.

Emergencies and Accidents

The Emergency Plan for medical, dental, and general emergencies is located at each center in all classrooms, large motor activity areas, and by every office/classroom phone.

General Emergencies

A General Emergency, as defined by Knox County Head Start, would be any unexpected event that could potentially threaten the safety of a child and/or staff person. Examples of a General Emergency are listed below:

- Any threats to the safety of children due to environmental situations or threats of violence.

- Natural disasters such as fire, tornado, flood, etc. Events such as fire and tornado have a clearly defined plan of action in each classroom. In addition, children and staff practice a fire drill every month and tornado drills in the months deemed necessary by the National Weather Service.
- Loss of power, heat, or water.

Communicable Disease

Knox County Head Start understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work/school when their child is ill. We encourage you to have an alternative plan if your child may not be able to remain in school. Exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to reduce the spread of communicable diseases. The spread of communicable diseases is a fact of life in school and center-based care. Illnesses spread because children have close contact and naturally explore their environment by touching and putting things in their mouths. Staff members receive training to recognize common signs of communicable disease.

Found in the back of this School Family™ Guide, you have a Communicable Disease Fact Booklet. This booklet describes the symptoms and treatment of many communicable diseases that your child may be exposed to during his/her enrollment with KCHS. When your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, you will receive a Health Alert notice.

CHILD SAFETY NOTE:

Your child is to be picked up within one hour of parent contact. ***Your child may return to the center once symptom free, without medication, for 24-hours.***

KCHS may require a doctor's note for him/her to return to the center if your child continues to show symptoms.

This note must confirm that the condition is not contagious.

A child is considered to be sick when demonstrating any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of at least one hundred and one degrees Fahrenheit (one hundred degrees Fahrenheit if taken axillary) when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness.
- Diarrhea (three or more abnormal, unexpected, or unexplained loose stools within a twenty-four-hour period).
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching, or eye pain.
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots, or rashes.
- Unusually dark urine and /or gray or white stool.
- Stiff neck with elevated temperature.
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
- Vomiting more than once or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness.

When caring for sick children, the center shall:

- Isolate the sick child away from other children in another room or portion of a room, but within sight and hearing at all times.
- Provide the sick child with a cot or mat or the sick infant with a crib and make the child comfortable.
- Notify the child's parent(s) immediately to arrange discharge, and if the child's condition worsens during isolation.

Short-Term Exclusion

Children with chronic or communicable diseases will not be permanently excluded. The health and safety of all children will be assured by requiring the exclusion of children who have short-term acute conditions that are contagious and pose an immediate risk to others in the child care setting, such as COVID symptoms, chicken pox, or strep throat.

Your child is defined as too sick to attend if any of the following apply:

- He/she is too sick to participate comfortably in the program's activities.
- He/she has a communicable disease that could spread to other children and staff.
- He/she has had a fever in the last 24 hours (must be a minimum of 24 hours free of symptoms without medication).
- The staff cannot adequately care for the needs of your sick child without compromising the care of other children.

Attendance is allowed, and no child is excluded from program participation for a long-term period, solely based on health care needs or medication requirements (such as HIV or asthma), consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, unless:

- Keeping the child in care poses a significant risk to the health and safety of the child or anyone in contact with the child.
- The risk cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through reasonable modification in the current program policies, practices, and procedures.

In accordance with the program's confidentiality policy, staff will request that parents inform them of any health or safety needs of their child that may need to be addressed during program hours.

- A Medical/Physical Care Plan will be developed, and information shared, as necessary, with appropriate staff regarding the health care needed for the child.
- Proper observation and supervision for children who require close monitoring because of potential side effects from medications they are receiving will be ensured.
- Parents will be assisted in communicating the effects of the medication on the child with their healthcare provider.
- Typically, a child may return to class when symptom-free. However, a medical note may be required for the child to return to class if symptoms are still present, but a physician believes the child is not contagious or does not pose a risk to the health and safety of other children.

Isolation

Each classroom has an isolation area provided for your child while waiting for you to pick him or her up. The purpose is to isolate the germs, so they do not spread to other children. Your child must be picked up **within one hour** of contact.

Isolation precautions: a child isolated due to a suspected communicable disease shall be:

- Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times
- Cared for in another room or portion of a room away from other children
- Provided with a cot and made comfortable. After use, the cot shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicide, or if soiled with blood, feces, vomit, or other body fluids, the cot shall be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with an appropriate germicide.

Medication Policies

Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication

Some children may need to take medications during the hours they are in school. All prescription and non-prescription medications must be accompanied by written instructions from the parent or guardian on the form provided. A prescription label also serves as written instructions by a physician for medications and food supplements, if the requirements stated below are met.

CHILD SAFETY NOTE:
Emergency medication is required to be on site when the child is in attendance.

Everyone administering medication in the center will be trained in medication administration. Each time medication is administered, a written record or log will be used, including dosage, date, and time. The log will be kept on file for one year.

The following will be required for any prescribed medication given to a child:

- First and last name of the child on the original, childproof container
- Current date (within the last twelve months) on the label
- Exact dosage to be given and the means of administration noted on the label
- Exact time to administer medication (*as needed* is not acceptable.)

Non-Prescription Medication

Sometimes you may want your child to take over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol (or other pain relievers), or use other non-prescription medications. Fever-reducing medications that do not contain aspirin or cough medicine that does not contain codeine may be administered by the center **with written instructions from a licensed physician**.

Knox County Head Start requires that over-the-counter medications be in their original container and labeled with:

- The child's first and last name
- The current date
- The expiration date (KCHS staff are not permitted to administer expired medication)
- Specific instructions for giving, storing, and disposing of the medication, including the specific symptoms that require medication to be administered.

A log will be kept that includes dosage, date, and time whenever a non-prescription medication is administered. KCHS employees can only administer over-the-counter medication for three consecutive days. This log will be kept on file for one year.

Over-the-Counter Creams/Topical Ointments

Over-the-counter creams/topical ointments must always follow the age and dosage requirements noted on the original container. The center may also provide topical ointments, such as sunscreen, that will require a parent's signature prior to use. This policy is subject to change without notice to meet Ohio Department of Children & Youth licensing requirements and Head Start Program Performance Standards.

