

# ADAMS COUNTY HEAD START

## PARENT HANDBOOK

**2023-2024**



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## CENTER LOCATIONS

Head Start Administration Office

[www.adcogov.org/head-start](http://www.adcogov.org/head-start)

<b>Brighton Head Start</b> 1850 Egbert Street, Suite G10 Brighton, CO 80601 (303) 659-2270	<b>Little Star Head Start</b> 3990 W. 74 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Westminster, CO 80030 303-427-2006 303-427-2019
<b>Creekside Head Start</b> 9189 Gale Blvd. Thornton, CO 80260 (720) 540-4836	<b>Rainbow Head Start</b> 8401 Circle Drive Westminster, CO 80030 (303) 428-6477
<b>Northglenn Head Start</b> 10675 Washington St. Northglenn, CO 80233 (720) 523-4870	<b>Sunshine Head Start</b> 7111 E. 56th Avenue Commerce City, CO 80022 (303) 286-4141



## **Adams County Mission**

To responsibly serve the Adams County community with integrity and innovation.

## **Purpose Statement**

Adams County Head Start exists to develop school ready children and impact generational success in partnership with families and the community.

## **Philosophy**

The philosophy of Adams County Head Start is that all children are born ready to learn. Therefore, the quality of their earliest experiences is critical for later school success.

## **Vision**

The vision of ACHS is that every child enrolled in Head Start will enter kindergarten with the competencies necessary to succeed in school and parents/caregivers will be empowered to be their child's most important teacher.

## **PROGRAM OPTIONS**

Adams County Head Start provides services at no charge to all families enrolled in the program.

**Full Day Option – 4 Days per Week                      Monday – Thursday**

**Full Day Option – 5 Days per Week                      Monday – Friday**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Classroom/Attendance Hours**

Brighton Head Start Hours:

- Classroom A and C: 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
- Classroom B: 8:20 A.M. – 3:20 P.M.

Creekside Head Start Hours: 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Little Star Head Start Hours: 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Northglenn Head Start Hours:

- Classroom A and C: 8:20 A.M. – 3:20 P.M.
- Classroom B: 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Rainbow Head Start Hours:

- Classroom A and C: 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
- Classroom B: 8:20 A.M. – 3:20 P.M.

Sunshine Head Start Hours:

- Classroom A and C: 8:20 A.M. – 3:20 P.M.
- Classroom B: 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.



### **Registration and Enrollment**

Adams County Head Start serves children who are 3 – 5 years of age. In order to be eligible for Head Start, a child must be three years old by their school district's cut-off date. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines are used to determine income eligibility for participation in Head Start. The child and family must reside in Adams County.

A child who is enrolled may continue to attend Head Start until he/she is eligible to start

kindergarten. Recertification of income eligibility may occur.

## **Calendar and Holidays**

The Adams County Head Start program is closed the following days:

- Labor Day
- Frances Xavier Cabrini Day
- Veterans Day
- Fall Break
- Winter Break (two weeks)
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Spring Break (one week)

## **Center Closure**

When delayed start or school closures occur due to inclement weather, please follow the school district specific to the Head Start center that your child attends. School closure notification will be on the news/radio station/internet:

Brighton Head Start center – District 27J  
Creekside Head Start center – District 12  
Little Star Head Start center – District 50  
Northglenn Head Start center- District 12  
Rainbow Head Start center– District 50  
Sunshine Head Start center – District 14



NOTE: If there are other closures, to include school closing early, families will be contacted by text message, email, or phone. Please check the program calendar for additional scheduled school closure days.

If there is a closure or closing early through Adams County, families will be contacted by text message, email, or phone.

## **EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

The Education Program at Adams County Head Start uses supportive classroom methods to engage children in high quality learning experiences appropriate to their level of development. ACHS provides positive instruction for children. In a positive, rewarding environment, ACHS students interact with materials and print-rich environments that help develop verbal, pre-academic, and pro-social skills necessary to be kindergarten ready. We use developmentally appropriate and research-based

curriculum elements to provide a scope and sequence of effective teaching and learning environments that can be individualized to the needs of each child.

## Curriculum Elements



In our classrooms, the ***Creative Curriculum*** is used to support children in reaching their developmental goals. There are five components in the curriculum: The Family's Role, How Children Develop and Learn, The Learning Environment, What Children Learn, and the Teachers Role. It clearly defines the role of the teacher in connecting content, teaching, and learning for children. Through active learning, young children create knowledge that helps them make sense of their world. As they follow their natural interests, children engage in meaningful experiences that support their growth and development in all areas of learning and prepare them to succeed in school. The main math curriculum is ***Creative Curriculum***, providing meaningful activities to foster the pre-numeracy skills needed in kindergarten and beyond. Teachers use ***Teaching Strategies GOLD*** to look at and track each child's developmental progress in achieving their goals and preparing them for kindergarten.

Teachers use the ***Incredible Years: Dinosaur School Curriculum*** to support children in becoming caring and responsible members of their classroom community. Dinosaur School helps children learn skills related to doing their best in school, getting along with friends and family members, following adult requests and rules, understanding, and expressing feelings and solving problems. Parents/ guardians and teachers work together to help children learn these important skills through at home activities.

Teachers use ***The Culture of Wellness in Preschools*** program that provides nutritious activities to increase daily healthy eating and fun physical activities to promote healthy bodies. The focus is on healthy learning and staying active as a family.

Teachers use the ***Zoo-phonics*** curriculum to support literacy development. Using the fun engaging activities, children learn to identify sounds and names associated with letters, begin simple decoding, and basics writing skills. Exposure to this knowledge is important to the child's independence in literacy. The experience they gain with this curriculum develops their self-esteem that promotes successful kindergarten readiness.

## Outdoor Play – Inclement Weather/Excessively Hot Weather

During inclement weather, ACHS will take steps to ensure the safety of children and families. If the weather (excessively hot or cold temperatures, wind, etc.) does not allow for active play outdoors, the teachers will arrange inside activities that will assist children in large muscle development. Classroom temperature will be adjusted as needed in order to keep a comfortable environment. Teachers are encouraged to open windows for ventilation, turn up heat, have a change of clothes for children and/or add additional clothing when necessary. Review "Appropriate Dress for Preschool Children" in page 22.

## Communication with Parents

The Head Start staff use the following ways to share and receive information with parents:

- Daily conversations (once all children are picked up)
- Monthly Classroom Newsletters
- Teacher Home Visits
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Email
- Text messages
- Phone calls

### **Parent Communication: Monthly Newsletters**

Classroom teachers will inform parents of classroom activities and topics via a monthly newsletter. The newsletter will cover the broad topics of classroom activities, as well as a note about your child.

### **Teacher Home Visits**

Teachers conduct two 30-minute home visits per year. The first home visit occurs within 45 calendar days of enrollment and provides an opportunity for the family to get to know the teacher and learn about the preschool program. In the spring, teachers conduct a second home visit to discuss children's progress and plan children's transition to the next learning environment.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Teachers conduct two Parent/Teacher Conferences per year. Teachers and parents share information on the developmental progress the child is demonstrating at home and school. Parents are encouraged to share their comments/concerns on the curriculum and how their child is doing.

### **Lending Library**

Children have the opportunity to check-out a book from our lending library to take home and are encouraged to read with their families. Children return the book and receive another book of their choice twice per month. In addition, families are encouraged to participate in Families and Fathers Reading Every Day (FFRED) to support child and family literacy.

### **Special Needs Services**

ACHS complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Head Start provides support services and individualized services for children and families who may need more support with developmental and/or social emotional growth. These services include developmental screenings, observations, and referrals for children who may be experiencing developmental delays and may need more support to succeed in the classroom. Parents who have children with special needs will be encouraged and supported in setting goals that will enhance their families' quality of life.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT**

**Adams County Head Start provides the following services to families:**

- ◆ Assist parents with identifying and meeting personal/family goals through one-on-one meetings and home and center meetings (Family Partnership Agreement)
- ◆ Assist families in accessing community resources such as food banks, clothing banks, parenting classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, General Educational Development (GED) classes, health services, etc.
- ◆ Facilitates workshops/trainings and provides information focusing on dental, health, mental health, nutrition, education, and special needs
- ◆ Support parents in enhancing leadership and advocacy skills through parent involvement
- ◆ Provide crisis intervention through case management and referrals
- ◆ Provides assistance and support to families whose child is transitioning to kindergarten to ensure a successful experience



## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Head Start recognizes parents as their child's first and most important teacher and advocate. Parents serve as volunteers in their child's classroom and also have a strong voice in decision making related to the program's operation and governance.

Parent involvement in all aspects of the program is a core value of Head Start and is essential to maintaining a high-quality program. ACHS asks each family to volunteer 4 hours to the program each month.

Parents bring new talents, strengths, and ideas to the program while they learn new skills, make new friends, improve leadership skills, and build relationships.

**Parent Involvement Opportunities Include:**

### Program Governance and Committees

- ◆ Participate in Policy Council
- ◆ Participate in Parent Committee/Café
- ◆ Participate in Health Services Advisory Committee
- ◆ Participate in trainings and activities

### Classroom

- ◆ Volunteer in the classroom

### Home

- ◆ Help teachers prepare for classroom projects
- ◆ Extend learning in the home (Examples: reading to your child, Incredible Years parent group activities)

### **Safety and Volunteering:**

- ✧ To ensure the safety and well-being of Head Start children, individuals requesting to volunteer in a Head Start classroom must complete and pass a background check.
- ✧ Due to licensing regulations, siblings are not allowed to be in the classroom or playgrounds during classroom hours.

## **Special Education & Support Services**

### **Collaborative Meetings:**

- ✧ These meetings are held to discuss additional support your child may need to be successful in the classroom environment. The Special Education and Support Services Program Manager may contact you if your child needs additional instructional support and/or a formal developmental evaluation with any of the District Child Find Teams or any other agency. Parent signature is required.
- ✧ Parents are encouraged to attend and participate during their child's meeting to discuss the following:
  - The child's developmental progress and to develop a specific plan(s) to support the student in the classroom and/or at home as needed
  - Meetings are held at centers or remotely monthly.
- ✧ If you have a concern about your child or want to participate, contact Monica Lujan, Special Education and Support Services Program Manager at 720-427-2102 or [mlujan@adcogov.org](mailto:mlujan@adcogov.org)

## **PROGRAM GOVERNANCE**

Each school year ACHS parents choose center representatives to take an active role and participate in the decision-making process of the program. Parent's input in Policy Council and Parent Committee meetings is important to the success of the program.



### **Policy Council**

The ACHS Policy Council is made up of Head Start parents (two representatives and one alternate per center) and local community representatives including a Governing Board appointed Policy Council Representative. Policy Council Parent Representatives are elected each year at their individual center Parent Committee/Café meetings. Policy Council Representatives are the liaisons between the Council and Parent Committees. Policy Council members work together with management staff and the Adams County Board of County Commissioners to develop, review, and approve agency policies, goals, and funding applications. In addition, Policy Council members are included in the hiring and termination process of employees. They also participate in

the annual program self-assessment and planning. Policy Council meets on a monthly basis.

### **Parent Committees/Café**

All parents/guardians of enrolled Head Start children can participate in the Parent Committees/Cafés at his/her center. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in the planning and carrying out of Parent Committee/Café meetings. This committee provides opportunities for Head Start parents to:

- Give ideas to staff in developing and using program policies, activities, and services.
- Plan, lead, and participate in programs and activities for parents and staff. ~~and~~

### **Health Services Advisory Committee**

Our Health Advisory Committee is composed of parents/guardians, ACHS staff, health professionals and other community members from partnering organizations. The committee addresses health literacy, health issues, and health equity. This committee is open to all ACHS family members. Please contact your family services specialist or health specialist if you are interested in participating in the committee at any point during the program year.

## **NUTRITION SERVICES**

**Adams County Head Start provides all enrolled children with nutritious meals and snacks.** Children are served breakfast, lunch, and a snack.

A wide variety of foods are prepared for our children, with a focus on serving whole grains, low-fat milk products, fresh fruits and vegetables. We also include foods from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. ACHS utilizes the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and develops our menus based on CACFP requirements. By following these guidelines, ACHS ensures children receive meals meeting their nutritional requirements for their age. Meals and snacks are served “family style” to help children become more independent and develop socialization skills. Children are encouraged to try new foods and explore their developing tastes by providing a neutral eating environment that encourages a positive relationship with food and mealtimes. Parents/guardians are welcome to come and sit with their child during mealtimes. Please note, due to CACFP guidelines we cannot accommodate meals for parents and family members outside of pre-organized events.

### **Menu Planning**

Monthly menus are posted in the classrooms in the preferred languages of enrolled families at each center and on the Head Start webpage <https://adcogov.org/school-menus>

If you would like to receive a copy of the monthly menu in your preferred language, please let your teacher know.

## **Dietary Needs**

Medically-based health conditions requiring dietary modifications are accommodated after ACHS receives clearance by the child's doctor. Non-medically-based accommodations are also available for families. Please contact your health specialist regarding any food-related accommodations you would like to discuss before the start of the program year. **Due to health and safety regulations, no outside food can be brought to the centers.**

Parents who have specific nutrition related questions and/or concerns can also schedule a time to meet with the program's registered dietitian/nutritionist.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**



Healthy habits and behaviors are practiced in the classroom daily. Children brush their teeth daily, wash their hands frequently, and participate in health education activities.

Each child enrolled in ACHS is required to have documentation of a current physical exam as well as up-to-date certificate of immunizations at enrollment. It is also important for parents/guardians to choose a medical and dental home. Your health specialist will be able to assist you in this process.

All children attending ACHS must receive the following screenings:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Growth Assessment (Body Mass Index-BMI)
- Speech and Language
- All Developmental Areas
- Anemia
- Lead (parent must be present for lead and anemia screenings)
- Dental

*Parents have the right to refuse screenings and procedures, please talk to your health specialist.*

**Referrals:** Once a child is screened, results are provided to the parent. If the results of the screening require(s) additional follow-up, parents will receive a referral for the child's specific needs (vision, hearing, dental and/or anemia and lead results). It is the expectation that when a parent receives a referral, the parent schedules all necessary follow-up with their appropriate clinical provider within one month.

**\*\*Please note that your assigned health specialist will follow-up on all care needed as per your child's initial screening results as well as provide any support you may need in having your child's health needs met.**

**Required Health Information per Colorado State Licensing Regulations:**  
Adams County Head Start requires **all children** to have:

- An annual physical exam
- Updated immunizations  
**\*\*Children without updated immunizations and physicals will be suspended unable to attend school until a current physical exam and immunization record is received per state law**

**Some children** may require the following additional paperwork:

- **Health Care Plans and Food Allergy Statements** are required for all children with significant health concerns. This includes conditions requiring on-site medication and/or emergency health procedures. Common conditions requiring health care plans include asthma, seizures, food allergies, bee allergies, and diabetes. All health care plans and food allergy statements require signatures from the child's doctor, parent/guardian, and Head Start's child health care consultant/registered nurse (CCHC). If the health care plan or food allergy statement requires medication, this medication must be in its original container (with the prescription label) within its expiration date and labeled with your child's name. All medication required must be accompanied with a completed health care plan and/or food allergy statement and must be at the child's center in order for the child to attend the program. If your child is diagnosed with a condition requiring a health care plan or food allergy statement **during the school year**, your child may not be able to attend school, or may be placed on a medical hold, depending upon the severity of the medical diagnosis. We will try to keep your child in school while this documentation is received and put in place. A current and accurate health care plan will need to be in place within ten business days from a medical diagnosis received by your medical home and signed by the CCHC before your child can come to school. It is our intent to keep your child safe while he/she attends school. The health specialist assigned to your child's center will be available to assist you with this process.
- **Special Diet Statements** are available for children with food allergies/intolerance(s) as needed. Special diet statements are for any children that do not require a more detailed health care plan with prescribed medication (example: Benadryl, or an Epi-pen). Special diet statements are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by a registered dietitian/nutritionist. Special diet statements may also require the clearance of the child's doctor. All special diet statements will require a parent/guardian signature.

## **Dental**

Head Start requires that every child have a periodic dental exam every six months. If a child is identified as needing further dental treatment, all dental treatment should be scheduled within one month from the initial exam at your chosen dental home. We encourage all Head Start families to choose a dental home convenient to them where dental exams and cleanings can be received conveniently and easily throughout the year.

Head Start provides dental exams at your child's Head Start center so your child can conveniently receive preventive dental care by a dentist and a dental hygienist two times a year. These dental services include a visual dental exam, cleaning, and up to four fluoride applications. However, this does not include dental X-rays and you may still need to go to your chosen dental home to receive your child's dental X-rays as recommended. If your child has received a dental exam, the documentation must be provided to ACHS right away. If you need assistance covering any dental and/or medical bills for your enrolled child(ren), please ask your health specialist to assist you in this process. If you choose to not receive treatment from our dental provider twice a year at Head Start, you will still need to provide a dental exam form from your dental home to the health specialist at your center.

Our program values your child's health and development and requests that you follow-up with any recommendations or concerns regarding your child's mental, physical, and emotional well-being at any time during the program year. You may be contacted by a family services specialist, child health care consultant, registered dietitian, special education and support services program manager and/or a health specialist during the year in regard to your child's health care needs.

## **Head Lice in a School Setting**

If a child has confirmed head lice while in school, parents/guardians will be called and supported on how to treat head lice. The child will stay in school until the end of the school day.

We will ask that the parents/guardians complete a treatment form and treat their child that night with an over-the-counter head lice treatment kit before the child returns to school the next day.

A letter (no names will be stated) stating that there is a confirmed case of head lice in the classroom as well as helpful tips on how to treat head lice will be provided to all parents who have children in the classroom where head lice was found. This is done so that parents/guardians are informed and can check their children and family members for head lice for the next ten days and treat ~~their child~~ immediately if found.

Adams County Head Start also follows specific procedures to ensure the prevention of further spread of head lice. We vacuum, remove play clothes and limit head-to-head contact as well as keep children's belongings separated.

Remember that all children can get lice. It is common that at some time there will be a child in each classroom with lice. It is a condition you should not be ashamed of. This is very common in a school setting where many children play together and have close head-to-head contact. Although a pest, head lice is NOT a health risk and lice cannot transmit disease. Also, pets do not carry head lice.

In the event your child has head lice, there are multiple treatment options available for purchase through retail stores. You may also contact your health care provider or county health department if you feel you need further assistance, or information. Your health specialist will support you through this process and will answer any questions you may have.

## **Accidents, Incidents, and Injuries**

Parents/guardians will be informed of accidents, incidents or injuries that occur during school hours and will sign and receive a copy of the ACHS Incident/Accident Report and in certain cases, a telephone call.

For serious accidents or injuries that require professional medical attention ACHS will call 911 and the parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached at the given number, a message will be left, if possible, and the teacher or ACHS staff member will be in charge until the arrival of the parent, and/or ambulance.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Parents/guardians must update their contact information, to include emergency contacts and pick-up list every August and January. It is for your child's benefit and safety that you keep us informed of any changes in phone numbers, emergency numbers and other parent/guardian contact information as they happen. A signed consent form must be on file prior to your child's first day in the program. This also includes written authority to arrange medical care.

## **Field Trips/Walking Experiences**

Field Trips and other special activities are planned to enhance the Head Start child's educational learning experiences. When children are on field trips or neighborhood walks a notice will be posted on classroom doors. Parents will be informed in writing prior to field trips and any other special activities and must sign a permission slip for their child to participate. If a child arrives to school after the group has left, the parent will need to take the child home.

# **PROGRAM POLICIES**

## **Attendance**

Regular school attendance helps your child build a positive relationship with their teacher and helps them feel comfortable in their classroom environment. This is important for your child's future success in school. Please call the center and let your family services specialist know if your child will not be attending school that day. If we do not receive a call from you, the family services specialist will contact you regarding your child's absence. Staff regularly reviews attendance and will follow up with parents if a child is not attending regularly. We understand your child can be absent from class for various reasons, the Head Start attendance goal is to attend school at least 85% of the time monthly.

## **Arrival and Pickup**

**Arrivals:** Children need to arrive to school on time. If your child is going to be late, please call the center and let the family services specialist know.

**Pickup:** Children need to be picked up from school on time. Children may only be picked up from the center by the parent/guardian or any other adult who is 18 or older

and listed on the child's pickup form. For the protection of children, persons unfamiliar to the staff will be asked to show a valid picture I.D. before the child is released. In the event that someone attempts to pick up a child who is not on the child's pickup form, parents will be immediately notified, and local authorities may be contacted.

### **Late Arrival and Pick Up**

Children are considered late if they arrive any time after the start time or are picked up later than the end time. Parents/guardians are to call their family services specialist to inform them of the late arrival/pickup.

A child cannot remain at a Head Start center past the end of the child's scheduled class time. If the parent/guardian or authorized designee does not pick up the child within 30 minutes or indicate that she/he is on the way, the police may be called.



If your child is dropped off or picked up late too many times, a conference with the parent(s) will be scheduled to develop a plan to provide support as needed. If the instances of late arrival or pickup continue, the plan will be revisited, and all efforts will be made to support the family for a successful Head Start experience.

### **Anti-Violence**

Adams County Head Start strives to provide an environment that is free of threats of violence or violent acts. This includes, but is not limited to threatening or hostile behaviors, physical abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, use of weapons, carrying weapons onto county property, or any other act, which in management's opinion is inappropriate in the Head Start environment. Additionally, offensive comments, actions, or behavior will not be tolerated. Refer to the Parent Code of Conduct.

### **Child Abuse and Reporting**

As mandatory reporters, Head Start employees are required by law to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect to Adams County Department of Human Services. Children are the top priority at ACHS, and it is our responsibility to keep them safe.

### **Complaint Reporting**

Parents, staff members, or community agencies wishing to file a complaint regarding suspected childcare licensing violations should contact the following:

**Department of Child Care Licensing  
(303) 866-5958**

### **Confidentiality**

All information gathered by the ACHS program regarding your family/child is confidential and is not released without written consent of the legal parent/guardian. Information may be used for documentation of Head Start eligibility, for local, state or federal funding and evaluation reporting requirements,

litigation procedures, and education planning. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to request and review a copy of documents in your child's file.

## **FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires education agencies and institutions to protect the privacy of student education records. Except in specified circumstances, education agencies and institutions must obtain the consent of a student or their parent/guardian before releasing education records.

**What Information Does FERPA Protect?** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act protects the privacy of "student education records" defined as records, documents, and materials maintained by an education agency or institution about a student. This includes health related information such as student health records, immunization records, and records maintained by school nurses. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act does not protect information in records created and maintained by teachers or administrators for their own use, records created for law enforcement purposes, employment records, and records maintained by physicians and/or mental health professionals for treatment purposes about students over the age of eighteen that are only accessible by persons treating the student.

**Who must comply with FERPA?** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act applies to all education agencies and institutions that receive federal funding. Consequently, most elementary and secondary schools as well as public and private colleges, universities and professional schools must comply with FERPA. Religious or otherwise private elementary and secondary schools are typically exempt.

**Who may Access Education Records?** Education agencies and institutions must allow parents/guardian to access their child's education records and challenge the accuracy of the record content. Government authorities (e.g. Comptroller General, Secretary of Education, State education authorities) may access student education records in order to evaluate federal programs or enforce legal requirements. Persons that collect information for such government purposes should limit the collection of information that identifies students and parents and destroy any identifying information when it is no longer needed.

**When may Education Agencies and Institutions Release Education Record?** Education agencies and institutions may release education records upon receiving a parent or guardian's written consent. However, FERPA provides numerous exceptions that allow agencies and institutions to release records without consent. These exceptions include releasing information to school officials for education purposes, releasing information concurrent with the financial aid process, and releasing information for health and safety purposes during an emergency.

*To find out more about FERPA, you can access this website:*

<http://www.healthinfoweb.org/article/fast-facts-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa>

## **HIPAA/FERPA and Medical Records**

Adams County Head Start follows HIPAA when we need to transfer any medical documentation electronically when communicating with your healthcare providers. Parents are asked to sign a HIPAA consent form, so we are able to contact your healthcare providers with any health care plans and/or advisement that is necessary to care for your child safely while they are enrolled in Head Start. Healthcare plans and special dietary needs are shared with Head Start staff that are “responsible for protecting the health, safety and learning of a student”. Personal identifiable health information of your child is only shared with staff that is providing care to your child. Staff receive annual training on how to responsibly protect that information through education in HIPAA and FERPA regulations. Important health information related to your child’s specific care and safety is posted discretely in the classroom. Red folders affixed with Velcro that identify health care plans and dietary needs specific to your child’s care are posted in the classroom. This helps specific staff involved with your child’s care to easily access this information in the event emergent care needed. It is the staff’s responsibility to ensure this is maintained in a confidential manner. If you have any questions about these policies, please contact the Health and Nutrition Manager at 720-378-0201.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate children from their center. Children will be taken to a safe place. Parents will be notified if such an event occurs.

### **Adams County Head Start** **Emergency Disaster Preparedness Evacuation Locations**

#### **Action To Be Taken by Staff:**

1. Evacuate the building. The evacuation should proceed as a “**fire drill**”. Evacuate to your designated evacuation location (should be a minimum of 300 feet away from building).
2. Call 911 and request immediate assistance.
3. Notify the main ACHS Office at 720-523-4602 and inform them of the situation.
4. Provide information to emergency response authorities upon their arrival.
5. Parents should be notified of the designated evacuation location to reunite with their child.

**Center**  
**Brighton**

**Evacuation Location**  
Southeast Elementary  
1595 E. Southern St.  
(South of the Head Start Center)

<b>Creekside</b>	Community Reach Center 8989 Huron St. (East of the Head Start Center)
<b>Little Star</b>	Fire Station No. 1 3948 W. 73 <sup>rd</sup> Ave (South of Head Start Center)
<b>Northglenn</b>	The Studio School main entrance 10604 Grant Drive (Southwest of Head Start center)
<b>Rainbow</b>	Mountain Terrace Apartments 3650 W. 84 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (East of the Head Start Center)
<b>Sunshine</b>	BJ's Auto 7051 E. 56 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (West of the Head Start Center)

## **Responding to Emergencies**

Fire and tornado drills are practiced regularly. In case of an emergency such as a tornado, fire, lock down/out (in case of threat or violence near the center), or lost child, staff will follow the emergency procedures at their center. These procedures are posted in the classrooms. In the event of an emergency, the staff will notify parents as soon as possible.

## **Text Messaging**

It is important for families to provide a current cell phone number and cell phone carrier (provider) as well as consent to receiving text messages so ACHS is able to inform you in the event of an emergency or a school closure/delay. Please check with your FSS for guidance.

## **Medication (Prescription and non-prescription)**

We recommend that parents/guardians administer medication outside of school hours whenever possible. In the event medication needs to be administered during program hours by staff, the following guidelines will be followed.

- A. Parent/Guardian will bring medications in with completed paperwork. If support is needed, please contact your ACHS health specialist.
- B. Medication must be in the original container with a readable label on it and will be stored out of reach of children.
- C. The medication documentation must include the following:
  - Name of child to receive the medication
  - Name of medication

- Proper dose of medication
  - Route medication is to be given (example: by mouth, injection, etc.)
  - Time medication is to be given
- D. The parent/guardian must check-in the medication with a trained ACHS staff.
- E. If your child is given medication while attending Head Start, your health specialist will go over the medication log with you at the end of each month. We ask that you sign and date the medication log after the health specialist has gone over this with you.
- F. Please note that we will write your child's first and last name on all medication and medication supplies (spacers, face masks, etc.) in a black permanent marker so we know what belongs to your child while they attend school.
- G. If a medication is a prescribed medication, the medication must have the original prescription label with the child's information. We cannot accept any prescribed medications without the original prescription label.

Based on the Colorado state licensing guidelines, only staff members who have taken the Medication Administration training and are delegated by the CCHC will be able to check-in, sign-out and provide medications to children. The center will maintain a written record of the administration and dispensing of medications. Any remaining medication will be returned to the parent /guardian to discard as required. If medication is not picked up by the parent/guardian the last day of school, or the child is no longer enrolled in Head Start, the medication will be properly disposed of. **The same procedures as prescription medication will be followed for over the counter medication.**

### **Illness/Exclusion Policy**

Young children frequently become mildly ill. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers experience a yearly average of six respiratory infections (colds) and can develop, on average, one to two gastrointestinal infections (vomiting and/or diarrhea) each year. Deciding when children can go to childcare or school can be difficult. Parents/guardians and caregivers should discuss the child's symptoms with your health specialist to help decide if your child should remain home or seek medical care.

Parents should contact the school when their child is sick and describe the illness and symptoms. If a doctor (health care provider) makes a specific diagnosis, (such as strep throat), let program staff know. Sometimes it is necessary for a child to remain at home. Information related to classroom infectious disease exposures are posted in the classroom. Please consult these classroom resources regularly and see your child's teacher or health specialist for additional information. Please receive a copy of How Sick is Too Sick from your center health specialist. You can also receive a copy of this document on the Adams County Head Start webpage: <https://adcogov.org/health-and-nutrition-0>

## **Smoking Policy**

Adams County Head Start is a smoke-free environment. Smoking or the use of tobacco products is prohibited in the classroom, at program events, and during any activity sponsored by ACHS. Smoking is not allowed on any Head Start property. If you are interested in a smoking cessation program, please ask your family services specialist or health specialist.

## **Visitors**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit at any time in the classroom. Please check in at the office, front desk or with a family services specialist to let them know you are a visitor in the building. All visitors are required to provide one form of identification when signing in and stating the purpose of the visit. Teachers are unable to meet with parents when children are present in the classroom. The teacher must be focused on the children at all times. The teacher can meet with parents after all children have been signed out or you can schedule a time to meet with the teacher.

\* Due to public health mandates, additional restrictions may need to be implemented during an outbreak as deemed by the local department of public health and infectious disease.

## **Withdrawal of Child from the Program**

Parents who are withdrawing their child from Adams County Head Start need to notify the family services specialist as soon as possible.

# **CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

## **Arriving and Leaving Preschool (Please see late arrival and pick up section)**

All children must be signed in and out of the classroom.

## **IF YOU DO NOT SIGN YOUR CHILD IN/OUT, YOU WILL BE CALLED BACK TO THE CENTER TO SIGN YOUR CHILD IN/OUT**

Anyone picking-up a child should be prepared to show photo identification before we release the child into his/her custody. The staff will only release children to the people listed on the Pick-Up form. **The staff will not release children to anyone who is not on the Pick-Up list or under the age of 18. Permission to release your child to someone who is not on the pick-up list will not be approved through a phone conversation or text.**

## **Supervision of Children**

Staff members closely supervise in all preschool settings and during special activities. We maintain a minimum ratio of eight children to one adult at all times. Staff closely watch and interact with children to ensure their safety and educational benefit. Children are counted before and after going from one setting to another. Should a child become separated from his/her class, the Lost Child protocol will be followed and every attempt

will be made to locate the child. If a child cannot be located the local police department will be contacted by 911 and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

## **Guidance/Discipline**

Positive guidance is an effective way of encouraging children to take control of their behavior. The ACHS staff provides children with the skills and tools needed to control their behavior effectively. This process takes patience, time, and effort. It is a policy that ACHS staff and volunteers treat children with care and respect using positive guidance methods that promote increased social competence and enhance children's self-esteem.

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using physical or emotional punishment or isolation. Head Start staff keeps parents informed about guidance techniques used in the classroom. Teachers discuss each child's social/emotional needs with parents/guardians only. In cases of severe behavior concerns, parent/guardians may be required to attend a meeting with staff and the mental health consultant to develop a behavior plan.

## **Appropriate Dress for Preschool Children**

In order to ensure children can actively engage in their learning it is important for children to be dressed in clothing that allows them to participate in indoor and outdoor activities. Children should always wear clothes that allow them to play without concern. If dresses or skirts are worn, please have them wear shorts under their dress or skirt. Some activities are messy so children need to wear clothes they can get dirty. In addition, children need to wear shoes that allow them to safely participate in all activities (no high heels, flip flops, or shoes that prevent children from climbing, jumping, running, hopping, skipping, balancing, etc.). Families may contact their family services specialist if they need assistance with acquiring clothing.

## **Personal Items**

Each child is expected to have at least one complete change of weather appropriate clothes at the center. Children's items (extra clothes, coats/jackets, hats, etc.) and backpacks must be labeled with the child's name. Toys, candy, money, or other personal items are not permitted in the classroom.



## **Outside Food**

Due to the health and safety of all Head Start children, we ask that you and your child do not bring any outside candy, or food to school. No exceptions will be made; all outside food brought into centers will not be accepted. If your child requires special diet accommodations, the food will be purchased by the program. **No food, parties or gifts will be allowed for holidays or birthday celebrations. As a federally funded program we are not allowed to celebrate holidays. In order to respect everyone's valued traditions and beliefs, ACHS celebrates children's unique selves and their accomplishments.**

## **Television, Video Viewing, DVD, Electronic Learning**

Our philosophy is that children learn by being actively involved with materials and other people in their environment. We only include television and/or video viewing, DVD, electronic learning in our preschool when it is an integral part of the educational lesson.

## **Sunscreen Application**

Parents are required to sign a permission form allowing the center to apply sunscreen to their child. To protect children from sunburn and other hazards of sun exposure, teachers will apply sunscreen on children's exposed skin before outdoor play. If parents feel their child needs a specific type of sunscreen, they must provide it labeled with their child's name and application instructions. Sunscreen must have a sun protective factor (SPF) of 30 or greater. Teachers will supervise as older children apply sunscreen to themselves and will assist younger children with the application of sunscreen.



## **Toilet Trained/Diapers**

Children are not required to be toilet trained to attend ACHS. Head Start teachers and family services specialists will work with parents to support their child's toilet learning. Parents can provide disposable diapers and wipes for their child for use during class time. If support is needed, ACHS will provide supplies.

## **Toys/Money/or Valuable Items**

We ask that you not let your child bring toys, money, or valuable items from home. Parents/guardians will be asked to take items back with them. Adams County Head Start is not responsible for the loss or damage of such items.

## **Universal Preschool (UPK)**

Adams County Head Start participates in Colorado's new Universal Preschool (UPK) program funding. We will assist some parents to apply for UPK online so that ACHS can access funding. In some cases, we might also need parents to fill out a Colorado Preschool Program application so that ACHS can also access that needed funding.

## **Captured Images (Photographs, Video)**

Parents have the opportunity to sign a waiver to allow ACHS to use captured images internally and externally for business purposes. ACHS staff are aware of the families who have signed the waiver and those who have not. Therefore, they make sure that any captured image (photograph or video) that they take within their classroom for ACHS purposes do not include children whose families have not signed the agreement. We ask that parents receive approval from the teacher prior to taking any captured images (photographs or videos) on any Adams County Head Start premises. Teachers will be able to share captured images that they have taken on Head Start premises with Head Start families.

**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

I have received, read, and understand the information in this parent handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date