



Parent Handbook

Your Child's Head Start Center & Classroom:

Classroom Hours:

Please note: In the event of severe weather, CREC Head Start will announce any program closures or delays on local television stations as early as possible and a notification will go out through ChildPlus text message. **Please keep us updated if your phone number changes so that we can reach you, if needed.**

Other decisions regarding closure or early release may need to be made by the Director, based on circumstances that effect the center. The Site Supervisor, Teachers and/or Family Advocates will notify parents of the schedule change and work with them to ensure the safe pick up of all children.

Classroom Teachers:

Family Advocate:

Site Supervisor:

Our Centers

CREC South

261 Locust Street
Hartford, CT 06114

CREC Swift

10 Love Lane
Hartford, CT 06112

CREC Roger Wolcott

451 Windsor Ave
Windsor, CT 06095

CREC Snow

299 Wadsworth Ave
Middletown, CT 06457

All centers can be reached at the central number (860) 244-2004

www.crec.org/head-start/



Table of Contents

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & INFORMATION

◇ Greetings from the Director of CREC Head Start	1
◇ About Us	2-3
◇ Parent & Program Partnership Outline	4
◇ Rules for Adults in the Program	5

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HEAD START

◇ Parent Engagement in Center Activities	6
◇ Volunteering, Internships & Becoming an Employee	6-7
◇ Parent Engagement in Decision-Making	7

HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

◇ Emergency Contacts & Release of Information	8
◇ Daily Health & Safety Checks	8
◇ Active Supervision, Child Accidents, & Safe Sleep Practices	9
◇ Child Illness, Handwashing, Diapering, and Toileting	10
◇ Weather Appropriate, Play-Focused Clothing	11

ATTENDANCE

◇ The Benefits of Regular Attendance	12
◇ Attendance Policy	12
◇ Late Pick-Up Policy	13

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, PRACTICES AND SERVICES

◇ Educational Philosophy	14
◇ Building the School-to-Home Connection	14
◇ Screening and Assessments	15
◇ Referrals and Disability Services	15
◇ Child Guidance	16
◇ Managing Challenging Behavior	16
◇ Preparing You & Your Child for Transitions	17

OUR FAMILY FOCUSED APPROACH

◇ School Readiness and Family Goal Achievement	18
--	----

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

◇ Family Services & Mental Health Services	19
◇ Health Services & Nutrition Services	20

APPENDICES

◇ Parent and Community Complaint Procedure	
◇ Accident/Incident Form	
◇ CREC Head Start Code of Conduct Statement	
◇ Mandated Reporter Policy	
◇ Protection for Privacy of Child Records	
◇ Short Term Exclusion Policy	
◇ In-Kind	

Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome you to the CREC Head Start program! Everyday, families just like yours trust us with their most valuable gifts—their children—and we are honored to have the opportunity to add your child to our school community.

It is our promise to you that we will provide your child with a nurturing, supportive and healthy environment that helps them learn and grow; we will be your partner in getting your child ready to be successful in school and in life; and we will support you in achieving the goals that you set for yourself and your family. This is our promise because we know that our Head Start children and parents are the college graduates, teachers, doctors, and leaders of tomorrow.

We value the relationships that we build with you and your child, and we hope that this relationship will encourage you to reach out when you need to, and to get involved in activities at your child's center. As your child's first and most important teacher, we encourage you to be an active part in your child's education. Your child's teachers are your partners, and your eyes and ears while your children are in their care. Always feel welcome to reach out to them, or to your Family Advocate if you have questions, comments, or concerns you would like to address.

This handbook is full of information about our program, our services, and the expectations that we have in place to ensure that our program is safe, welcoming, and built for learning. If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with a center staff.

Again, welcome to our program! We look forward to seeing you and your child in our center, and participating in all that we have to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennie Shea". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennie Shea

Director of Early Childhood Programs and Services

About Us

For more than 50 years, the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), has been a leader in delivering a wide array of cost-effective and high-quality programs and services to meet the educational needs of children and adults in Greater Hartford. In July of 2020, CREC was awarded Head Start and Early Head Start grants to include early education programming to its many high-quality services.

Head Start is a federally funded program that has been serving children across the country since 1965. Our program, and all Head Start programs, promote the school readiness of young children from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. We offer a two-generation approach, which allows us to serve the needs of children and support families in achieving their own goals.

We respect the home culture and language of all the children and families we serve, while helping children progress towards understanding and speaking English. Throughout our time together we hope to learn more about your family culture so that we can provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects your culture, language, and ethnicity.

Our staff work together to provide comprehensive services that include:

◆ Education & Disabilities Services

- ◆ This includes teaching staff, educational coaches, and the Education Manager. They work together to deliver quality education to your child, and with community agencies who serve children with disabilities to ensure that our classrooms can be inclusive and supportive.

◆ Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

- ◆ This includes your Family Advocate who works with you to set goals, find resources, and connect your family to services. We work with community agencies of all types so that we can connect families to resources that support their well-being. If you have concerns about your family's safety or well-being the staff are available to assist you.

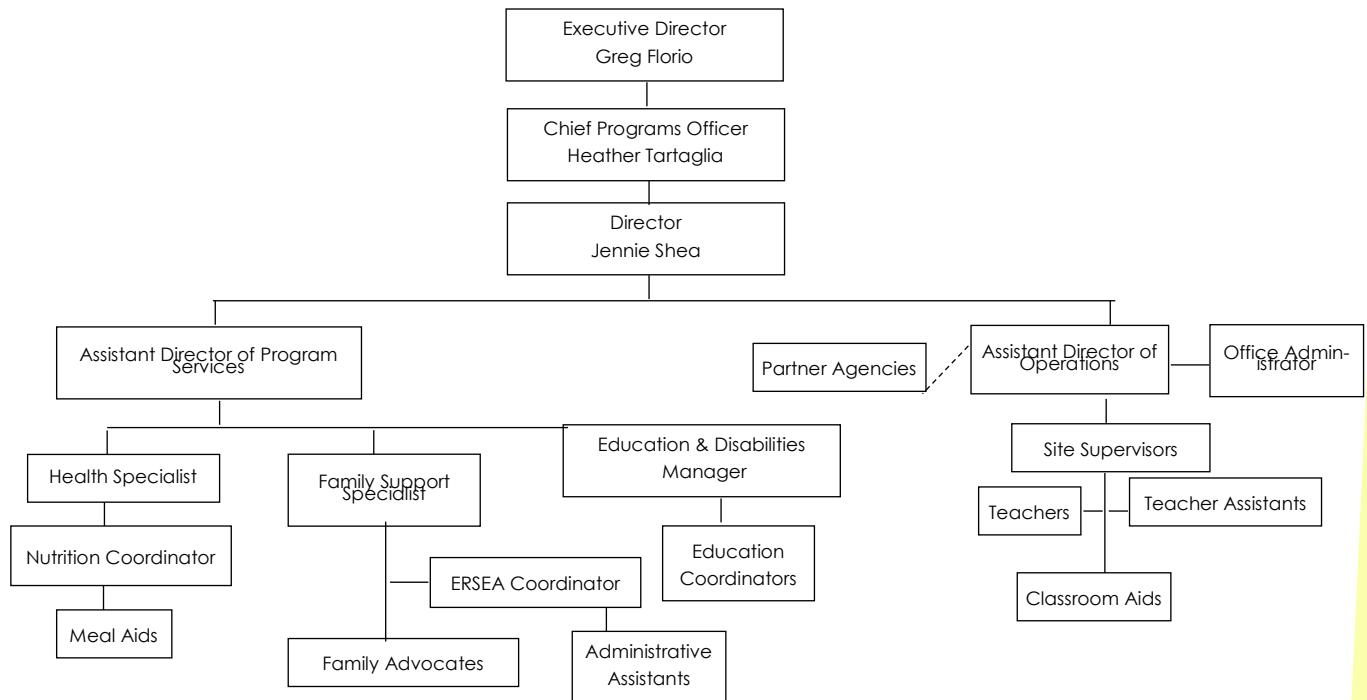
◆ Health & Nutrition Services

- ◆ This includes the Health and Nutrition Coordinator and food service staff. They work together to make sure your child is safe, healthy and has access to nutritious meals. Our staff are trained to do CPR, first aid and administer medication.

◆ Mental Health Consultation

- ◆ This includes the Mental Health Consultants who are available to support the classrooms with social-emotional learning, and can work with a parent and child if there are identified concerns. Our Mental Health Consultants are also happy to offer support to parents if they are looking to be connected to a mental health resource.

Organizational Chart



If you ever have a concern or complaint, we ask that you bring your concern directly to your Site Supervisor, or the person involved (if you feel comfortable doing so). We will address the concern or complaint in a timely manner, and work with you to come to a resolution as quickly as possible following our Parent and Community Complaint Procedure (see Appendix 1).

Slot Distribution

Agency	Hours of Operation	Centers & Location	Total # of slots & Classrooms	
CREC	Early Head Start & Head Start Monday—Friday 8:30 am—3:30 pm Head Start Extended Day classrooms operate until 4:00 pm	CREC Swift 10 Love Lane, Hartford	83	4 EHS (0-3) 3 HS (3-5)
		CREC South 261 Locust St, Hartford	194	5 EHS (0-3) 9 HS (3-5)
		CREC Roger Wolcott 451 Windsor Ave, Windsor	67	2 EHS (0-3) 3 HS (3-5)
		CREC Snow 299 Wadsworth St, Middletown	17	1 HS (3-5)
Catholic Charities	Monday—Friday 8:30am—3:30 pm	St Cyril 45 Groton St, Hartford	32	4 EHS (0-3)
		Institute for Hispanic Families 45 Wadsworth St, Hartford	16	2 EHS (0-3)

Partnering with Families

An important aspect of our program is family partnership. We believe that children and families benefit most from the program when we all engage in meaningful relationship building. Our program staff are here to support your child and your family by...

...Always treating you with respect and recognizing you as your child's first, most important teacher.

...Welcoming you to visit your child's center and classroom.

...Regularly informing you about your child's progress in school, including written progress reports and parent teacher conferences with your child's teachers.

...Encouraging you to take part in making decisions about your child's center and the program through the different parent engagement opportunities we provide. Your ideas and suggestions are valued, and there are opportunities for you to share them with staff and other parents.

...Providing you information about resources within CREC Head Start and the community that you have access to for health, education and family well-being.

In return, we ask that you...

...Work cooperatively with teachers, staff, and other parents so that we can maintain positive relationships that will benefit us all. We encourage you to be open to new ideas and experiences.

...Be actively involved in your child's education and reinforce what your child learns at school by working with him/her at home. When you show your child that their education matters to you, it gives you a shared experience and they will feel proud of their accomplishments knowing you were there supporting them.

...Help us make our program better by offering your ideas, opinions, and suggestions. We appreciate feedback from parents because it gives us the chance to help families in the best possible way.

...Ask questions when you are unsure. Teachers and staff are always happy to answer your questions, or help find you the answers you need if we don't know.

Rules for Adults in the Program

Our centers and events are family friendly, and designed for the children that we serve. In order to make sure that the children are having safe, positive experiences we have rules for adult staff and parents when they are in the program and at our events.

◆ Personal Conduct:

- ◆ CREC Head Start is committed to the safety, privacy, and welfare of our children, families and staff. To ensure a respectful and safe space for all, please note there is a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** for violence, harassment, bullying, or inappropriate behavior at any Head Start center or at a Head Start sponsored activity. Adults shall not curse or use abusive language in the center. **We reserve the right to limit access of family members and/or family friends from your child's site and other program facilities whenever there is a violation of this personal conduct expectation.**

◆ Smoking:

- ◆ Due to the acknowledged hazards, both to adult non-smokers and especially young children, arising from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, CREC Head Start has a **NO SMOKING** Policy. We provide a smoke free environment for staff, children and participants. Smoking of any substance is prohibited at all times on our property and during CREC Head Start sponsored events.

◆ Beverages:

- ◆ Adults are not allowed to have hot beverages in areas in the center where children are present, to prevent any accidental injury. **NO ALCOHOL** is permitted at any Head Start center or activity.

◆ Discipline:

- ◆ Physical discipline at the center is prohibited. This includes a slap on the child's hand or bottom. Aggressive verbal discipline, like shouting angrily or humiliating a child, will not be tolerated.
- ◆ Please note all staff at Head Start are Mandated Reporters. Should any reportable activity occur while a Head Start staff member is present that incident will be reported in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a. Please refer to our Mandated Reporter Policy for more information (see Appendix 4).

◆ Privacy:

- ◆ Every child and family has a right to their privacy. Adults should not share others personal information that they may see or hear in the center.
- ◆ Parents are not permitted to take photos or videos while in the center, to protect the privacy of other children and families.

◆ Property:

- ◆ We ask that everyone treat our property with respect, including our centers and parking lots. Please park in designated spots, and be mindful of the cars around you so that damage is not done to vehicles or property located in the parking lot. Destruction of agency property could result in loss of access to the center or appropriate legal action.

◆ Late Drop Off/Early Pick Up:

- ◆ The classroom schedule is designed to support your child's learning through daily routines, and your child being present for meal times with their peers also assists in their socialization skills. We encourage all parents to bring their children for the full school day so that their child has the opportunity to participate in the full schedule of the day.

Opportunities for Parent Engagement in Head Start...

We love our CREC Head Start parents and are proud to say many of our staff were once parents, just like you! Being involved with your child's care and education is not only your right, but is a great way for you to build upon your positive relationship with your child, grow your leadership and advocacy skills, and build connections to other parents.

We incorporate many different options for parents to be engaged throughout our program so that there are opportunities for parents to find things that fit their schedule. Here are some ways for you to get involved:

PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN CENTER ACTIVITIES

Throughout the school year the Family Service Advocate and Teachers put on events for children and their families. These events focus on what your child is learning in the classroom, and include parent-related information and resources. We encourage parents to come and participate in as many events as possible, so that they can extend their child's learning from the classroom to home.

Our curriculum is research-based and is not holiday focused. Center staff will not plan or promote specific holidays, including birthdays. We do encourage families to share their culture and traditions with the center/classroom staff so that those practices can be incorporated into the lesson planning. However, we ask that parents do not bring food, candy or gifts to the classroom.

Strong relationships with fathers and other **positive male role models** are an important part of children's healthy development, so we hold events throughout the year that focus on these special bonds. Our centers welcome and encourage the participation of positive male role models in the lives of children everyday by creating an environment that supports spending quality time together and meeting other men in the community of parents.

◆ Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to get involved and we appreciate your help! If you have a special skill or talent that could be helpful to your child's teacher or center, we always encourage parents to work with their center management to find ways that they can volunteer. There are several ways you can volunteer—volunteering in the classroom, helping in the kitchen are common volunteer options, assisting with a center event. To become a volunteer in the classroom/center:

1. Let someone from your child's center team know that you're interested in volunteering.
2. Attend a parent volunteer training
3. Based upon the volunteering opportunities you are interested in, you may need to complete a tuberculosis (TB) test at your doctor's and complete a Background Records Check prior to volunteering, which will include fingerprinting. The program can assist in paying for this to be completed.

◆ Internships

We welcome any parent enrolled in a college program who is interested in completing field work or practicum hours with us to contact their Site Supervisor. Internships require Background Checks so please be aware that it may take several weeks for these to be completed.

◇ **Becoming an Employee**

There are opportunities for employment posted regularly and we encourage parents to apply to any jobs they qualify for. You can find postings on center parent boards, on the CREC website (www.crec.org/careers/), and online on employment search services such as Indeed.

Things to remember:

- ◇ You must have your own transportation
- ◇ Employees, including substitute teachers, cannot be a member of the Policy Council.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

One very important way to be involved is by participating in program governance which is the process of providing guiding direction for the program. Participating in Parent Committee and Policy Council gives parents an opportunity to learn about decision making and advocacy in a supportive educational program. Your voice is important and it helps the program can better meet the needs of your child and family!

◇ **Parent Committee**

Every parent of a child currently enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start is automatically a member of the Parent Committee in the center in which your child is enrolled. The Parent Committee gives all parents an opportunity to participate in guiding the direction of the program, as well as get to know other parents and give input about events for the center. The following are just a few ways in which parents may contribute to the program through the Parent Committee:

- ◇ Electing Representatives and Alternates to the Policy Council;
- ◇ Advise staff in developing and implementing program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families
- ◇ Plan center events for parents, invite speakers to present, or discuss your ideas with the staff

◇ **Policy Council**

The Policy Council is our governing body composed of elected parents and community representatives. The Policy Council meets monthly to review and approve program plans and policies. It functions as a link to the Parent Committees and is the program governance "voice of parents" of currently enrolled children. A key role of the Policy Council representatives is to express the ideas and viewpoints of the parents from the Parent Committee they represent. Policy Council members receive training on their roles and responsibilities. As parents think about getting involved, they should consider the following questions before agreeing to serve as a Policy Council Representative if elected:

- ◇ Am I able to commit to at least one meeting per month?
- ◇ Will I put aside my personal opinions to represent the voice of the parents that I was elected to represent?
- ◇ Am I willing and able to look at the big picture for the overall good of the program?

Health and Safety Practices

◆ Emergency Contacts

For the safety of your child, staff are only authorized to release your child to you and to the trusted people you list on your child's **Emergency Contact Form**. This form can only be updated in person and we will not release your child to anyone not listed on the form even if they are your friend or family member. There will be no exceptions. Any person picking up a child must be at least 18 years old and will be asked to show **a valid photo ID** (license, state ID, passport, school ID, etc.) before the child is released. This allows us to be sure we are releasing your child to someone you trust.

We use this sheet at pick up, if your child becomes ill during the day and needs to go home early, or if your child has not been picked up by the end of their scheduled class time. We will always attempt to contact you before we reach out to the others listed on the emergency contact form.

◆ Release of Information

The program is committed to the privacy of all confidential information that is obtained during your child's enrollment. Therefore, we will not release any information about your child to anyone unless we have a signed Release of Information that details what information is acceptable to share. Please be aware of this when sending family or friends to drop off or pick up your child. We will not share information about your child's assessments, attendance, medical conditions, or other sensitive information.

Please see more information about how we protect your child's information in our Protections for Privacy of Child Records (see Appendix 5).

◆ Daily Health & Safety Checks

Each day the staff do checks of the classroom, and playground, environment to ensure that there are no safety concerns. Teachers also perform daily health checks on children when they enter the classroom, and will discuss any injuries or signs of illness with the parent.

All facilities must meet state child care licensing requirements, **even if not required by the state**. Staff members are expected ensure materials and equipment are safe, clean, and sanitized and to teach children to care for the materials, equipment, and facilities. All equipment and materials must at a minimum:

- ◆ Be clean and safe for children's use and are appropriately disinfected;
- ◆ Be accessible only to children for whom they are age appropriate;
- ◆ Be designed to ensure appropriate supervision of children at all times;
- ◆ Allow for the separation of infants and toddlers from preschoolers during play
- ◆ Be kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance.

Each infant/toddler in a center-based program is to be assigned a crib that only she or he sleeps in. Crib sheets and other linens are to be changed and laundered at least weekly. Cribs/mattresses are to be cleaned weekly, or more often if needed, and before use by another child.

Each older two-year old or preschool child in a center-based program must have clean bed linen consisting of a sheet, towel or small blanket to place on his or her cot or mat for daily rest or nap time. Cots or mats are to be cleaned weekly and/or before the use by another child. The used bed linens cannot touch one another during daily storage. All bed linens and clothing must be identified with the child's name. Linen is to be laundered at least weekly and more frequently as needed.

We encourage parents to assist staff in monitoring the environment for any health and safety hazards. If you see something that is a concern, please bring it to the attention of your child's teacher or the Site Supervisor.

◆ Active Supervision

Staff supervise and are actively engaged with children to keep children safe. Staff provide appropriate indoor and outdoor supervision of children throughout the day. Children are never left alone or unsupervised. Ask your child's teacher to share with you their approach to active supervision. Their approach should include the following key elements:

- ◇ Staff set up the environment, so children can be supervised at all times – low furniture, no “blind spots” or hidden corners.
- ◇ Staff communicate with each other and plan to position themselves during the day, so all children can be seen and supervised.
- ◇ Staff scan & count throughout the day –keeping a written count and check-in often with each other often to ensure all children are accounted for.
- ◇ Staff listen for any sounds, or “lack of sound,” that may signal a need for closer supervision or engagement with children.
- ◇ Staff anticipate children's behavior and are prepared for smooth transitions between activities, indoor to outdoor, etc.
- ◇ Staff engage with and redirect children to ensure they are safe and supported in their learning activities throughout the day.
- ◇ Staff appreciate our parents' support in speaking with your children about keeping themselves and their friends safe in the classroom. Children are involved in the process to help them learn safety skills too.

◆ Child Accidents

We are committed to providing a safe environment at our centers and take every possible precaution to ensure the safety of children, staff, parents/guardians, and visitors. Despite all precautions, accidents occasionally happen. When an accident does occur, the child will be attended to immediately in accordance with current first aid practice. Once the child is safe or if the child needs to be seen by a doctor, the parent/guardian will be notified. For accidents or incidents occurring throughout the day the Teachers will complete an Accident/Incident Form (see Appendix 2) and provide the parent with a copy at the end of the school day.

If a child needs to be transported to the Emergency Room, and the parent is unavailable, every effort will be made for a CREC Head Start staff to accompany the child to the hospital that is indicated by the parent/guardian on the child's Emergency Contact Form.

◆ Safe Sleep Practices

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others approved to enter rooms where infants are cared for are made aware of and follow safe sleep practices for infants. Staff members are trained and orientated on safe sleep practices before they are allowed to care for infants.

CREC Head Start follows safe sleep practices for infants as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which includes:

- ◇ Always placing the baby on his or her back for every sleep time.
- ◇ Always use a firm sleep surface. Car seats and other sitting devices are not permitted for routine sleep.
- ◇ The baby will sleep in their own crib in the same room as other children.
- ◇ Keep soft objects or loose bedding out of the crib. This includes pillows, blankets, and bumper pads.
- ◇ Wedges and positioners will not be used, unless required with medical documentation.
- ◇ Teachers must always be able to observe sleeping infants by sight and sound at all times. A teacher who has been trained in safe sleep practices must be in the room at all times. This teacher will remain alert and actively supervise sleeping infants.

Health and Safety Practices cont.

◆ Child Illness

Children should not come to class if their symptoms will cause significant discomfort during their participation. If a child begins showing signs of illness during the school day, staff will monitor the child's symptoms closely and our school nurse will determine if the child needs to be sent home. If it is determined that your child needs to be sent home, you or the emergency contacts you provided, will be contacted and asked to pick the child up. Please review our Child Illness Policy (see Appendix 6).

◆ Hand Washing

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Parents are encouraged to reinforce proper hand washing at home. Children, staff, and volunteers wash hands with soap and running water when arriving each day, coming in from playing outdoors, and before and after:

- ◆ Preparing food or beverages
- ◆ Eating, handling food, or feeding a child
- ◆ Brushing or helping a child brush teeth
- ◆ Giving medication or administering first aid for sores, cuts, or scrapes
- ◆ Playing in water
- ◆ Diapering

And after:

- ◆ Using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet
- ◆ Handling bodily fluid (nose blowing/wiping)
- ◆ Handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
- ◆ Playing in sand, on wooden play sets, and outdoors
- ◆ Cleaning or handling the garbage

◆ Diapering

All Early Head Start staff must follow sanitation and hygiene procedures for diapering that adequately protect the health and safety of the children. The diapering area must be kept sanitary and free from clutter. Centers are designed to separate diapering areas from areas for preparing food, cooking, eating, or children's activities. Staff follow the diapering procedures as posted at the diaper changing area and make plans to accommodate the special needs of older children who need diapering.

◆ Toileting

CREC Head Start welcomes children into center-based care regardless of whether they are able to use the toilet independently or not. Coordination between you and program staff around toilet learning is imperative. A conference between parents and teacher will be held to establish common goals and methods.

For children who are not yet using the toilet independently, teachers will change diapers and assist children in learning to use the toilet when they are ready. If your child is currently learning to use the potty, please dress your child in clothing that is easy to get on and off. Also, please provide a change of clothing just in case the need arises. Accidents are to be expected when children are learning a new skill. Children who are not yet ready, forget, or have accidents will never be made to feel ashamed.

◆ Weather Appropriate, Play-Focused Clothing

Your child's day with us will be full of learning, exploring and playing which can get messy. Whether children are painting, playing in sand, water and mud; learning to drink from cups with no covers; or learning to serve their own food during our family style meals, being messy helps them learn about the world around them. For this reason we ask that you dress your child in clothes that will not be ruined if they are stained or soiled.

Your child will also have the opportunity to play outside every day unless the weather is deemed to be too extreme. Site Supervisors and teachers use **Child Care Weather Watch** as a guide when deciding whether or not to bring children outside. If it is safe for play, out we go!

Outdoor play gives children the chance to stretch their large muscles, breathe fresh air, take in the sunshine and experience the weather, enjoy the freedom of open spaces and move their bodies differently than they can indoors. Spending time outdoors gives all children an opportunity to explore their senses, practice developing gross motor and fine motor skills, social skills and begin to appreciate and respect the natural world.

We want your child to safely be able to have these experiences so we ask that you keep the following health and safety information in mind when dressing your child for the day:

- ◆ Dress your child in weather appropriate clothing.
- ◆ Children should wear non-skid, fully enclosed shoes. Sneakers best support children's balance and full movement of their bodies. Open footwear such as sandals, flip flops, beach shoes, and "jelly" shoes can cause falls and be dangerous.
- ◆ Strings, jewelry, scarves or items that could become caught on playground equipment are a danger to your child, so avoid dressing your child in these items to prevent accidents and injuries.
- ◆ **Please do not dress your child in valuable items. We are not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.**

We ask that you please send a labeled extra set of clothing for your child to keep in their cubby. If your child needs to be changed and has no extra clothing in the classroom, the teachers will lend whatever clean clothing is available. **If you need assistance obtaining clothing items for you or your child, please reach out to your classroom teacher or Family Advocate.**

Attendance

◆ The Benefits of Regular Attendance

When your child enrolls in our program, they will begin learning routines, developing relationships with their new friends and teachers, and will start gaining the skills they need to be successful in school and life. Consistently attending school will provide them the best opportunity to learn the skills that they need.

Children who attend Head Start or Early Head Start on a regular basis show significant gains in comparison to children who do not. Research collected by the **National Head Start Association** indicates that:

- ◆ Head Start children show significantly better social-emotional, language and cognitive development.
- ◆ Head Start children have better social skills, impulse control and approaches to learning.
- ◆ Head Start children are more likely to have healthy eating patterns and are less likely to be overweight compared to children in other non-parental care
- ◆ Head Start children have a higher likelihood of graduating high school, attending college, and receiving a post-secondary degree, license, or certification.

We're here to help your child find their highest potential, so we encourage parents to bring their child to school everyday when possible with the goal of maintaining 85% or greater average daily attendance.

◆ Attendance Policy

Attendance is tracked daily for every child, which helps us monitor patterns of absenteeism early on. To ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school, we ask you to contact the program within one hour of the start of the program day when your child is going to be absent. If the program has not heard from you within one hour of your child's expected arrival time, staff will attempt to contact you. If your child is absent for a second day without contact from you, program staff will conduct a home visit.

If staff are unable to make contact with you by phone or in person, they will email you a letter asking that you contact the program and they will continue to attempt contact with you by phone. If the staff is unable to make contact with you for 5 consecutive days, you will receive another email notifying you that your child will be withdrawn from the program.

◆ Attendance Plans

If your child is chronically absent (2 times in a week, or 3 times in two weeks), and it is not due to illness, your Family Advocate will work with you to develop a plan to support your child's regular attendance. Attendance plans are used to plan out strategies to reduce the barriers you and your child are experiencing that are preventing your child from being in school.

We are always available to assist with family concerns and are here to support you and your child. If your child is unable to attend school due to lack of transportation or due to your work/school hours. Please speak with your Family Advocate to determine if there is another program option more suitable for your family.

◆ Late Pick Up Policy

The cornerstone of the partnership we build between teachers and parents is respect, so we ask that parents respect the staff's planning and personal time by being on time for pick up.

The following policy and its procedures are in place to ensure that you and your child are safe. When a parent is late and we have not heard from them, there can be concern that something may have happened that has prevented the parent from being in contact. This is why it is important that you call the center staff as soon as possible to inform them if you will be late or will not be able to pick up your child. Together you can discuss arrangements to have your child picked up. If your child has not been picked up and you have not called to let us know that you will be late, the following procedure will be used:

- ◇ Lateness will be defined as immediately after the closing time of your child's classroom.
- ◇ Teachers will begin calling parents to remind them of the classroom closing time 5 minutes prior to pick up. If they do not reach you by phone, and the child has not been picked up by the closing time of the classroom, they will begin calling your child's Emergency Contacts.
- ◇ Once you have arrived late to pick up your child you will be asked to sign a Late Pick Up Notice, which will be kept in your child's record. If you demonstrate a pattern of lateness, you will be required to have a meeting with the Teachers and Family Advocate to discuss barriers to on-time pick up. If the lateness continues after this meeting, you will be required to meet with the Site Supervisor before your child will be permitted to return. At that time you and the Site Supervisor will discuss options including an early pick up schedule that will need to be followed or the option to assist you in finding care that better meets your needs.

In the event that the staff are unable to make contact with anyone after trying you and all emergency contacts for one hour, staff will contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the local Police Department to ensure the safety of your child.

◆ Late Drop Off/Early Pick-Up

The program supports the different circumstances of all families, and understands that it may be necessary at times to drop off your child late or to pick them up early. The classroom schedule is designed to support your child's learning through daily routines, and your child being present for meal times with their peers also assists in their socialization skills. We encourage all parents to bring their children for the full school day so that their child has the opportunity to participate in the full schedule of the day.

If your work/school schedule, or other family circumstance, prevents you from bringing your child in at the regular drop off and pick up times please speak with your Family Advocate or child's Teacher so that we may support you in building a routine that works for your circumstances.

Educational Philosophy, Practices and Services

At CREC Head Start, we believe that parents are their child's first and most important teacher. No one knows your child better than you do, so we value the knowledge that you bring to the partnership you build with your child's teachers. In return we provide your child with an active, hands on, play-based program that takes into account your child's family, culture, experience, abilities and needs.

Our classrooms are inclusive of children from all backgrounds and with all levels of ability. If your child has a disability or is a dual language learner, staff will provide an environment of inclusion that supports and respects you and your child. We understand that children will progress in their own time and we celebrate differences in our classrooms.

Teachers plan organized activities, schedules, lesson plans, and early learning experiences based on the curriculum that respond to and build upon each child's individual pattern of development and learning. The program provides age-appropriate equipment, materials, supplies and physical space for indoor and outdoor learning environments. Necessary accommodations are provided to make the space, equipment, and materials accessible to children with disabilities.

We know that children learn best when they feel safe and secure, so our classrooms are designed to be nurturing, supportive and healthy environments for children. When children freely play and explore, they:

- ◇ Learn to share, take turns and play well with others
- ◇ Feel good about themselves and learn to express their feelings
- ◇ Use their imagination and gain independence
- ◇ Learn and use new concepts and vocabulary

◇ Building the School-to-Home Connection

At CREC Head Start we believe that our role with parents is to be their partner in their child's learning, and their family's success. We encourage you to participate in opportunities to become more knowledgeable about your child's education, such as:

- ◇ Volunteering in the classroom
- ◇ Communicating regularly with your child's teacher about their routines, activities and experiences
- ◇ Participating in home visits, parent-teacher conferences, and meetings to discuss recommendations

Another great way to strengthen your child's growth and development and partner with their teachers is through **at-home learning**. Practicing daily routines and reading to your child are different ways that you can help your child learn. Your child's teachers can provide you with an **in-kind form** (see Appendix 7) form to help you track different tasks and exercises you do with your child at home.

When parents engage their children in learning, children develop a love for learning because it becomes an opportunity to spend time together and to show off the skills they are building when they are away at school. Some examples of simple activities you can do with your child are:

- ◇ Counting the number of red cars you see while in the car
- ◇ Having your child set the table for dinner
- ◇ Asking them what new words they learned while at school

◆ Screening and Assessments

Teachers will partner with you to complete a behavioral screenings for your child within the first few weeks of enrollment. The information you share with teachers about your child's typical behavior is an important part of the screening process. The teachers will also complete a developmental screening to identify your child's current skills as well as any concerns regarding their motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional development.

Ongoing assessments are conducted by teachers for each child throughout the program year to support individualization of curriculum activities. The ongoing assessments include informal teacher observations and family input. The assessment provides information to:

- ◆ Evaluate the child's developmental level and progress;
- ◆ Determine a child's strengths and needs;
- ◆ Inform and adjust strategies to better support individualized learning;

◆ Referrals and Disability Services

If the screening results indicate a concern about your child's development, your child's teacher and perhaps other support staff will discuss with you the process for referral for further evaluation. Referrals are only made with parent's written consent. These referrals are to the local agency responsible for conducting formal evaluations for children in the local area. Program staff will support you through the formal evaluation process. Teaching Staff, service providers and families work together to:

- ◆ Determine if a child has an educational developmental delay/disability
- ◆ Refer a child to a local education agency and/or early intervention agency for a special education evaluation, and
- ◆ Develop goals and activities that are developmentally appropriate based on the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children birth to age three or Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children ages 3 to 5 years.

Inclusion is our philosophy and all of our classrooms are inclusive of children of all abilities. When children of different abilities play and learn together, all children benefit. If developmental delays are recognized and addressed during their early years, children with disabilities will have a greater rate of success which is why we assess every child throughout their time in the classroom in order to ensure early detection.

If you suspect that your child has a disability or needs additional educational support and you want to learn more about disability supports available to you, we encourage you to visit the following websites as resources. Our Education & Disabilities Specialist is also available for consultation, just as your Family Advocate to connect you!

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (www.cpacinc.org) offers information and support to families of children with disabilities and other chronic conditions. They have staff who can help connect you with services and answer questions that you may have.

CT.gov, search Early Childhood Special Education offers information and resources for children who are between 3 and 5 years old.

Connecticut Birth to Three (www.Birth23.org) offers information and a simple referral form that can be completed by the child's family member who wishes to have them evaluated for support.

Educational Philosophy, Practices and Services cont...

◆ Child Guidance

When a child's behavior needs to be redirected, we believe the guidance we provide is an opportunity for the child to learn. Challenging behavior can be part of a child's development, and we work closely with parents to find positive approaches to guiding their child. **Our teachers use positive, non-punitive methods of guidance which include:**

- ◆ Respecting and acknowledging children's feelings;
- ◆ Creating a classroom atmosphere through example and attitude where it is natural and acceptable to express feelings;
- ◆ Developing clear, reasonable, consistent, and age-appropriate rules and expectations for children, and to the extent possible, engage children themselves in the rule-setting process;
- ◆ Working with children to help them solve problems instead of imposing solutions;
- ◆ Reducing the potential need for discipline by anticipating and decreasing instances when problems could arise;
- ◆ Using natural and logical consequences as learning opportunities for children, and;
- ◆ Maintaining a positive approach to classroom management.

Our teachers will never:

- ◆ Engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse or humiliation as a means of discipline.
- ◆ Employ methods of discipline that involve isolation (time out), the use of food as punishment or reward or the denial of basic needs.
- ◆ Engage in any method of physical restraint on a child.

Please see our Code of Conduct Statement to learn more about our child guidance philosophy (Appendix 3).

◆ Managing Challenging or Unsafe Behavior

A child may not be suspended or expelled from Head Start because of their behavior. However, if a child displays persistent, unsafe behavior, program staff will use the Behavior Management procedure to ensure every effort is made to help the child be safe and successful while participating in the Head Start program.

1. Identifying a behavior concern and putting strategies in place
2. If it escalates or becomes unsafe, the Mental Health Consultant will work with the Education team and the family to create a Behavior Intervention Plan
3. If the behavior remains unsafe and cannot be managed using the identified plan, a child may be put on a modified schedule.

A temporary schedule modification will only be used as a last resort and in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications. Examples of behaviors that may require temporary suspension are behaviors that are continuous, excessive and dangerous: repeated biting, kicking, throwing objects, inflicting harm to self or others, consistent oppositional behavior or non-compliance in times of safety or urgency, or running from the teacher or from the room or playground.

◆ Preparing You and Your Child for Transitions

Throughout the course of your child's time at CREC Head Start, you will participate in one or several **transitions**—this could be your child's initial entry into their classroom, a transition from Early Head Start to Head Start, from Head Start to Kindergarten, or even a transition to a new school if you need to. We acknowledge that change can be difficult and that the best way to feel comfortable with it is to prepare! Below is some information on common transitions you might encounter.

In order to ensure a successful transition into Head Start or Early Head start, parents are asked to participate in a transition process at the time of their child's enrollment. A thoughtful, individualized transition into the classroom helps provide a trusting, secure relationship for the parent, child and classroom staff. Initial transitions are conducted throughout the child's first week to familiarize parents with the program's various services, and to acclimate the child to the classroom setting.

The transition out of Early Head Start marks the beginning of a new experience for both you and your child. We will begin working with you when your toddler turns **2 years and 6 months old** to plan for your child's transition to preschool. Whether you'd like your child to transition into a Head Start classroom, or think that you might be interest in learning about other options for your child, we'd like to stay by your side to offer guidance and information about what to expect.

All children are scheduled to transition out of Early Head Start when they turn 3 years old, but can transition as early as 2 years and 9 months if the child, parent(s) and teachers feel the child is ready. If your child has a disability and a transition to preschool at that age would not be developmentally appropriate, your child's teachers or Family Advocate can set up a meeting to discuss an extended transition plan for your child. We will work closely with any agencies your family is involved with to make your child's transition smooth and to make sure there is a continuity of services.

The transition to kindergarten is an exciting time for preschoolers. Your child will be learning all the skills they need to be successful and will be excited to show you all the new things they are learning to do. Your child's teachers will regularly share your child's progress with you. Your Family Advocate will give information about kindergarten registration in your community and can provide information about licensed before and after school programs, summer programs, or other child care options if needed.

If your child has a disability, your child's team will work with your child's new school to ensure that services and support are in place for your child to have a successful transition.

A transition to another program might be necessary if your family is moving to a new community outside of our service area. Your Family Advocate can assist you with finding another program that meets your needs. If you are able to transport them, your child can continue to receive services at their current site until a transition to another suitable program can be arranged.

If your family moves to another location within our service area or if your child's classroom location and hours do not meet the needs of your family, a transfer can be requested at any time. Please contact your Family Advocate if you would like to request a transfer. Once a transfer request has been submitted, it remains active until the transfer can be processed or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Our Family Focused Approach

◆ School Readiness and Family Goal Achievement

Our primary goal is to prepare your child for a lifetime of success, and you play a very important role in helping us achieve that goal. You are your child's first, and most important, teacher which means your input is valuable in helping support their growth and development. From birth through age five, your child is developing the critical physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills they need to be successful in school and for the rest of their lives. These skills are built in your home and in our classrooms.

Children learn through everyday activities such as cooking dinner, bed time routines, riding in the car or the bus, attending medical/dental appointments, and socializing with other children. This learning helps your child have the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for **school readiness**.

At Head Start, **school readiness** means:

- ◆ Children are academically ready for school
- ◆ Families are ready to support their children's learning
- ◆ Children have the ability to regulate their emotions and form social connections

We recognize that in order for families to support their child's learning, they must be able to achieve their **own goals** and have **supportive relationships** that help them get there. Our Family Advocates partner with families to work towards:

- ◆ Parents and families being safe and healthy, and having increased financial security.
- ◆ Parents and families developing strong relationships that nurture their child's learning and development beginning with transitions to parenthood.
- ◆ Parents and families observing, guiding, promoting, and participating in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
- ◆ Parents and families advancing their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.
- ◆ Parents and families supporting and advocating 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.
- ◆ Parents and families forming 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.
- ◆ Parents and families participating in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

Comprehensive Services

We are committed to providing high quality comprehensive services to the children and families in our program. We offer families support in the areas of social service, mental health, disabilities, health, and nutrition. However, if a child or family is in need of a service that we cannot provide, or if the need requires the assistance of someone with a greater level of knowledge we may recommend that you and your family be referred to an outside agency. The following is information regarding all of the comprehensive services we offer:

◆ Family Services

The Family Services team believes that when families do well, children do well—and that when both do well the family is at its strongest. Family Advocates (FSWs) work closely with families to act as your partner and to offer support, assistance, and guidance. Throughout the year your Family Advocate will work along side you to identify your family's strengths and goals for the future.

All parents have goals that they set for themselves and their children, and we want to help you accomplish them by creating a **Family Partnership Agreement**. During this process, you will identify a goal, determine what steps need to be taken in order to reach it, and how your Family Advocate might help you get there.

Your Family Advocate can also assist you with identifying resources in the community that could benefit you or your family. Please feel free to ask your Family Advocate if you have questions or are interested in more information about housing or job searches, health or mental health resources, GED or vocational training, or other community resources.

◆ Mental Health Services

Early childhood mental health refers to the ways in which young children manage their emotions, form relationships, problem solve in different environments and learn about the world around them. We know that the mental health of young children is linked to the well-being of the people who care for them, and that addressing mental health concerns when children are young makes a positive difference for years to come.

CREC Head Start provides a variety of on-site mental health services and supports delivered by Masters level and/or Licensed Mental Health Clinicians. We also work in collaboration with local community mental health agencies to ensure all families have access to mental health services.

Our **strength-based** mental health services and supports include prevention and promotion strategies for the classroom and home, early identification and when appropriate, referral to local community mental health providers. Examples of how we can support your child's mental health on-site include:

- ◆ Social-emotional curriculum, screening and assessment
- ◆ Behavioral Consultation to parents and teachers
- ◆ Advocacy and referral to community mental health agencies

If you would like to learn more about how we can support you or your child's mental health please contact your classroom teacher, Family Advocate or your center's assigned Mental Health Consultant.

◆ Health Services

We involve all parents in the process of accessing needed medical and dental health services for themselves and their child, to track and report completion of needed services, and to identify health concerns to be addressed through individualized plans for follow-up and treatment. The staff regularly collaborate and communicate with families to promote children's health and well-being including:

- ◆ Ensuring all children enrolled are up to date with necessary health screening and assist in performing these screening where needed. Screenings included are: vision, hearing, height/weight, visual check of teeth and gums.
- ◆ Emphasizing the importance of identifying health concerns, early referral, and follow-up
- ◆ Emphasizing that updated immunization records, physicals, dental exams, and lead screen results are required results are required by our program.
- ◆ Practicing hand washing to prevent the spread of disease and/or illness.
- ◆ Providing children with the opportunity to brush their teeth as part of their daily routine.

◆ Nutrition Services

Nutrition is an important part of a child's development, which is why we serve all of our children a healthy breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Each meal is planned using USDA guidelines and requirements, and menus are sent home once every 3 month cycle so that you know what your child will be offered each day.

We serve all of our meals family style which gives children the opportunity to choose what they eat and to socialize with others around the table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and help with the mealtime routine. If a child does not want to eat a particular food, the child is encouraged to have a taste, but the child is never forced. Food is never used as a reward or punishment.

Health staff will also discuss the importance of physical activity with the children in their classroom, and assist parents in selecting and preparing nutritious foods that meet their family's nutritional and budgetary needs.

Food Allergies or Modifications

Individual health care plans will be developed for children with special dietary or feeding concerns. This written plan will indicate the restricted food(s) and recommended substitutions and/or modifications. All written plans or instructions will indicate symptoms of exposure and what to do in case of an emergency allergic reaction. This plan will guide kitchen and classroom staff in the care of your child. Staff will work with parents to provide reasonable accommodations when indicated in a child's IEP/IFSP or plan developed by the health care provider for children with diagnosed disabilities who also require modifications for feeding, equipment or any part of mealtime.

Bottle Feeding

Our program supports and promotes breast feeding, and can make accommodations for mothers who wish to breastfeed during program hours. We also offer the option of storing and feeding your child bottled breast milk. Staff ensures containers of breast milk or formula are dated, clearly labeled with the child's name, and used only for the intended child. Bottles are kept at the appropriate temperature and brought to the appropriate temperature before serving. However, microwaves are not used to warm bottles or foods.

Introduction of New Foods

Teachers of infants are to work closely with parents, and health care providers as needed, to center feeding around individual developmental readiness and feeding skills. The staff will introduce solid foods at 6 months of age, or when developmentally appropriate, based on information provided by the parent in the infant feeding diary. New foods are introduced one new food at a time only after a parent has introduced that food at home.

APPENDICES

Parent and Community Complaint Procedure

Policy

In compliance with the Head Start Act 642(c)(1)(E)(x)(bb), the CREC Head Start program is required to establish and maintain a procedure for working to resolve community complaints about the program. This procedure is provided to all families and is available by request to the community that we serve. CREC Head Start promotes the philosophy that the individuals involved in a complaint should make every effort to resolve issues between themselves as the first step in any disagreement, misunderstanding or complaint.

Procedure

Regardless of the origin of the complaint, whether in the community at-large or in the center, the following procedure will be utilized in an effort to resolve the issue at the earliest possible opportunity at the lowest possible level. **If a complaint concerns the safety of a child, or children, all initial steps will be bypassed and the Director of CREC Head Start will be notified immediately.**

1. The concern will be address by the person(s) with the concern directly with the person(s) involved.

- ◆ The individuals involved should meet informally and make every effort to resolve the issue together immediately. If the issue is not resolved through conversation, the employee will provide the person(s) with a concern the work contact information for his/her direct supervisor and notify the supervisor of the unresolved concern.

2. The person(s) with the concern should discuss the concern with the person's supervisor.

- ◆ The person(s) with the concern should contact the responsible supervisor to discuss the issue. The supervisor will listen to the concern and as appropriate, engage the person(s) with the concern with the employee(s) involved, or other program staff, to resolve the issue through conversation.

3. If the issue has not been resolved through steps one or two, the person(s) with the concern will submit a written complaint to the supervisor's manager and the Director.

- ◆ If the person(s) with the concern does not believe that the issue has been resolved following a conversation with the supervisor, a written complaint should be submitted to the supervisor's manager and Director.
- ◆ The person(s) making the complaint is free to ask for assistance in writing down the complaint, if needed. The written complaint should be factual, free of opinion and focus on what happened. The supervisor receiving the written complaint then submits a copy of the complaint to their manager and Director immediately upon receipt.

4. The Manager or Director who receives the complaint meets with the person(s) making the complaint to facilitate resolution to the concern.

- ◆ The responsible supervisor will contact the person(s) making the complaint within one working day and set the date, time and location for the face-to-face meeting. The supervisor and other program employee(s) will be invited to participate as appropriate.
- ◆ The goal of the face-to-face meeting is to restate the concern/complaint and create an acceptable resolution to the concern whenever possible. The Manager or Director will facilitate the meeting and ensure that each person's point is heard and respected. The group will determine one of the following next steps:
 - ◆ It may be decided that no further action is needed if the discussion resolved the issue.
 - ◆ It may be determined at the meeting that more information is needed; if so, the meeting will be rescheduled.
 - ◆ A resolution is not reached.
 - ◆ An action plan with target dates and persons responsible may be developed that is acceptable to all parties. The action plan is then implemented and if the action plan includes information that must be shared with all staff at the center level, this will be done at the next scheduled staff meeting.
 - ◆ The person with the complaint does not attend the meeting as scheduled or rescheduled, the Program Director will send a letter to the person with the resolution within five days.

5. If the face to face meeting does not result in resolution or an agreed upon plan or if the Director does not approve the changes in procedure, the issue will remain unresolved.

- ◆ The Deputy Executive Director will be notified as appropriate in order to determine the next step in the resolution process.

Accident/Incident Form

Accident/Incident Report



Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Center and Classroom Name: _____ Date: _____

Name of Staff Completing Form: _____

Please indicate: ☐ Accident (was injured) ☐ Incident (caused an injury to another child)

Time of Accident/Incident: _____ am/pm ☐ unknown (for injuries at home)

Location of Accident/Incident: ☐ Home ☐ Parking Lot ☐ Classroom ☐ Playground ☐ Bathroom
☐ Hallway ☐ Other: _____

Accident/incident observed by: _____

Other adult witnesses: _____

How the accident/incident occurred: _____

Area and Description of Injury: _____

First Aid/Care Provided: _____

Parent contacted immediately? ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, who contacted the parent and when: _____

Disposition of the Child: ☐ Remained at School ☐ Sent Home* ☐ Emergency Services Called*

***If serious injury occurred, Health Practitioner and Site Supervisor will determine disposition of the child. Both must be contacted immediately following injury, and either will notify the parent.**

Signature of Staff: _____ Date: _____

Name of Guardian Who Reviewed: _____

Signature of Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Guardian Refused to Sign? ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, reason given _____

For staff use only: Original to guardian, copy to Site Supervisor

SS Rec'd: Date: _____ Initials: _____

*For serious injury, time that the SS/HP were notified: _____

CREC Head Start Code of Conduct Statement

This Employee Code of Conduct outlines the expectations and standards of behaviors for all CREC Early Childhood employees. All CREC Early Childhood employees have the responsibility to become familiar with, and abide by, local, state and federal laws that impact their work, as well as all CREC policies and regulations. Employees are expected to faithfully carry out their assigned duties in a manner that upholds ethical standards and adheres to all applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

All CREC Early Childhood employees are expected to demonstrate professionalism and integrity at all times. Professional behavior in the workplace is a combination of attitude and manners. It includes the way employees speak, act, and make decisions. Professional work behavior includes treating supervisors, colleagues, and students with respect; projecting a positive attitude; being polite; exercising good judgment; and being ethical.

The CREC Council expects all employees to recognize that they are being continuously observed by students and/or parents while on duty or attending school functions; and that their actions and demeanor will influence and be reflected in the conduct of the students, and will affect CREC's standing in the community. Accordingly, it is expected that employees will strive to set the kind of example that will serve students and families well in adopting their own conduct and behavior; will be conducive to an appropriate school atmosphere; and will be a positive reflection on CREC.

CREC Early Childhood employees are expected to:

- ◇ Treat all students, colleagues, and parents with respect, fairness, and courtesy
- ◇ Communicate clearly, honestly, and professionally with colleagues, students, and parents
- ◇ Avoid the use of offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate language
- ◇ Ensure the safety and security of students and staff
- ◇ Report safety concerns, accidents, or incidents promptly
- ◇ Be punctual and maintain regular attendance as required by their position
- ◇ Notify their supervisor in advance of any anticipated absences or tardiness
- ◇ Use CREC resources, including equipment and facilities, responsibly and for CREC-related purposes
- ◇ Not delete access to CREC shared folders and documents without consent from a supervisor
- ◇ Not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague or student, including on-line

When conflicts arise, employees are expected to:

- ◇ Seek constructive and respectful resolutions through appropriate channels
- ◇ Avoid engaging in disruptive or unprofessional behavior
- ◇ Refrain from using a personal or school recording device to record student or colleague
- ◇ Participate in restorative practices and/or reflective discussions aimed at collaborative problem-solving and building solid relationships"

CREC Head Start Code of Conduct Statement cont...

In addition, all staff and volunteers employed within the Early Childhood Education Division are required at time of hire or placement to understand and abide by the codes of conduct as set forth in the state and federally dictated performance standards. The following standards specify that:

1. Staff will respect and promote the unique identity of each child, family, and staff member, and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.
2. Staff understand that maintaining confidentiality is important to the success of our mission, our reputation in the community and the privacy of clients and staff. Family files, personnel records, financial information, client information and other related information is considered confidential. Staff are required to protect this information by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly when not in use, and discussing it only with those who have a legitimate need to know. Additionally staff, who are also parents, may not access confidential information (as defined above) other than what is required within the scope of their job responsibilities. If approached by members of the news media, requesting information regarding CREC Early Childhood Education operations, staff will refer requests to the Director.
3. Staff understand that no child shall be left alone or unsupervised while under their care. Supervised is interpreted to mean at least two paid or contracted staff persons are present, unless an exception has been approved by the Director or their designee. Staff will ensure children are kept safe at all times.
4. Staff will use positive methods of child guidance to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior. This includes:
 - ◇ Modeling emotional control for students (i.e. narrating or demonstrating strategies)
 - ◇ Implementing self-regulation skill building for students (e.g. breathing, movement, relaxation, etc.)
 - ◇ Maintaining a calm demeanor when interacting with students
 - ◇ Speaking positively and respectfully to, and about, students
 - ◇ Refraining from power struggles with students.
 - ◇ Engaging in active listening with students.
 - ◇ Exploring problems with students before discussing consequences.
 - ◇ Delivering consequences for failing to meet expectations calmly and consistently
5. Staff will maintain positive methods of engaging with my colleagues, especially in the presence of children, as they recognize that they are modeling respectful relationship management to the children through their own behavior. This includes:
 - Speaking positively and respectfully to other adults
 - ◇ Speaking respectfully about other adults.
 - ◇ Refraining from power struggles with other adults.

CREC Head Start Code of Conduct Statement cont...

6. Staff will not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, • Use corporal punishment;
- ◇ Use isolation (time out) to discipline a child;
 - ◇ Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth;
 - ◇ Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;
 - ◇ Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate, rejecting, intimidate, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;
 - ◇ Physically abuse a child;
 - ◇ Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, shaming, teasing, threats, intimidating or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family; or,
 - ◇ Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.
7. Staff understand that no child may be removed from the presence of staff other than a child's own parent or guardian or other authorized person.
8. Staff will not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of significant value for personal use or enrichment from contractors/vendors or potential contractors/vendors who have been awarded contracts or provide services or materials for CREC Head Start.
9. Unless authorized by the Director, staff will not solicit or request donations (monetary, services and/or goods) for the agency or agency sponsored events.

Staff understand that they must maintain professional boundaries with agency enrolled children/families at all times. Staff are expected to keep their personal lives separate from that of enrolled children/families and shall have only limited contact outside of work time and/or work related activities. Staff are to discuss with their supervisor any situations/relationships with enrolled children/families that are unclear or questionable.

CREC supports and encourages positive relationships between employees, but discourages relationships of a romantic nature between co-workers. Such relationships may have an adverse effect on the workplace environment. Employees who pursue a relationship with a co-worker must be vigilant to ensure that their actions are not unwelcome and that the relationship is consensual; and does not interfere with work, create or result in favoritism, create an uncomfortable or hostile work environment for others, or affect the ability of those involved to perform their duties. Employees who are involved in a romantic relationship with a co-worker in the same school/program must notify their direct supervisor and Human Resources.

CREC prohibits romantic relationships between supervisors and the employees they supervise and/or whose working conditions or position they may affect, directly or indirectly. This includes relationships between staff working in the same classroom.

The relationship between staff and students should be one of cooperation, understanding and mutual respect. Staff have the responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and to motivate each student to perform to their capacity. Staff members are expected to regard each student as an individual and to accord to each rights and respect accordingly. Insults, disparaging names, or sarcasm shall not be used as a way of forcing compliance with a staff member's requirements or expectations. CREC believes that students and staff members should interact with each other in a warm, open, and positive fashion. However, a professional distance must be maintained at all times, in order to preserve the atmosphere necessary to succeed in the educational mission of the school. CREC prohibits all forms of sexual remarks or conduct between staff and students.

Mandated Reporter Policy

All CREC Head Start staff are required to be CT DCF Mandated Reporter trained and submit a certification of completion prior to they begin their duties. All staff are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families, or their Supervisor, immediately and cause a report to be made. Staff members do not require the permission of their Supervisor in order to make a report and will use the following procedure when making a report:

4.1 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting. All staff and consultants will follow appropriate practices, at a minimum.

4.1.1 Reporting of suspected or known child abuse and neglect is required by state law to report any suspected abuse within 12 hours. CREC HS requires reports to be made within 12 hours of first becoming aware of the situation. The person reporting suspected abuse will not be required to ask permission or report to any person in advance of reporting suspected abuse. Child Abuse Procedures and Hotline numbers will be posted in each classroom.

4.1.2. Any suspected abuse/neglect must be reported within 12 hours.

4.1.3. Call DCF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE: (800) 842-2288

4.1.4. Complete CT DCF 136 Report which includes the following information:

4.1.4.1. Child's Name, Address, and parent's name

4.1.4.2. Child's age, gender, and race

4.1.4.3. Family Composition

4.1.4.4. Nature and extent of injury, abuse, or neglect

4.1.4.5. Name of person allegedly responsible for injury, abuse or neglect

4.1.4.6 Source of the report

4.1.4.7. Name, address, and telephone number of person making the report

4.1.4.8. Any actions taken to prevent further abuse or neglect

4.1.4.9. Other useful information

4.1.5. The Careline Worker will provide the caller with their name to be added to the DCF 136

4.1.6. Any documentation of reported suspected child abuse or neglect will immediately be scanned to the Supervisor or Director. The Director or their designee will keep a printed copy of the report in a locked filing cabinet. Documentation of reporting will not be included in ChildPlus case notes.

4.1.7. Submit the completed CT DCF 136 to the appropriate area office by fax and mail within 48 hours of the Careline call.

Protections for Privacy of Child Records

Confidentiality Procedures for Child Records

Head Start (HS) programs must protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information (PII) in child records. A confidential, individual file for each child in the CREC HS program is maintained in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and information in those files is released only in accordance with those laws and regulations. In accordance with applicable federal regulations, Head Start child files are held in trust for the benefit of the children and families receiving services from the program. Included in these files are a number of signed consent/authorization forms, which may include the following:

- ◇ Emergency Contact Information
- ◇ Medication Authorization (when applicable)
- ◇ Individual Health Care Plan (when applicable)
- ◇ Consent for Services and Permissions such as developmental screening and assessment
- ◇ Consent for sharing of confidential information with a third party

Only authorized persons are permitted to view children's records or files. State child care licensing agencies and Head Start federal review teams are the only outside agencies, individuals or groups allowed to review records without a consent form signed by the parent or guardian. Anyone reviewing a record or file must sign a third-party access form as it is a record of all parties reviewing records. The main custodian of the file who may repeatedly review a child's file during a one-day period, must sign the third party access form during the first review of records that day but is not required to sign the form later within the same day.

The program must only disclose information from a child file that is deemed necessary for the purpose of the disclosure. The procedures to follow for different circumstances for disclosure are detailed below.

CREC Head Start serves children who are eligible for services under IDEA and therefore must comply with the applicable confidentiality provisions in Part B or Part C of IDEA. See this website for more information: [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) and Part B or C of IDEA Confidentiality Provisions](#)

Disclosures with Parental Consent

Parent written consent is required before the program may disclose PII from child records. The written consent must: (1) specify what child records may be disclosed; (2) explain why the record will be disclosed; (3) identify the party or class of parties to whom the records may be disclosed; and,

The written consent must be "signed and dated" which may include a record and signature in electronic form that: (1) identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic consent; and, (2) indicates such person's approval of the information.

The parent must be informed that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time. A revocation is not retroactive and does not apply to an action that occurred before the consent was revoked.

Disclosure Without Consent But With Notice

The program may disclose such PII from child records without parental consent if the program notifies the parent about the disclosure, provides the parent, upon the parent's request, a copy of the PII from the child records to be disclosed in advance, and gives the parent an opportunity to challenge and refuse disclosure of the information in the records, before the program forwards the records to officials at a program, school, or school district in which the child seeks or intends to enroll or where the child is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is related to the child's enrollment or transfer.

Disclosure Without Consent But With Notice cont.

The program may disclose such PII without parental consent to:

- ◇ Officials within the program or acting for the program such as contractors, if the official provides services for which the program would otherwise use employees, is necessary for HeadStart services, and the program maintains oversight with respect to the use, further disclosure, and maintenance of child records, such as through a written agreement;
- ◇ Officials within the program, acting for the program, or from a federal or state entity, in connection with an audit or evaluation of education or child development program, or for enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements of the program, or to conduct a study to improve child and family outcomes, including improving the quality of the program, for or on behalf of the program; provided the program maintains oversight with respect to the use, further disclosure, and maintenance of child records, such as through a written agreement, including the destruction of the PII when no longer needed for the purpose of the disclosure;
- ◇ Appropriate parties in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency during the period of the emergency, or a serious health and safety risk such as a serious food allergy, if the program determines that disclosing the PII from child records is necessary to protect the health or safety of children or other persons;
- ◇ Comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, provided the program makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent about all such subpoenas and court orders in advance of the compliance therewith;
- ◇ The Secretary of Agriculture or an authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service to conduct program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), if the results will be reported in an aggregate form that does not identify any individual, and must be destroyed when the data are no longer needed.
- ◇ A caseworker or other representative from a state, local, or tribal child welfare agency, who has the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement, when such agency is legally responsible for the child's care and protection under state or tribal law, if the agency agrees in writing to protect PII, to use information from the child's case plan for specific purposes intended of addressing the child's needs, and to destroy information that is no longer needed for those purposes; and,
- ◇ Appropriate parties in order to address suspected or known child maltreatment and is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws on reporting child abuse and neglect.

Written Agreements

When the program establishes a written agreement with a third party, the procedures to protect such PII must be reviewed annually and, if necessary, update the agreement. If the third party violates the agreement, then the program may:

- ◇ Provide the third party an opportunity to self-correct; or,
- ◇ Prohibit the third party from access to records for a set period of time as established by the programs governing body and policy council.

Annual Notice

The programs must annually notify the parents in the program in writing of their rights including the types of PII that may be disclosed, to whom the PII may be disclosed, and what may constitute a necessary reason for the disclosure without parental consent as described in this section. This information is contained in this Parent Handbook and the acknowledgement page must be signed by the parent annually and kept in the child file.

Protections for Privacy of Child Records cont.

Parental Rights

The parent or legal guardian has the authority to inspect and review records and sign documents relating to his or her child's Head Start services unless the program has been advised that the parent does not have the authority under applicable state or federal law governing such matters as guardianship, separation, custody, or divorce (e.g., court order, state statute, other legally binding document). In a situation where parents are not living together, either parent having not been legally barred may request access to the child's file.

Parents and legal guardians have the right to inspect their child's records.

- ◇ If the parent requests to inspect child records, the program must make the child records available within a reasonable time, but no more than 45 days after receipt of request.
- ◇ If a program maintains child records that contain information on more than one child, the program must ensure the parent only inspects information that pertains to the parent's child.
- ◇ Inspection and review is to be conducted during normal working hours and the custodian of the file is to be present.
- ◇ The program shall not destroy a child record with an outstanding request to inspect and review the record under this section.
- ◇ Right to copy of record. The program must provide a parent, free of charge, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties with parental consent and, upon parent request, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties, unless the disclosure was for a court that ordered neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information furnished in response be disclosed.
- ◇ Right to inspect written agreements. A parent has the right to review any written agreements with third parties.
- ◇ All records are to remain within the program. Parents (with children currently enrolled or those with children no longer enrolled in the program) wishing to make copies of any records in their child's file for themselves or for a third party may request access to copies. For parents with currently enrolled children there is no charge (budget allowing) and for parents with children no longer enrolled there may be a charge for copies based on the cost to the program.
- ◇ If after inspection and review, the parent/guardian is not in agreement with information maintained in their child's file or believes it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy, she or he may make a request to the program to amend the information. The program must consider the parent's request and, if the request is denied, render a written decision to the parent within a reasonable time that informs the parent of the right to a hearing.
- ◇ If the parent requests a hearing to challenge information in the child record, the Director must be contacted and they will counsel with legal aid to ensure proper procedures are followed.

Maintaining Records

The child master file is maintained as a continuous record for each child/family served. Files are located in locked filing cabinets at a secure location. Information is also contained in a master data base with assigned access. The program must ensure web-based data systems are adequately protected and maintained according to current industry security standards. Entries into the record are kept as follows:

- ◇ Information is to be contained in the file as outlined in a child file checklist and is organized in an appropriate manner;
- ◇ Active files are to be maintained in alphabetical order by program year, and are to be secured and maintained for the required number of years
- ◇ All files are to be kept current by the family services staff assigned to the child/family;
- ◇ Entries into the child master file are to be dated, legible, clear, concise, complete, timely and written in ink;
- ◇ All entries are to be signed or initialed and dated by the appropriate individual;
- ◇ White-out is not to be used. Any strikeouts or cross-outs used must be initialed and dated;

Maintaining Records cont.

Files are to be "signed out and signed in" by the responsible staff member whenever removed from the cabinet or file drawer to assure that the location of the records is known at all times. Files are to be removed from the center only with prior authorization by the Site Supervisor or Director. Only authorized staff have access to the files.

The contents of all active master files are to be reviewed periodically by the family services staff. The staff member responsible for family services is to conduct a quarterly file review on a minimum of 10% of each family services staff person's caseload as a method of assuring quality and improving performance as may be needed.

The program must maintain, with the child records, for as long as the records are maintained, information on all individuals, agencies, or organizations to whom a disclosure of PII from the child records was made (except for program officials and parents) and why the disclosure was made.

If a parent places a statement in the child record, the program must maintain the statement with the contested part of the child record for as long as the program maintains the record and, disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the child record to which the statement relates.

File Retention

The program must maintain, with the child records, for as long as the records are maintained, information on all individuals, agencies, or organizations to whom a disclosure of PII from the child records was made (except for program officials and parents) and why the disclosure was made.

When a child's file becomes inactive through disenrollment or transition out of the program, the file is to be given to the Site Supervisor for processing. All follow-up activity is to be completed and the child and family are discharged from the tracking system.

Videotaping or Photographing of Children

Teachers and other staff may occasionally want to take photographs of your child and your family for program use (e.g., for classroom or center displays, newsletters). You and your child will not be videotaped, audiotaped and/or photographed without your written consent.

Declining or Refusing Services

In the event you wish to refuse any services, after staff has explained the benefits of those services, you may be asked to sign documentation of your refusal or staff will document in your child's file your verbal refusal. Staff will always try to share with you any services that will be of benefit to your child and family.

Child Illness Guidance

If the child has become ill while at the center and is waiting for a parent to pick them up, the teaching staff will keep the child in a safe, quiet area in the classroom away from the other children. The child will be provided a cot and blanket for rest, if they want or need it.

Prior to excluding a child with a diagnosed medical condition and/or disability, the teaching staff will need to contact the Health Practitioner for guidance and approval.

If the parent/guardian and the Emergency Contacts cannot be contact then the Site Supervisor will be notified.

If the child in our care is suspected of having an infectious, contagious illness, all equipment that child uses must be cleaned with an approved cleaner.

Parents are asked to use the guidance below to determine if their child should attend or return based on their symptom/diagnosis. This is an abbreviated (not complete) list of common illnesses/conditions that arise with children. A doctor's note may be required to return to school in certain situations. If your child is sick or experiencing symptoms of illness while at school, the program's Health Practitioner will determine if your child needs to be sent home.

Symptom/Diagnosis	While at Home	While at School
Cold/Flu/RSV	Can come to school without a fever	Can remain in school with minor cough, runny nose and sore throat
Episodes of Repeated Vomiting	Should not come to school until there has been no vomiting for 24 hours	Will be sent home, cannot return to school until no vomiting for 24 hours
Episodes of Repeated Uncontrollable Diarrhea	Should not come to school until there has been no episodes for 24 hours	Will be sent home, cannot return to school until no diarrhea for 24 hours
Temperature of 100.4 Degrees or Higher	Should not come to school until they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours	Will be sent home, cannot return to school until they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours
Unexplained Rash	Consult with Health Practitioner	May be sent home if medical treatment is deemed necessary
Diagnosed or Suspected Contagious Rashes	Should not come to school until your child has received 24 hours of treatment	Will be sent home if medical treatment is deemed necessary

Symptom/Diagnosis	While at Home	While at School
Pink eye with drainage from the eye(s)	Should not come to school until treatment for 24hrs if deemed necessary by a doctor.	May be sent home if medical treatment is deemed necessary.
Bacterial infections, such as strep throat, impetigo, or urinary tract infection	Should not come to school until your child has received 24 hours of antibiotic treatment or per health care provider's note.	Will be sent home if medical treatment is deemed necessary.
Chicken Pox	Should not come to school until all lesions have dried or crusted. A doctor's note will be necessary.	Will be sent home if medical treatment is deemed necessary. A doctor's note will be necessary.
Lice	Should not come to school until after 1st treatment (consult with Health Practitioner)	Parent will be notified by the Health Practitioner and treatment will be discussed.
Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease	Should not come to school until they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours, and have no weeping sores or drooling.	Will be sent home if your child has a fever.
Child is not participating in regular activities for an unexplained reason or excessive fatigue	Please consult with the Health Practitioner.	May be sent home if medical treatment is deemed necessary.

If you are unsure about sending your child to school for an illness or condition not mentioned above, please consult with our Health Practitioner, Matt Cushing:

(860) 293-6702 (office) ✦ (860) 539-3629 (cell) ✦ mcushing@crec.org

Please note, all absences must be reported to your child's Teacher or your Family Advocate

In Kind

In-kind is defined as property or services that benefit a grant-supported project or program and are contributed by non-federal third parties without charge to the grantee. In-kind contributions may consist of the value of real property and equipment and the value of goods and services directly benefiting the grant program and specifically identifiable to it. In-kind match is counted for the period when the services are provided or when the donated goods are received and used.

Head Start programs are required to generate 20% of their grant funding amount as in-kind donations, making in-kind one of the most important parts of our program's fiscal management.

Classroom volunteering and activities will be recorded in the following way:

Classroom:		Center Name:	
Date	Print Name	Activity	Timeframe (to the nearest 15 minutes)

Decision making activities, such as Parent Committee, will be recorded in the following way:

Meeting Name:				Date:
Meeting Facilitator :				Length of Meeting:
Print Name	Role	Hours Donated	Miles Donated	Signature



CREC Head Start

In partnership with



Procedures in this handbook are based on regulations and standards from a variety of sources, including the following:

- ◇ The Head Start Program Performance Standards <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/docs/hspss-appendix.pdf>
- ◇ Office of Head Start (OHS) Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- ◇ State child care licensing rules and regulations
- ◇ National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education: Caring for Our Children Basics: Health and Safety Foundations for Early Care and Education. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecl/caring_for_our_children_basics.pdf

USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax:

(202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.