



ALABAMA COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS, INC.
CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
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COVID-19 CRISIS INFORMATION

In order to protect children, families, and staff during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis program operations, procedures, and services must adapt as the conditions/concerns in the community change. As needed, we will modify the way we offer services to provide a balance of quality services, safety and support. We added a page at the end of this manual that lists changes/adaptations that we expect to make this year that affect what is in the manual. Because knowledge about COVID-19 and the conditions in our area constantly change, we expect that the projected adaptations also will change. We will use our website and Facebook page to keep parents informed.

INTRODUCTION

The Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc., (ACHR) Child Development Program has many parts and goals. It is set up to meet the educational, physical, mental health and nutritional needs of children from birth through 12 years. ACHR helps families meet their needs through their own strengths and community resources. Our overall goal in the program is school readiness for children. Everything staff does from program finances, to teaching, to engaging families/communities, to cooking meals, cleaning facilities and transporting children is for the purpose of school readiness for program children.

As a part of the Child Development Program, Early Head Start serves pregnant women and infants/toddlers from birth-to-three in both center-based and home-based options. Head Start is a preschool program for 3-5 year olds. Both Early Head Start and Head Start serve children who have special needs and assist families in accessing available services appropriate to their situation. Early Head Start and Head Start are federally funded. Head Start and Early Head Start have income and age based eligibility guidelines.

Children develop skills and learn from experiences. Each child learns at his/her own pace. Children develop physically, emotionally, educationally, socially and creatively while they participate in our program. Our High/Scope approach to working with children supports the way young children learn through play. It helps children make choices, communicate well with others and learn to problem solve. It also helps them build language, pre-reading, and math skills. Early Head Start and Head Start both use the same approach and curriculum in working with children.

Head Start and Early Head Start get 80% of the money needed to operate from the federal government. The other 20% of the "money" MUST come from the parents/community as "in-kind" services (donated time, goods, and services). If we do not get the 20% in-kind, we will receive less federal money. If we receive reduced funds, we would have to reduce the number of Head Start and Early Head Start children and programs. The program receives in-kind whenever you volunteer, attend meetings/workshops, donate "goods" to the program or accept certain donated goods. *We ask for no payment to participate in Head Start or Early Head Start. Please be sure you and your family give your fair share of in-kind (through RAGS homework and by volunteering in other ways) to show the federal and state governments that you feel these and other ACHR programs are important and needed in Lee/Russell Counties.* For more information on in-kind, contact, your child's teacher, the In-Kind Manager or your Family Engagement Advocate.

This booklet, *Hand in Hand* has information about ACHR programs that you will need during the year. *Branching Out to the Community*, a directory of services in Lee and Russell Counties is available for you on our web site, achr.com under "Information." You will find active links to other programs/services.

**ACHR CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
EDUCATION AND SCHOOL READINESS
PHILOSOPHY**



It is our belief that each child is a unique individual who deserves nurturing and respect. To do their best, children must be cared for in ways that help them feel safe, accepted and competent. We believe children develop trust and security when they have consistent nurturing, encouraging, challenging, and supportive families, caregivers and teachers. With this positive base, children are ready to make attachments to significant others, develop positive self-esteem, and continue their natural interest in learning.

Factors such as a child's temperament, culture, rate of learning, special needs, and experiences influence his/her development. To get the best results for children, we believe caregivers and teachers must learn about each child. They must adapt what they plan and do to fit the children's needs. Teachers learn about individual children by talking about the child with parents as well as getting to know the child in person. This shared knowledge helps teachers provide appropriate support, materials, and focused activities that lead to positive development, increased knowledge and skills, and school readiness. Our program is designed to offer children a sensitive, caring, and consistent educational environment.

Young children learn by doing. They build understanding and skills from experiences with objects, people, events, and ideas. Young children are naturally active, curious, and full of creative energy. They are busy growing and changing in ways that will impact their eventual outcomes in school and in life. Training teachers to understand how different kinds of play and purposeful experiences help children develop their physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and creative skills is an important part of our program. Teachers then can fully support children's natural and active learning.

Our approach to early education and school readiness enhances the way young children learn by addressing the needs of the whole child. Our approach is based on the Performance Standards adopted by Head Start, the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Birth-5* (HSELOF) and on information from other recognized educational organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In 1978, we adopted the HighScope Preschool Curriculum in our Head Start classrooms; it is based on research and sound child development principles. Long-term studies of the HighScope Preschool Curriculum show positive results for children into adulthood. Likewise, the HighScope Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers, implemented by ACHR since 1998, is a sound, effective way to support infant-toddler development and provides a solid foundation to prepare toddlers for pre-school.

We believe child development must be age and stage specific. For example, infant routines are individualized. *Infant's* exploratory activities, feeding, and sleeping occur according to individual needs ("on demand"). This supports the infant's growing trust in and attachment to caregivers. *Toddler* routines become a little more structured as the toddler's body rhythms become more predictable and they become more aware of and involved with those around them. We provide *preschoolers* with a consistent daily routine that includes a balance of adult initiated and child initiated activity segments, time for children to work in a variety of interest/learning areas, and outside activity times. Preschoolers have times each day when they can make child-size decisions about what they want to do. They carry out their self-chosen activities with peers and teachers and afterwards talk with one another about what they did and learned.

The major goals of our education/school readiness approach are to help children learn to:

- a. Develop trusting relationships
- b. Communicate well with others
- c. Make positive choices and decisions

- d. Think things through and figure things out
- e. Solve problems effectively
- f. Gain knowledge and skills in all developmental areas and in specific content areas such as language and literacy, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, cognitive skills (e.g. math and science), perceptual and motor skills development, and creative arts.

We encourage children to explore and develop these skills within well-planned, stimulating environments supported by caring adults who facilitate and enhance children's learning.

Children develop thinking processes in the early years. During these years, the majority of children's brain cells become connected and form patterns for thinking. Children need to learn general knowledge. However, it is more important to help children learn *how* to think, instead of *what* to think. In addition, our teachers promote independence and responsibility in children by encouraging them to do as much for themselves as possible. Children also experience the satisfaction of helping others and as appropriate taking on classroom jobs.

Social-emotional skills are rapidly developing in young children. Social competence is essential because most learning and life satisfaction occurs in social contexts. School readiness and success cannot occur without social competence. Staff promote children's social development in many ways. This includes helping children identify and understand their own feelings and recognize the feelings of others. It includes helping children work through frustration and anger using appropriate language and actions, follow social/classroom rules and routines and learn a problem-solving approach to social conflict. Mistakes are part of learning. ACHR staff use understanding, conscious discipline, and guidance verses punishment to help children learn social skills and self-regulation.

Teachers' daily lesson plans are based on the age-specific interests and needs of children and cover all areas as outlined in the HSELOF. These include approaches to learning, language and literacy, cognitive development (e.g. math and science), social/emotional development, perceptual and motor skills, personal safety and healthy habits, creative arts, as well as experiences that increase the children's knowledge of their own and other's cultures and languages.

We believe parents are the first and most important role models for children. We are eager and willing to encourage parents and primary caregivers to be engaged in their children's learning and to become effective advocates for their children. Teamwork with parents is at the heart of our program. We communicate with each other through activities including home visits, parent conferences, and group meetings. Parents of center based children are welcome in our centers at any time and are encouraged to volunteer to participate in their child's classroom activities. Parents of home based children are encouraged to attend socializations and other program activities.

ACHR Child Guidance

Based on Conscious Discipline

- ❖ ACHR Staff will create a **school family**, which creates a safe, caring classroom that fosters meaningful academics and social learning. Part of building this school family includes each child having a meaningful job, creating rituals, setting classroom commitments, and **building connections** with each child. The school family promotes and encourages kindness and helpfulness.
- ❖ Classrooms will practice the **Safe Keeper Ritual**: The adults say, “My job is to keep you safe. Your job is to help keep it safe!” Safety is the core of the classroom.
- ❖ Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks about the child, his/her family, or their race, religion, culture or economic status will NOT be used or permitted.
- ❖ Children will learn anger management, helpfulness, assertiveness, impulse control, cooperation, empathy, and problem solving skills.
- ❖ **Breathing techniques** will be taught as a way to relax, become calm, regain composure, and maintain control. **Star, balloon, drain, and pretzel** are some examples.
- ❖ The **Safe Place** in the classroom provides an opportunity for children to remove themselves from the group in order to become calm, regain composure, and maintain control when upset, sad, angry or frustrated. Children go to the Safe Place in order to be helpful to themselves and others. At first, a teacher usually goes with the child as a guide who helps them through the process. There may be breathing techniques posted, family photos, squishy balls, comfort bag, or many other things there to help manage feelings. Time out will not be used.
- ❖ All children shall be within the sight of an adult. No child shall be left alone at any time.
- ❖ All **behavior is viewed as a call for love (help) and will be seen as an opportunity to teach** the child skills so that the next time the child/children will be better able to handle the situation on their own. Children will be involved in the conflict resolution process.
- ❖ Staff will help the children to be successful instead of attempting to make or “get them” to behave. For example, the perspective, “How can I get this child to clean up?” will be changed to, “How can I help this child be more likely to choose to clean up?”
- ❖ The staff will **focus on what they want the child to do**. Instead of saying, “No pushing, you know better than to push your friend, you need to be nice to your friends.” Say, “When you want your friend to move, say, 'Move please'. Tell him now for practice.”
- ❖ Children will be **offered choices and given consequences**. For example, “When you throw the blocks, one of your friends could get hurt. You can throw the ball when we go outside and you can build with the blocks. If you choose to throw the blocks again, you will have to leave the block area. That will keep you safe and keep our friends safe.”



Basic Goals for School Readiness

For children to be physically, emotionally, and cognitively ready for kindergarten and life.

To reach these overall goals we provide opportunities for children to:

- ◆ Develop trusting relationships.
- ◆ Learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas.
- ◆ Become independent, responsible, and confident—ready for school and ready for life.
- ◆ Learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with other children and their teachers about what they have done and what they have learned.
- ◆ Gain knowledge and skills in important content areas including:
 - approaches to learning (how I learn/focus, ability to plan/reflect, and problem solve)
 - language (speaking and listening)
 - literacy (reading and writing) and communication
 - social-emotional development
 - creative arts (e.g. visual and dramatic arts)
 - social studies,
 - physical development and health (e.g. large and small muscles, coordination, healthy habits)
 - science and technology (classification: describing, sorting, matching)
 - mathematics (e.g. counting, shapes, patterns, measurement)

NOTE: These goals correspond with and incorporate the national *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework*. Domains include: Approaches to learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language, Literacy and Communication, Cognition (e.g. math and science), Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development, and English Language Development for Dual Language Learners.

COPIES OF IN DEPTH SCHOOL READINESS GOALS ARE AVAILABLE IN CENTER OFFICES. There is a summary of the specific goals for HS & EHS children in the appendix to *Hand in Hand*.

PARENTS' QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE - See Rest of Manual for Details

1. **PROGRAM HOURS & ATTENDANCE Head Start: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. EHS: 8:00-2:00p.m.**
 - a. Attendance EVERY day (except when sick) and being on time is essential for your child's school readiness. Every child should be **in his/her classroom** between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. After number of absences as described in Appendix A-4, child can be placed on wait list.
 - b. Children brought to the center office after 8:15 a.m. will be considered tardy. Exceptions made for: lateness because the bus was late (not because child missed bus) or *arrangements were made ahead of time for appointment (e.g. immunization or medical appointment)*. Parents need to call Center Assistant/Manager the day before the appointment or before 8:30 a.m. the morning of appointment, so the child will be on the lunch count and can receive lunch when comes to the center. Parents must bring appointment documentation with child. If a child is tardy twice in a three-month period, the parent will have to meet with the FEA to make a plan.
 - c. Head Start children must be picked up by 1:00 p.m. and Early Head Start children must be picked up by 2:00 p.m. If parents have appointment/event that will prevent him/her from being at the center **by the above times** or at agreed drop-off point when the bus arrives, they must make arrangements to pick up child before the above times or arrange with someone the child can be released to and who is listed on the Pre-Ad "release to" section to pick up or meet child.
 - d. If there is no one to receive your child per Transportation Plan & Pre-Ad, your child will not be able to ride the bus until an approved plan is in place (through a conference between you and an ACHR representative). If your child does not ride the bus regularly, he/she will lose bus seat.

2. **DRESS FOR SCHOOL**

- a. Dress your child in simple, washable clothing so he/she can be active, paint and play in the sand without worrying about clothing getting dirty or torn. Mark all clothing with child's name inside. Children have ways of losing things that cannot be helped. *We cannot be responsible for lost clothing*, so do not let your child wear anything that you do not want to lose. (See Page 13)
 - b. **Your child should wear shoes that fit securely on his/her feet. Shoes must cover the toes and have a back.** No high heels, flip-flops, mules, or sling backs.
 - c. Children should wear hats, scarves, gloves, and strong shoes during cold and wet weather. Mark items on inside tag (or piece of masking tape) with child's name using permanent marker.
 - d. Children cannot wear jewelry (ex., earrings, necklaces, rings) or hair decorations (ex. beads, barrettes, ponytail holders with balls or other objects on end). They are a choking hazard. Plain ribbons, scrunchies, & hair rubber bands acceptable. (See Appendix A-5) **(Applies ALL days at center.)**
3. **THINGS FROM HOME - (SAFETY)** Children should NEVER bring toys, food/candy or backpacks to center or on bus unless requested by staff to parent. (See Page 16)
 4. **ALL CENTERS ARE SMOKE & SCENT FREE (no perfumes/after shave etc. due to asthma/allergies).** Please do not put perfume or cologne on children.
 5. **BAD WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSING**
Center closings due to **weather** or other **sudden events** will be announced by text messaging, on ACHR Facebook page (ACHR-Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc.), and/or on our website (www.achr.com). Please check before calling the center or main office. Morning buses will run late in bad weather for safety. *Please stay aware of weather conditions during the day.* Buses may leave the center early (or late) if bad weather is approaching. On such days there must be an authorized person at drop point early/late to receive child(ren).
 6. **WE MUST BE ABLE TO CONTACT YOU** by phone or text. Keep number up-to-date at ALL TIMES.



ACHR Child Development Program - Parent Information

A. **RIGHTS OF ACHR PARENTS** As A Parent I Have The Right:



1. **To be treated with respect and dignity.**
2. **To be told regularly about my child's interests, strengths and skills in getting along with others.**

2.1 Parent-teacher conferences are good for your child. Sharing information helps provide continuity between the home and center. Either parents or staff may arrange a meeting. Parent-Teacher Conferences for children at the centers are held four times each year (two in the home, two at the center). Parents and teachers share information about children's interests and areas of growth. They work together to plan for children's steady success. Additional conferences may be held anytime there is a need. When you want information about how your child is doing, the daily schedule or the curriculum, contact your child's teacher or the Center Educator.

3. **To understand what types of screenings and assessments are used with children and what they are used for.**

3.1. Screening: All Early Head Start and Head Start children are screened during their first 45 days of attendance to identify concerns regarding health or development. The screening for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers is a developmental checklist completed by the program and the parent. Children also receive screenings for hearing, vision, height and weight (if not already done by their physicians). Screenings are used to help identify concerns in developmental, sensory (e.g., hearing/vision), behavioral, motor (physical skills), language, cognitive, perceptual, and social/emotional areas.

3.2. Ongoing assessment: All Head Start programs are required to gather data on children's learning and progress throughout the school year. Data is collected at various times during the year from teacher/parent observations of children's growth and learning, and from analyses of children's work and performance. Written observations are categorized and scored developmentally by teachers using a validated observation instrument called the COR© (Child Observation Record) Advantage. The COR is a seamless assessment tool for children birth through the end of kindergarten. The COR was chosen because it is aligned with the curriculum used in the classrooms and has been tested and validated for use in infant-toddler and preschool programs, including Head Start.


Teachers share observation information with parents at home visits and at parent-teacher conferences. Two times per year, each Head Start/Early Head Start family receives a report generated by the COR and at the end of the year Head Start families receive a portfolio/scrapbook of the child's drawings, writing, and other creative work.

In Head Start, a computerized system tracks the children's growth and development in eight major developmental areas and 34 developmental items as defined by the *HighScope Preschool Curriculum* and ACHR school readiness goals. Additionally, the HighScope Online COR software cross-references this data to show children's growth in the required five Head Start child development areas. Staff enter this data at three collection points in each school year – near the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Educators generate group reports from this data to share with the Head Start Policy Council and ACHR Board and with ACHR's School Readiness Advisory Committee. Staff also use the data to assist with training plans, future purchases of classroom materials, and program improvement plans.

4. To be engaged in planning and participating in programs that will improve my skills in areas including employment, daily living, parenting and literacy.

- 4.1. ACHR's staff uses the Family Engagement Summary and its related information to assess each family's strengths and needs. Using that information, individual families - working together with their Family Engagement Advocates or Home Visitors - set goals and plans ways to meet those goals. The Family Engagement Summary process is ongoing. As goals are accomplished, families assess and start working to complete other goals.
- 4.2. ACHR sponsors various parent workshops. These workshops will be held as closely as possible to the times indicated on the *Parent Information Form*. Food will be provided as deemed appropriate. Persons from other agencies are invited to come and talk with parents on topics of interest expressed on the *Parent Information Form* completed during Parent Orientation. Parents can request workshops of interest anytime during the school year by contacting their Family Engagement Advocate, Teacher, Home Based Parent Educator, Center Assistant/Manager or Educator. Watch for announcements of these special workshops in the parent newsletter and/or flyers sent home with the children.
- 4.3. ACHR offers parents opportunities to increase their parenting skills through research-based parenting classes such as *Triple P Parenting (through the Family Resource Center in Opelika)* and *Conscious Discipline Parenting classes, offered at ACHR*.
- 4.4. ACHR works closely with other agencies to prevent overlap of services and to provide the best possible services. Information about you and your child may be shared with or released to partner agencies so that ACHR staff can find the best services for you and your child.
- 4.5. ACHR has activities for all of the family. However, from previous years, we have learned some fathers felt left out of the activities at the center. Therefore, we have placed special emphasis on providing activities for fathers. Men important in the life of an ACHR CDP child are welcome. Before event, parent will need to send name & person show ID at event. Watch the parent newsletter (*Head Start Herald*) and special flyers for information on when these activities are being held.

5. To receive regular communications from the program.

- 5.1. ACHR's *Head Start Herald* (monthly parent newsletter) is available on our website (achr.com; right side, scroll to ACHR Family pwd achrFamily), and if you wish, in hard copy. The newsletter has information from administration, health and nutrition tips, Policy Council reports, job announcements, current calendar of events and much, much more. Please take the time to read it and then use it for reference. 
- 5.2. Various staff and programs at ACHR send flyers, memos, and text messages to families. Staff also posts information on the ACHR website (achr.com) and on Facebook. Each of these items contain information that is vital to the center, your child and your family. Please take time to read them.
- 5.3. "Bubble notes" (individualized notes to parents from teachers about their children's progress sent home on months when a parent-teacher conference is not scheduled).
- 5.4. Calendar of Events (*in Hand in Hand*) – lists planned events including dates and times. Event Dates including any changes are in the monthly *Head Start Herald*. Put this calendar on your refrigerator for quick reference. The most up-to date calendar will be on ACHR.com.
- 5.5. ACHR's resource manual, *Branching Out*, contains resources that you can access for services as you need them. It is on achr.com under Information; links are clickable. You may request a hard copy. You can call 211, a United Way referral service available 24/7. You may also contact your Family Engagement Advocate/Home Based Parent Educator for help if needed.

6. To be a member of the Center Committee and to serve in an elected position.

- 6.1. It is important for families receiving services to have a decision-making role. Parents at each center form a group called the Center Committee with a chairperson and other officers. The Center Committee (*Parent Meeting*) is our "PTA." You can meet with other parents and staff to learn about things important to you and your child. You can help plan activities that interest you. Center Committee meetings will be held in the evening at each center in September, January and April

(see calendar for dates). Additional meetings will be scheduled built around topics parents are interested in as shown on parent survey. Some of our teachers are scheduled to attend each meeting. If you want to see your child's teacher, please send a note at any time. Your child's teacher will contact you to set up an appointment.

- 6.2. Each center elects representatives from the Center Committee to serve on the Policy Council.
Be sure to come to the September meeting if you are interested.

7. To serve on the Policy Council if elected.

- 7.1. The Policy Council has input on the decisions for Head Start and Early Head Start.
- 7.2. Parents elected to serve on Policy Council from their respective Center Committees (Parent Meetings) and community representatives who have an interest in our programs make up the Policy Council. Parents are elected from each center at the September Center Committee meeting. The Policy Council meets once each month. Training is provided to members on the duties and responsibilities of a Policy Council member. Training usually is held the first Saturday in October.
- 7.3. To serve on the Policy Council, all you need is to be willing to give some of your time, make decisions based on facts, and work with other parents and community representatives on behalf of the children enrolled in the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs.

8. To be kept informed about the activities of the Policy Council. To ensure this is done:

- 8.1. "Policy Council Corner" is a regular item in the *Head Start Herald* (parent newsletter).
- 8.2. Policy Council Representatives will report during Center Committee Meetings (*parent meetings*).

9. To serve on advisory groups that plan services.

- 9.1. ACHR has advisory groups, such as the Health/Disabilities/Infant-Toddler Advisory Committee and the School Readiness Advisory Committee that meet one to three times a year to provide staff with suggestions on ways to improve services to the children. If you are interested, please tell your Family Engagement Advocate or your Home Based Parent Educator. You can volunteer to serve on the Self-Assessment Team. This group works hard for about three weeks in October to assess the various areas of our Head Start/Early Head Start program.
- 9.2. If you live in Lee County, you can volunteer to be elected to serve on the Community Action Partnership-Lee County (CAP-LC), a 15-member group working with Community Services Block Grant programs including the energy assistance, housing counseling and weatherization programs. That group meets quarterly (February, May, August, November), at 11:00 a.m. The election of members to the CAP-LC is in January.

10. To make suggestions for improvements or file a complaint.

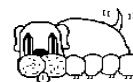
- 10.1. Parents may make suggestions for improvements or file complaints at any time. If a matter cannot be settled at the center, then parents should write their suggestions and/or complaints to the Family Engagement Coordinator. Each will be handled in the appropriate manner. Please feel free to call (334) 821-8336 if you have questions, suggestions or problems. We look forward to having your child (ren) in our program.

11. To read the manuals that govern the operations of the program.

- 11.1. ACHR's Child Development Program operates in accordance with *National Head Start and Early Head Start Program Performance Standards* (Federal), and the *Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers* (State). A copy of national regulations may be obtained from our central office. A copy of state regulations may be obtained from the state Department of Human Resources, Office of Day Care Licensing, Montgomery, Alabama; or by calling (334) 945-4630. The Family Engagement Coordinator and the Center Educators have copies of regulations and would be happy for you to look at the copy.
- 11.2. We encourage parents to become familiar with the Performance Standards and DHR Standards and compare them with our operation. We think you will find that we exceed minimum standards.

12. To visit the center when I want to -- and to volunteer.

- 12.1. Parents and legal guardians are welcome to visit the center to watch, join in and/or volunteer anytime. To be with/volunteer with the children all other persons must complete the DHR volunteer requirements, as do other volunteers. This includes siblings (older or younger), parent's significant other, step-parents, grandparents, and friends of the family. These persons are not permitted to visit in classrooms other than at specially planned times such as Father's events, or when the person is asked to be and is acting as a "resource" visitor. Everyone at the center must follow the center and DHR rules.
- 12.2. *One important thing to remember is to **sign in and out at the center office** and wear a visitor's badge each time you come.* For the protection of the children, we have to know who is in the center at all times. Volunteers are welcome and can be helpful in many areas: classrooms, health services, family services, food services, etc. Let the Center Assistant/Manager know if you are interested. *We will find a place to use your talents and time.*
- 12.3. When you volunteer, your time counts as "in-kind" or "match." Parents/guardians please sign in in the center office. Also, sign the Parent Volunteer form in the classroom so we can count your volunteer time. Non-parents/guardians (ex. Grandparents) who come as resource visitors should sign a Volunteer Information/Agreement Form one-time only (1407) and each time fill out a Time Sheet-Volunteer (1426). *These forms are **VERY** important to our being able to continue the program. **If no one gives you one, please ask.***
- 12.4. Another way to help your child and the program is by participating in our **Reading Activities and Growth for Success (RAGS)** activity/"homework." Research has shown that children whose parents give them individual one-on-one time -- talking, reading, sharing and doing activities together -- do better in school. The impact of this one-on-one time has been shown to last well into a child's "big school" years - some studies say into High School! **RAGS** provides suggested ideas and activities related to classroom activities. It encourages you to give your child focused time and attention whether doing the suggested activities that support what is being learned in the classroom that week or doing a related activity your child is interested in and can learn from.
- 12.5. **Lending Library books are available in each classroom.** Children will have opportunities to choose a book to take home for you to read together. When your child returns the book and its bag, he/she can borrow another book. Reading is an important part of school readiness. Research shows that children who are read to every night do better in school. *Please help us by regularly reading with your child and then by seeing that all books and bags return to the classroom.*

**B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACHR PARENTS** As A Parent I Need:

- 1. To treat program staff and other parents with respect and dignity.**
 - 1.1. Concerns, disagreements, and/or complaints must be handled in a calm, courteous manner. Loud voices, arguing, profanity, and/or threatening statements are NOT acceptable ways to express disagreements with others at centers or any ACHR function.
 - 1.2. Physical aggression or any behavior that disrupts the smooth operations of the program will not be tolerated. Refer to Rights of ACHR Parents under the section, "To make suggestions for improvements or file a complaint (10.1)."
- 2. To provide center staff with up-to-date, correct addresses and phone numbers for work and home each time there is a change so I can be contacted at any time during the day in case of emergency and so that I will receive text messages from the program.**

- 2.1. In addition, I must provide and keep current *correct pick-up and delivery addresses* for my child(ren) who ride the bus.
- 2.2. I must provide **and keep current at least two phone numbers** of people who could contact me in case of an emergency. (*DHR may be notified if parent cannot be contacted in an emergency*).
3. **To bring and pick up my child at agreed on time. (For Head Start-arrive by 8:00 a.m. & pick up by 1:00 p.m. For Early Head Start-arrive by 8:00 a.m. & pick up by 2:00 p.m.)**
4. **To have my child at school every day that he/she is not ill. Attendance is very important to each child** and to the center. Our aim is 100% attendance each day. Your child cannot receive all of the benefits of the program if he/she does not come to the center every day (except when sick). **If there is a pattern of too many unexcused absences (*when a child is not sick but misses one or two days each week or several days each month*), your child may be dropped from the program** and if you wish, placed on the waiting list. When your child's unexcused absences reach 10 or more, you will be notified that your child will be dropped from the program. We always have children on the waiting list and it is unfair to them for a child who does not regularly attend to be holding a slot. See complete attendance policy in Appendix 4.
5. **To follow the transportation rules when I (or my designee) transport my child and to have my child at school on time and picked up on time each day.** Being **on time** is a must. Children should be in their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. When a child is late, he/she misses activities he/she needs and disrupts the learning process for the rest of the group.
 - 5.1. I must see that my child arrives in the center on time (8:00 a.m.). Children brought to the **center after 8:15 a.m. will be considered late/unexcused**. Exceptions are made if the lateness is the result of the bus being late (*not you missing the bus*) or if the center is notified ahead of time about a medical or dental appointment. If a child has an appointment, parents need to call Center Assistant/Manager the day before the appointment or before 8:30 a.m. the morning of the appointment, so child will be on the lunch count and can receive lunch when comes to the center. Parents must bring appointment documentation with child so late arrival will be considered "excused." If a child is unexcused twice in a three-month period, the parent will have to meet with the FEA to make a plan.
 - 5.2. I must sign my child in on the form provided in the office when arrive at center.
 - 5.2.1. Hold your child's hand from the time he/she gets out of the car, and until you have walked him/her to the classroom.
 - 5.2.2. After the office, when you walk your child to the classroom, tell the teacher that you are leaving your child with him/her; be sure she knows your child is present.
 - 5.2.3. Before leaving the classroom, sign your child in on classroom sign in form in notebook; use full signature and correct time.
 - 5.3. I must see that my child is picked up on time each day by an authorized adult. Children must be picked up by 1:00 p.m. (Head Start) and by 2:00 p.m. for Early Head Start. Send only authorized adults (those listed on your child's Pre-Admission Form "Pre-Ad") to pick up your child. ID may be requested. To pick up child:
 - 5.3.1. Go to the office, sign child out in the office, get and sign a release slip.
 - 5.3.2. Sign the child out in the classroom notebook (use full signature and right time).
 - 5.3.3. Take completed release form back to the office (do not just send your child!).
 - 5.3.4. If you or a designated adult (age 16 or older *and on your child's release list*) is not at the center to pick up your child on time, the parent/guardian must have a conference with an authorized ACHR representative before child can return. If authorized pick up person does not come to pick up child within 30 minutes of pickup time, DHR may be notified. The second time a child is not picked up on time another conference must be held with a firm plan in place for someone to pick up child *on time each day*. If child is not picked up on time a third time, a thorough investigation of situation will be done by ACHR staff to determine if there is a safe plan in place prior to the child's to return. Again, when a child is not safely and regularly picked up from the center on time, DHR may be contacted.

- 5.4. On days, such as Holiday Program days, classes may start later and/or end early. Watch for notices.
- 5.5. Information about center closings due to weather or other unexpected events is announced by text messaging, on Facebook (ACHR - Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc.) or the agency website (www.achr.com). Buses will run late or not at all in bad weather to ensure children's safety.

6. To follow ACHR's rules for transportation of children when riding on an ACHR bus. *If My Child Is Transported on The Bus, I Must:*



- 6.1. Have an adult *listed under release on the child's Pre-Admission form* [Pre-Ad] at home or at the location agreed on ***EACH*** day to receive my child. (*Bus drivers cannot leave a child unless authorized adult is present; if an adult on the pre-ad is not present, child is returned to center and we may notify DHR*).
- 6.2. Have my child ready on time *each day* and be ready to hand my child off to the Bus Aide. [*Waiting just one minute on each of 20 children puts the driver 20 minutes behind schedule; the children would miss some learning activities.*]
- 6.2.1. I understand that my child cannot ride a bus if he/she is less than three-years-old and weighs less than forty pounds.
- 6.2.2. If I live in an apartment complex or in a mobile home park, I understand my child will be picked up and dropped off at the apartment or park office at the agreed-on time. [*Drivers do not have time to stop at each apartment. Also, some mobile home parks do not have enough room for buses to move through them safely in a timely way.*]
- 6.2.3. I (or my designee) will be waiting with my child and *will walk my child all the way to the bus* after it stops. I understand that due to staff-child ratio, the Bus Aide is not allowed to walk away from the bus *and must go no farther than the bottom step*. Because children must not walk by themselves to the bus, this means the parent/designated adult must walk, holding child's hand, all the way to the bus with the child.
- 6.2.4. Once routes are established, drivers try to arrive at about the same time every day. This is not always possible. There may be as much as 30-minute's difference in pick-up or drop-off times. When children are added/removed from the route or a substitute drives the route times may change without notice. Please be patient.
- 6.2.5. If my child is picked up or dropped off from *another daycare*, I will notify the daycare that daycare staff must walk my child to the bus for pick up and meet the bus to receive my child in the afternoon, because the bus aide is not allowed to walk away from the bus.
- 6.2.6. I will **call the day before if I know my child will not be riding the bus**. For Darden and King Centers call 334-821-8336; for Edelman Center call 334-667-0001; ask for "transportation." or center office manager.
- 6.2.7. *If my child has not ridden the bus for two days without notice, the bus will not pick up my child again* until I tell the Center Assistant/Manager the reason my child is not riding and that my child is ready to return to the bus. I am responsible for calling the Center Assistant/Manager [Darden/King (334) 821-8336; Edelman (334) 667-0001] by 12:00 p.m. the day before the child's return in order for transportation to start again.
- 6.2.8. Gas and route time must be used wisely. *We will not hold bus seats for children who do not ride regularly without a documented reason (usually medical)*. If a child does not ride bus for two days without a medical or other acceptable excuse communicated to center office staff, bus will not pick up child until parent talks with Family Engagement Advocate or center office staff. It will be at least 24 hours after the meeting before child can ride the bus. Parent will need to transport child to/from center during this time. If there is no communication between parent and center office staff, or if child does not ride regularly (such as missing a day each week without prior arrangements with the center and with good reason), *the child will be dropped from the bus list*. Children not listed on the DHR weekly transportation list are not allowed on the bus per DHR.

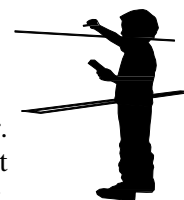
- 6.3. Cooperate with the bus driver and bus aide. *[Each child will be checked briefly as he/she gets on the bus, possibly including a temperature check. If your child seems to be ill (fever of 100.4 F 38 C or more, severe rash etc.), driver will not be able to bring child to the center. Please help us reduce illness at the center. If you have problems with that request, put it in writing. Either bring it to the center or, if you do not have transportation, call Family Engagement Advocate.]*
- 6.4. Be aware that only the child (not you, anyone with you, nor your designee to meet your child at the bus) *is allowed to step on even the first bus step.* This is for the safety of all children. The only exception is if the driver invites you to do so to assist your child.
- 6.5. Encourage my child to cooperate with the driver and aide and to stay buckled in the bus seat. *[We cannot transport children who do not stay buckled or who repeatedly cause other problems on the bus.]* Parent(s) of a child with special needs/behavior challenges may be required to attend a conference to work out transportation strategies for the safety of the child and others on the bus.
- 6.6. Be home (or at the agreed on drop-off point) *on time every day* to receive my child *from the bus* from the aide when my child is dropped off.
 - 6.6.1 If you or your designated adult (16 years old or older and on your child's release list) is not on time at the place agreed on in writing, the bus will return your child to the center office. Staff will not transport your child home, and the bus driver will not make a second trip to your home if no one was there the first time.
 - 6.6.2 If you (or your designated adult) are not at the location agreed on to receive your child, the bus will not pick him/her up again until parent/guardian has a conference with an authorized ACHR representative. **It will be at least 24 hours after the meeting before child can be transported again on bus.** Parent will have to transport child to and from center until bus transportation is resumed. The second time a child is brought back to the center there must be another conference with a firm plan in place for someone to receive the child from the bus. If child is brought back to the center a third time, the child will be removed from the bus list and may permanently lose transportation privileges. The parent will be responsible for transporting child daily to and from center.
 - 6.6.3 Drivers are *only allowed to pick up or drop children off at the address listed on Transportation Agreement and with a release to person on the Pre-Ad;* that means the driver cannot drop your child with a neighbor unless you go to the center and revise the Transportation Agreement and, if the person receiving the child changes, the Pre-Ad.
- 6.7. Make transportation changes in person at the center office (fill out a new *Transportation Agreement or Pre-Ad*). **Changes cannot be made by driver or by phone.** Changes do not take effect immediately. **It takes 4-7 days if change is possible. (Buses usually are at capacity.)**
- 6.8. Be at the center by 12:45 p.m. if you want to pick your child up instead of him/her riding the bus. *[You may pick up a child at any time before 1:00 p.m. If you want your child to stay through lunch, pick him/her up no earlier than 12:30 p.m.]*
- 6.9. Other transportation items:
 - 6.9.1 Pick-up/drop-off stops are planned where buses do not have to back-up. This is a Head Start guideline and is for your child's protection.
 - 6.9.2 We must run routes efficiently to save time & gas. Also, buses cannot travel down some dirt roads that may be passable by car. Therefore, there may be some designated pick-up/drop off points in the county.
 - 6.9.3 A driver cannot take information about a change, change a route for you, *nor drop your child off anywhere other than location on your child's Transportation Agreement & person on Pre-Ad.* Doing so could cost a driver his/her job. See 6.7. Please plan ahead.

7. To dress my child appropriately for school and to provide a change of clothes that match the season of the year.

- 7.1. Dress your child in simple, washable clothing. Your child should be able to crawl, run, play, paint, climb, play in the sand and swing without worrying that you will be mad if clothing gets dirty or torn.
- 7.2. Children are not allowed to wear jewelry or hair barrettes/beads of any kind. Please refer to copy of policy at the end of this handbook.
- 7.3. Children should wear shoes that fit securely on their feet. Shoes must cover the child's toes and must have a back (*no high heels, flip-flops, sling backs, or mules*).
- 7.4. Children should wear hats, scarves, gloves and strong shoes during cold, wet weather. If the temperature or chill factor is below 32 degrees, teachers will plan movement activities in the classroom/center. On days when it is raining or below 32 degrees teachers will use the classroom/gym/center for playtime.
- 7.5. Children will play in-doors when the heat index is over 99 degrees outside. Outside times may be shortened by teachers and/or scheduled for cooler times of the day during hot weather.
- 7.6. Mark all clothing with your child's name on the inside. Children have ways of losing things that cannot be helped no matter how much they are watched. *We cannot be responsible for lost clothing*, so please do not let your child wear anything that you do not want to lose.
- 7.7. Change of Clothing: **Every child** must have a complete change of clothing (outer garments, underwear & socks appropriate to the season) stored at the center **at all times** for "accidents." Clearly mark your child's name inside each clothing item. The center stores your child's clothing until needed. You will need to send clean clothing more often for younger children. When possible, we will wash your child's clothing and put it back on. Sometimes there is not enough time left at the end of the day to do so. **If your preschool child still has potty accidents, please send your child to the center in pull-ups.** If your child wears home clothing borrowed from the center, please wash and send the borrowed items back to the center.



8. **To pick up my child as quickly as possible (within 30 minutes) if my child gets sick or is injured at school. (I may send someone who is on my release list in my place.)**
9. **To provide information for job/school verification when requested.** Early Head Start center slots and childcare slots are *only* for parents who work, attend school or are in a training program. Verification of work/school/training hours will be requested three to four times per year.
10. **To report to the EHS Assistant, EHS Manager or Darden Clerk if I lose my job, my training slot, or no longer attend school (only for Early Head Start and childcare).**
11. **To work with staff in any way deemed necessary to help resolve problems (e.g., behavior, mental health, etc.) my child might be having.**



- 11.1. Preschool children face many new situations when they come to the center. This, along with the child's age, personality, and range of experience, can affect a child's behavior. It may be their first time participating in a group setting. They may experience sadness at being separated from their parent/family. The newness of our daily activities may be frightening to them at first.
- 11.2. Teachers reassure children and help them learn the daily routine. Repetition of the daily routine helps children feel secure and able to predict what will happen while they are at the center. It is important that children come every day to get used to the routine. As they gain experience and build trusting relationships over time, it is common for positive social behaviors to increase.
- 11.3. It is normal for preschoolers to have difficulty sharing toys and getting along with others. Most lack the language skills to express their feelings and needs in words. This can lead to behaviors

such as pushing, hitting, biting, or name-calling. Teachers will help children learn to get along with each other, express their needs appropriately, and solve conflicts.

- 11.4. Teachers will work with children to use words and solve problems without hitting or hitting back. We need parents' cooperation and support to increase children's abilities to handle disagreements with words and to discourage them from hitting, biting, etc. This is a school readiness item.
- 11.5. One of our school readiness social/emotional goals is to help children be able to manage and express their feelings, increase control of their impulses, and develop an inner sense of right and wrong behaviors. Most children show an increase in positive social skills during the year(s) they are at Head Start. They learn these skills, which are needed for school, even better when the family members expect the same of their children at home. See ACHR.com for suggestions.
- 11.6. Some children have more difficulty than others developing these skills. Children with more difficult behavior often have trouble developing relationships with new adults and children. They may refuse to follow the teacher's directions, may act out impulsively, or may have tantrums. You will be asked to work with us in helping your child as needed with his behavior.
If needed, ACHR has an Intervention/Behavior Specialist on staff who assists teachers, parents and children in resolving these issues.
- 11.7. When a child's difficult behavior does not respond to teachers' and the Intervention/Behavior Specialist's efforts, *parents will be called in for a conference*. The conference will need to take place as soon as possible. At this conference, parents and staff will talk, create and agree on home/school strategies to be implemented to assist the child at the center and at home. It is essential that parents be involved. In doing so, parents become an advocate for the child and a partner with Educators.
- 11.8. If a child's difficult behavior becomes a danger to the child, teachers, or classmates, **the parent will be notified to come to the center immediately (within 30 minutes)**. A conference will be held. Staff and parent(s) will create a behavior plan outlining specific interventions (e.g. mental health consultation). Many parents later tell us that this process helped their children and better prepared the parents to support and intercede on their child's behalf throughout their education.
- 11.9. We want to work with parents whose children are having difficult behaviors before the behavior becomes harmful to the child. Research shows these children spend so much time trying to cope that their learning can suffer. Parents and staff can help by identifying effective ways of working with these children at the center and at home. We have a mental health consultant to whom children and families will be referred as needed for additional help.
- 11.10. In all instances, we ask that parents support the center's rules about listening to teachers, using words to solve problems, and discussing the rules with the child as frequently as needed. This kind of center-parent teamwork can make all the difference in a child's life and self-esteem, the safe and successful operation of the program and, eventually, a successful transition into public school.
12. **To attend Center Committee meetings (Parent Meetings), serve as an officer in any elected position, and work with my child's class to make his/her pre-school experience the best ever.**
13. **If elected, to serve on the Policy Council, to attend the meetings, report to my center about the decisions of the Policy Council and report to the Policy Council the concerns of my center.**
14. **To communicate with the program staff on a regular basis.**



Parents should use their calendar and read texts and notes sent home. They should also attend parent-teacher conferences and home visits, respond to teacher's, health staff's and family engagement

advocate's notes, texts, and phone calls, attend parent meetings and other program events and check the ACHR Facebook page or website.

- 14.1. *Parents of infants and toddlers must share information with caregivers every day.* Please plan to stay a few minutes when you bring and pick up your child. You and the caregiver will share information about new skills learned, foods eaten and other happenings. You will sign and receive a *Daily Parent Form* each day at pick-up time. The form will tell you how much formula your child drank, how much food he/she ate and how much he/she slept and went to the bathroom.
- 14.2. Parents of preschool children (ages 3-5) communicate with staff in many ways, including telephone calls, notes, home visits, texts, email, and parent-teacher conferences. Please ask the bus aide each day if there is a note; also, check in your child's pockets. When a reply to a note or signature on a form is needed, it is usually needed soon, so please reply quickly. When the RAGS bags go home (currently on Tuesdays) with books, notes often are included.
- 14.3. When calling the center with a concern, understand that you must give your name and phone number to the person answering the phone so that your concern can go to the correct person and so if the needed person is busy, the person can return your call.

15. To help ACHR Child Development Program staff keep my child and other children safe.

15.1. The center provides children with toys and food. For safety, personal toys, food and candy should **never** be brought to a center unless requested by the teacher. Staff cannot be responsible for toys or food brought to the center. This includes such things as action figures, sharp objects, toy guns, jewelry, money or any dangerous item that children might put in their mouths or pockets. Some of these items can be a choking or other hazard and are not allowed. Toddlers may bring a security blanket or stuffed toy, but we cannot be responsible if the item is lost.

15.2. We know that sometimes items get past parents. Items such as those named above will be "parked" with the teacher. They will be returned to the person picking up the child. If the child rides the bus, they will be sent with the bus aide on the bus.

15.3. **Backpacks are not allowed at the centers. Please do not send them.**

15.4. Our centers and properties are **smoke free**. No smoking is allowed **anywhere**. We feel that this helps our children's development. It is also the law. Please tell your family and friends of this policy. Persons found breaking the policy will be asked to leave the premises. We appreciate your cooperation.



15.5. There is only **one** entrance open to parents and children at our centers. Please use only this entrance. Please let all adults who may bring or pick up your child know where appropriate parking is located. DO NOT park in a way that blocks other vehicles. This is a hazard.

15.5.1. At Darden, please park in spaces off the circle – *not on the circle drive itself*. There also is parking available on the hill

15.5.2. At Edelman, please park on the left side of main road or the left side of gate.

15.5.3 At King, please park in a designated parent parking space and cross at painted crosswalk. For safety reasons – do **not** cross at bus loading area.

15.6. Please do not leave unattended children in your vehicle while you run in to drop off or pick up a child. Do not drop off a child without signing him/her in. Please have/use age appropriate car seats for your child(ren). Buckle your child in and be sure s/he stays buckled. We are required by law to report these sorts of incidents to DHR for children's safety.

15.7 All ACHR buildings have a no weapons policy.

- 15.8 The law prohibits registered sex offenders from being on or near school property, please assist us in enforcing these rules. If the sex offender is a parent, please discuss this with the center assistant/manager.
- 15.8. **Sign In:** For your child's safety, each parent (or person designated by parent) who brings a child to the center must
- 15.8.1 hold the child's hand in the parking lot and walking into and through the center
 - 15.8.2 **sign** the child in **at the Center Assistant/Manager's office**
 - 15.8.3 hold the child's hand and walk the child to the classroom and
 - 15.8.4 **sign the child in the child's classroom; sign your first and last name, not initials, as well as the time.** Signatures must be legible. (DHR regulation)
 - 15.8.5 If you leave your child at the center without signing him/her in, your child may be dropped from his/her slot. DHR may be notified.
- 15.9. **Sign Out:** For your child's safety, each parent (or person designated by parents on release to part of pre-ad) who picks a child up at the center at any time of day must
- 15.9.1 **sign** child out **at the Center Assistant/Manager's office** and receive a release form. Only you or the person(s) you designated on your child's Pre-Admission Form may pick up your child. The Center Assistant/Manager may ask you or the person picking up your child to show photo identification.
 - 15.9.2 take release form to the teacher, sign your child out of the classroom (readable full signature and time) and get your child.
 - 15.9.3 hold child's hand, walk the child to the office and return the teacher-signed release form to the person at the desk. Do not send child alone to the office to return the slip.
 - 15.9.4 hold the child's hand walking from the center and in the parking lot.
- 15.10. **Person signing child out:** You must *come to the center* to change the forms if you want a person not on your list to pick your child up (phone changes not accepted). This is to protect your child.
- 15.11. There are cameras and video/audio systems in the centers to monitor activities round the clock. The cameras are in classrooms and other areas for student and staff security; to allow parents/guardians to review their children's classroom activities at certain days or times (as agreed on by the CEO or designee); and to record children's progress and document staff observations. Video/audio recordings are treated as confidential and are for the exclusive use of the ACHR-CDP. Note: sometimes the system fails to record.
- 15.12. Photos and video (including cell phone) in classrooms and field trips: We understand when you are in a center or on a fieldtrip, you may want to take and post cute photos or video. We have children in foster care and other situations where pictures seen by others could cause them harm. For the safety of our children, please quietly tell the teacher you want to take a picture so she can move away any child who should not be photographed.
- 15.13. If you see someone or something in or near the center that seems odd and that could be a possible danger, please let staff know.
- 16. To help ACHR Child Development Program staff build children's self-esteem.**
- 16.1. Your child's teachers sometimes will send home your child's work. Please find a special place to hang some items. You might want to hang things on the refrigerator using magnets. This will let your child know you are proud of his/her work. Encourage your child to continue trying new things. That will help your child build self-esteem.
 - 16.2. **Field Trips:** Pre-school children go on a field trip away from the center approximately



three times during the center year (if funds are available). Trips will include places such as grocery store, library, farm, car lot or fire station. These trips help children increase both understanding about their world and their self-esteem and confidence. Parents/guardians (*not friends or other family members*) are welcome and encouraged to volunteer to help on field trips. Extra help always is needed and appreciated. However, *those helping must:*

- 16.2.1. **Work with and be responsible for the children in the same manner as the staff and must follow all ACHR rules (e.g., no yelling, spanking, etc.).** Sharing these activities with your child either at the time or later is another self-esteem builder.
- 16.2.2. Children must have signed permission from their parents/guardians to be able to go on a field trip. Parents **MUST** sign a permission form for **EACH** field trip. *Only children enrolled in the program are allowed to go on field trips. ONLY* parents or legal guardians may accompany class on field trip and may ride bus with class, if space is available. For safety, other unexpected adults may not show up at field trip sites and interact with children. To help with a child who has behavior concerns be able to go on the trip and participate safely, in some cases a parent may be required to go on the trip with the child.

C. **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

1. **Darden and Edelman Centers - before and after school care may be available for a fee.**

“Wrap-around” care is for children enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start whose parents work or are in school and need their children cared for before 8:00 a.m. and/or after 1:00 p.m. If “wrap-around” care is available, all children in the centers are eligible, but slots are limited so parents may have to seek other before/afterschool care. Frankie B. King Center parents can apply with our partners, Joyland and Auburn Day Care or other daycare centers in Auburn area that agree to accept children afterschool. Parent must contact the daycare to make arrangements and must revise the Transportation Agreement.



2. **Care during center breaks for children enrolled in "wrap."** Care is provided during most center breaks for children enrolled in the childcare program. Part-time fees are charged during the program year. Full-time fees are charged during summer and during weeklong breaks throughout the year. Fees are based on an established sliding scale. We accept shopping cards from Family Guidance of Opelika. Parents of children who have a card from Family Guidance must bring the card to be swiped each time the child is dropped off or picked up.

3. **Parents must transport all children in childcare at ACHR.** An exception is made for children receiving Head Start transportation and who may ride the bus one way.

4. **Weekly fees must be paid in full each week and cover only agreed duration of care for each day.**

4.1. Fees for children in wrap-around care are due weekly to keep a child's slot. Fees must be paid even when children are **absent** for any reason. Pay fees each Monday at the center office. We do not keep money at centers so exact change is needed. Get a receipt and know the person to whom you are giving money.

4.2. Fees do not cover staff time beyond the hours agreed on for a day, though we are sympathetic to your individual childcare problems and needs. If you arrive late to pick up your child(ren), you will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 for each minute. The **late fee must be paid before your child can return to wrap care. Repeated late pick-ups can be cause for your child to lose his wrap-around care slot.**

4.3. If you miss two payments, you will receive a termination notice by the Friday of the second week. On the Monday of the third week, you must present a receipt for the balance paid in full or your child will not be accepted into the wrap program.

4.4. If you decide to take your child out of the wrap-around program, fees will continue to be charged (accumulate) until you notify the Child Care Center Assistant/Manager.

D. HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

1. Illness: The ACHR Child Development Program tries to provide as safe and healthy a place as possible for your children.

- 1.1. Please **DO NOT** send or bring your child to school sick. Head Start expects us to know the status of enrolled children. Call the center before 8:30 a.m. if your child will be out sick. If your child has a severe cold (frequent coughing, earache, sneezing), undetermined rash or spots, fever, severe headache, upset stomach, temperature of 100.4 F (38 C) or more, just “droopy” or other symptoms of illness, he/she should stay home. Parents will be notified to pick up their children immediately (within 30 minutes) when there are signs of illness.
- 1.2. Child must be fever, diarrhea and/or vomit free for at least 24 hours without use of medication. *Children who are sick are usually not comfortable at the center and they can cause others to be sick.* In addition, their sickness makes it easier for them to “catch” something else.
- 1.3. Children may not return to the center after they have had a contagious disease until you bring a statement from the doctor. Along with written note from doctor/health care provider, parent must bring child to the center on the first morning back following contagious disease to be checked by health or office staff. Parent should be prepared to take the child home if the child still seems to be sick.
- 1.4. The center will notify parents if their children are exposed to a contagious disease. Please notify the center when your child has been exposed to a contagious disease outside the center. Information about contagious diseases is available from the health staff.



2. Immunizations: The *law requires that each child in the center have an up-to-date Alabama immunization certificate AT ALL TIMES* – not just at entry to the program.

- 2.1 Children whose shot certificates are not up-to-date must not be in the center until an updated Alabama immunization certificate is given to the Center Assistant/Manager.
 - 2.2. Babies have a frequent schedule of well-baby check-ups (1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 24 months). After each appointment, *parents of infants and toddlers must turn in forms to the center* indicating the required immunizations and check-ups have been completed. We need details of well-baby checks at least annually. We will accept a statement from the physician’s office that the well-baby check has been completed in between.
 - 2.3. Appointments are hard to get. They are even harder to get if you miss one. Each time your child gets a shot, make an appointment for the next one.
 - 2.4. Staff will give reminder during orientation and send a reminder about a month before a child’s next immunization is due. If you do not have an appointment, make one *immediately*.
- 3. Well Child-Well Baby Checks:** Federal guidelines say programs must document each infant/toddler’s well child check-ups and each preschool child’s well child check.

- 3.1 Well child checks usually are done at the time of immunizations. Please ask that they be done then because it saves a visit. If your child is on Medicaid, or if you have a private physician, request that your child be **screened for lead** if not already done. It is required only one time. We must have documentation that lead screening has been done, whether current, or earlier (such as at the 24-month check). Attach a copy of the screening results to the Well Child Check form before you turn it in to the Center Assistant/Manager.
- 3.2 **We must have documentation of regular well child checks.** (See schedule under 2.2 above for infants and toddlers; annually for preschool children.) We will accept a copy of the Medicaid screening form. Because it is shorter, most medical offices prefer to complete the ACHR form (*Well Child/Baby Check-Up Form*). These forms can be picked up at the center office before the appointment. For infants/toddlers, we will also accept a statement of verification that the child has

had a well-child check, with full results given once each year.

- 3.3 An updated form must be provided to the center after **each** well child check-up. Schedule the next well child check before leaving the doctor's office. It is easy to fall behind if you are not careful. You can harm your child's health, and, possibly, lose your child's slot at the center if you do not keep your appointments and bring us the documentation. Let us know if we can help you.
- 3.4 If your preschool child had a well- child check within 12 months of entry into the program, your doctor may use the results to fill out our form without you having to make another appointment. Call your child's clinic and let them know what you need. Remember that a child older than 24 months cannot receive two Medicaid screenings in the same calendar year.


4. Head Lice: In accordance with state and county regulations for head lice, we have set the following policy:

- 4.1 Children will be checked for head lice at teachers' request or when other cases are found.
- 4.2 When a child has head lice, staff notify parents immediately and ask them to pick child up from school. Health staff can provide recommendations for getting rid of lice. Because of state rules, we must notify parents of other children who may have been in contact with the child, even if the contact was unlikely to have passed on lice. If a child has had enough contact with a child who has lice to make us feel the problem may spread, we will call or send that child's parent a more specific note. You should also know that we will thoroughly clean the child's room, bus seat and other possible contact points.
- 4.3 A child sent home from school because of lice may return to school only after: a) the parent brings in proof of treatment and b) a health staff member or other designated person checks the child and finds no evidence of live lice or eggs (nits). *A child who rides the bus who has had lice must be brought to the center to be checked prior to being back on the bus.*

5. Medication: The child's parent/guardian must give written permission if he/she wants staff to give medicines at the center, whether given by mouth, spray or a cream. This permission must be on the DHR form (*see "Authorization for Administering Medication"* form in the back of this handbook Appendix 7) with all sections completed. Parent/guardian must sign and date the request. No out of date/expired medication can be brought to, used, or kept at the center.



- 5.1 The request to give medication must be made *in person*.
- 5.2 Blanket permission to give medications cannot be accepted. *You must fill out a new "Authorization for Administering Medication" form every five days.*
- 5.3 Any prescription medicine brought to the center must be in its **original container and** clearly labeled with the child's name and directions for giving the medication. If the medication requires measuring, the correct measuring device must be included with it.
- 5.4 If the prescription is written "PRN" that means, "*As Needed.*" We can only give it "as needed," meaning when symptoms appear. Staff cannot give the medication at a specific time, even on parent request. "As needed" medication is meant to only be given when the child is showing symptoms of whatever problem the medication is for. If the prescription is written, "PRN" or "as needed," but you want your child to take a medication daily; you must ask the physician to change the way the prescription is written and bring a copy to the center.
- 5.5 Medication must be transported to/from the center **only by adults!** All medication **must** be taken to the front office or health room. Medication (other than EPI Pens) cannot be brought to school on the bus. *Medication must not be left in the classroom.*
- 5.6 Give short-term medications (ex. antibiotics given one to three times daily) at home. Please work with your child's doctor to schedule doses for when your child is at home.

- 5.7 If medication must be given at the center, you may be able to ask the pharmacist to figure the amounts to give and split the prescription into two bottles, one for doses given at home and one for doses given at the center. Some medications, such as antibiotics, must be kept cool. We will work with you to do so. Questions? Contact health staff.
- 5.8 *Non-prescription medicine cannot be given at the center unless a doctor requests in writing that the child receive it.* In addition, any non-prescription medication must be clearly labeled with the child's name and directions for giving it. Just as with any other medication, there must be an *Authorization for Administering Medication* form on file.
- 5.9 Non-prescription items for infants, such as *diaper cream and sun screen*, can be used **ONLY**:
1) if the parent brings the cream to use, 2) if the item is clearly labeled with the child's name and instructions for use, and 3) if the parent completes/signs a form *each week* giving permission along with instructions for use. 
- 5.10 **For allergies requiring EPI PENS:** If a child has a prescription for EPI Pens, the child cannot attend until EPI pens are in place. EPI Pens are prescribed in a package of 2 as a child may need 2 doses if a reaction to an allergen occurs. ACHR requires one set of 2 EPI pens be wherever the child is at all times. Children who ride a bus or stay for wrap-around care will need 2 sets of 2-EPI Pens so one stays in his primary classroom and the other stays on his bus or in his daycare classroom. Parents must let doctor know ahead of time how many sets of EPI pens are needed, including a set for home, so doctor will know how many to prescribe. Medicaid/insurance will pay for multiple sets, but doctor will have to write prescription for the needed amount. EPI Pens are kept in a small secure bag inside of the classroom (that travels to the playground & on field trips) or bus emergency bags. EPI pens expire after 12 months and must be replaced when expired. A child, who needs Epi pens, will not be able to stay in the center or ride on bus until appropriate number of sets of pens are brought to the center and kept current.

6. Emergency Treatment: Please keep phone numbers and other emergency contact information up-to-date at all times. If there are changes in this information or the information requested in item 6.1 below, *please* come visit the Center Assistant/Manager and update your child's records. We understand your need to work or do other things while your child is at the center, but we must be able to contact you. Children who are sick or hurt very much want – and need – their parents.

- 6.1. *Parents must leave signed emergency permission on file so that ACHR staff can obtain appropriate treatment for the child if for any reason the parent or guardian cannot be reached.* Be sure the center has the name of the *child's current doctor and other adults to contact* in case parent cannot be reached in an emergency.
- 6.2. If a child has an accident or illness needing emergency medical attention, center staff will call the parent or designee immediately (if staff has *current* phone numbers). A designated person will take the child to a facility where services can be obtained effectively and quickly. Sometimes this is a doctor's office; sometimes the emergency room. Paramedics will be called if thought necessary. Child's Medicaid or insurance information will be given to doctor or emergency room staff along with the form with signed emergency permission.

7. Medical Care: Head Start/Early Head Start funds are limited. By law, we can help parents with payments **ONLY** when care is necessary and only when no other source will pay. In reality, in this time of funding challenges, it is even more difficult for Head Start to help with any medical or dental payment.

- 7.1. If your child is on Medicaid, we need to know the Medicaid number **AND** the name of the child is assigned physician.
- 7.2. It is **essential to your child's good health and ability to receive medical/dental care that you keep your child's Medicaid benefits current.** Remember to **renew your child's benefits on time**, as we cannot assist with funds for care if a child would have been eligible but lost eligibility.
- 7.3. ***Our records must stay current.*** If your child is dropped from or added to Medicaid or if you change your child's Medicaid physician or dentist, please let us know.

- 7.4. Doctors, dentists and pharmacists **MUST** see the Medicaid card. If you let us take your child to the dentist and you cannot come, you must send the Medicaid card.
- 7.5. If your child is not eligible for Medicaid, he/she should be eligible for **All Kids**, which is an insurance program for children through the State of Alabama. As with Medicaid, we need to know the child's number and other basic information.
- 7.6. If your child has other insurance, we need that information and a copy of the card.

8. Medical - Other:

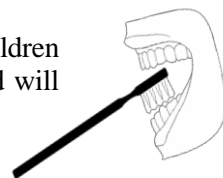
- 8.1. Young children are active and are learning to play together. They are learning what they physically can and cannot do. During the year, most children will receive some bumps, bruises and scratches. That is normal. We expect children to tell you about their day, but they do not always have the language skills needed to explain what really happened so in the past we tried to call parents about almost any concern. Parents then said we made too many calls to home or work; therefore:

If a child has an incident serious enough to leave a mark, or if we have any concerns about your child, we will send a note home to you. In addition, as appropriate, staff will use the phone numbers on file to contact the parent, possibly by text, so please keep phone numbers up-to-date.

- 8.2. When your child has had surgery or a serious injury:
 - 8.2.1 Call the Center Assistant/Manager to notify the agency what is happening and when the child is expected to be able to return to the center.
 - 8.2.2 Ask the doctor for a note giving the date that the child may return to the center and listing any restrictions. Bring the note to the center.

9. Dental Care: Dental care is very important for young children. Many people assume baby teeth are not important -- but they are. **The condition of the baby teeth will help decide the condition of and placement of your child's permanent teeth.**


- 9.1. Our infant-toddler staff wipes babies' teeth and gums with gauze twice a day. Children will begin helping us brush their teeth when they reach 12 months of age. A child will not use toothpaste at the center until the child has learned to spit.
- 9.2. Please do not put your baby or toddler to bed with a bottle. Juice or milk left in the mouth can -- and will -- cause severe tooth decay.
- 9.3. Older preschool children have toothbrushes and toothpaste at the center and brush each day. Brushing helps prevent tooth decay. Please also help your child learn to brush at home. Most children do not have the motor skills to brush effectively by themselves until they are about eight years old, so they continue to need your supervision and help at home.
- 9.4. *Each Head Start child must have a dental examination and follow-up treatment as needed each year.* We need your help in assuring this, both for your child's good dental health, and to help us meet program regulations.
- 9.5. We recommend that parents of children on Medicaid make their child's dental appointments after a Medicaid EPSDT screening. Parents will be able to schedule individual children faster than we can take them in groups. Parents of children on *All Kids* also should make their own appointments. Please let us know if you can take your child to the dentist yourself.



That helps us meet program regulations and helps our program stay in good standing. Most important, it lets your child know you value dental care. Ask at the dentist's office for copy of the first page of your child's patient records as documentation of the examination and treatment.

- 9.6. If you have already taken your child for a dental examination or treatment within the last year, ***thank you!*** Please let us know so that we can document your child as complete and so we do not schedule your child for an unnecessary examination.
- 9.7. To get enough dental care appointments for our preschool children, we transport some children out of the county. You will be notified about times and dates, and asked to sign permission and field trip forms. Please return these immediately so your child can receive needed dental care.
- 9.8. After the examination - for children who we arrange to take for dental examinations - children in pain who have never received dental treatment will be the first to be taken for treatment (provided their parents return the needed forms promptly).
- 9.9. For children's dental and physical health, CANDY IS NOT served in centers nor sent home with children. For information on children's parties, see item H: Other Program Information.

E. NUTRITION

1. **Mealtimes: We serve preschoolers breakfast at 8:15 a.m., lunch at 12:00 noon (11:00 for toddlers) and an afternoon snack (for EHS and wrap-around care).** The ACHR Child Development Program is an equal opportunity food provider. We provide meals that include about one-half of your child's daily nutritional needs. For best brain and body development *and to keep them from becoming tired and irritable young* children need nutritious foods regularly. 
2. **Food, including snacks, cannot go home with children.** USDA, our source for money to buy food, requires that *all food be eaten in the classroom*. Children cannot take food, snacks or drinks out of the classroom. If you arrive at mealtime or snack time, please wait for your child to finish eating. His/her meal or snack is an important part of his/her nutrition/development.
3. **Infants and toddlers are fed "on demand."** The program provides formula, baby food, and toddler foods. Breastfeeding of infants is strongly encouraged. Mothers are welcome to drop by the center anytime to do so. We have a breastfeeding room available for you. We will also let you store breast milk at the center. Just let us know how we can help.
4. **Allergies or other special food needs:** If your child needs foods different from those on our regular menu, *your doctor must write an order for the needed changes. Your child cannot attend the program until this note is in the health room and menu changes are in place.* Then we will be able to plan/prepare the right foods for the diet. Please bring the doctor's order before the time your child starts at the center if your child needs changes from our regular menus. We do work to accommodate religious diet restrictions. Contact the Health/Nutrition Assistant or the Registered Dietician for more information.
5. **Eating at the center with your child:** Parents may pay to eat a meal with their child at the center. If you volunteer at the center ***at least three hours*** that day, the meal is free. If you want to eat at the center please sign-up in the classroom before 9:00 a.m. so we will include you in our lunch count. If you have not been counted, we will not be able to feed you.
6. **Nutrition Education:** Teachers/Home Visitors give information on good eating habits, choosing healthy foods, and are role models for children and families during meals to encourage children and families to try new foods and make healthier food choices.

We must include the following statement related to our food program:

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, email: Program.intake@usda.gov or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through

the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

F. **EMERGENCY PLANS**

1. **We have regular fire, severe weather, shelter in place, and bus evacuation drills.** Emergency procedures will be followed in case of an emergency.
2. **If your children are at the center in severe weather, we will either:**
 - 2.1. Send children home early before severe weather is to be in the area; or
 - 2.2. Hold children at the center until the severe weather warning is cancelled. (So please do not tie up center phone lines); or
 - 2.3. If we are under a **tornado warning** when you come to pick up your child, you will be invited to stay until danger has passed.
3. **When children are at home when severe weather is expected, either:**
 - 3.1. Buses will not come to pick up children until the warning is cancelled; or
 - 3.2. The CEO or designee will declare centers closed for the day. Announcements are made by text message, our Facebook page and/or our website (www.achr.com).
4. **There is a center evacuation procedure if needed.**

If you arrive at a center that has been evacuated, children and staff can be found at the following locations:

 - 4.1 Frankie B. King Center children -- Auburn Arena located at 250 Beard Eaves Court, Auburn, AL. If that location is evacuated, the back-up location is Darden Center located at 601 S. 4th Street in Opelika, AL.
 - 4.2 Darden Center children -- Covington Center located at 213 Carver Avenue, Opelika, AL. If that location is evacuated, the back-up location is Frankie B. King Center located at 950 Shelton Mill Road, Auburn, AL.
 - 4.3 Marian Wright Edelman center children -- Hurtsboro Senior Center located at 506 Owens Street in Hurtsboro, AL.
5. **If there is a disruption in regular phone line services.** Parents can call the following numbers for emergencies only, no general calls. These phones are only on when regular lines are down Darden (334)742-9766, King Center (334) 826-6397, and Edelman Center (334) 667-6645.



G. **SPECIAL SERVICES**

1. **Children who have special needs are welcome at the ACHR Child Development Program.** In fact, *parents are encouraged to send these children.* The preschool years are an important time for growth and learning. Our HighScope curriculum is based on child development principals that encourage both periods of individual attention and group interaction, so it is ideal for children with special needs. ACHR staff work with staff from local school systems and other agencies to provide services for children who have special needs and their families.
2. **Tell one of our staff if you have concerns about your child's development or skills.** If you have concerns about your child's learning, behavior, speech/language or motor skills tell your child's teacher, the Center Educator, or your Family Engagement Advocate /Home Based Parent Educator. If your child has a diagnosis, please give us copies of records or permission to get them.
3. **Screenings.** ACHR and/or school system staff and other partners will screen every child to see if the child may have a special need. If a possible need is found, you will be contacted and may be asked to meet with staff to give written permission to evaluate your child. You will receive the results in writing or at a conference.

- 4. Plans for children with special needs.** An IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) or IEP (Individual Education Plan) is written for every child who has a diagnosed special need. The parent, teacher, Head Start and Early Head Start staff members and others help write the plans. We need your input and cannot provide special services for your child without an IFSP or IEP, so if you are asked to come, please do. Call your FEA if you need help with transportation.

H. OTHER PROGRAM INFORMATION

- 1. Birthdays and holiday celebrations:** If you choose, you may celebrate your child's individual birthday or help with other holidays or events at the center.

- 1.1. If you want to celebrate at the center and want to bring food or other items, you **must** tell the Teacher and Center Assistant/Manager **at least one** week in advance. Things to know:

1.1.1. Parties are allowed **only** after lunch.

1.1.2. Preschool class size in most classes is 18 children and two-three adults; infant-toddler class size is eight children and two-three adults.

1.1.3. **Party snacks consist of two or more healthy food items.** They must be **store-bought**. *No homemade foods can be served.* List of approved party snacks:

- Fresh fruit (no grapes unless cut in half)
- Cookies (store bought in package)
- Cake, cupcakes or muffins (store bought in package)
- Popsicles
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt

1.2. For more information or to check a food item, please call the nutrition assistant.

1.3. Only parent or legal guardian may go to classroom for this event. No siblings or other family members.

1.4. Please **do not bring:**

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Balloons | ▪ Nuts | ▪ Punch/sodas | ▪ Candy/suckers/chewing gum |
| ▪ Plastic favor bags | ▪ Chips | ▪ Pizza | |



- 2. Multicultural Activities:** We encourage and want parents to help us broaden our children's cultural experiences. For example, you can bring musical instruments, clothing or items from your job, other countries, or pictures. If you are bi-lingual, you could come and read a children's book to the children in your home language. Then you and the teacher could talk about it with the children. You could teach the children a few words in another language or sing a song. Though you cannot bring homemade foods, we can do in-classroom food preparation during the children's small group time and have a tasting party for foods from other cultures. Please talk with your child's teacher about any ideas you have as these things need planning time.
- 3. Importance of pre-school to child's future learning:** In doing assessments, staff has seen how much difference enrollment before age four, regular attendance and parent engagement make in school readiness. If your child is in Early Head Start -- good for you and for your child. If you get your child ready and to the center each day scheduled, double-good. If you read to and play with your child, and participate in RAGS home activities, and do other things with your child to encourage learning, triple good!! ***If you have a friend or relative with a three-year-old not in pre-school, please let them know about the program. It is very important to get children enrolled early and that they attend regularly.***

4. Sunshine Shop: ACHR's Sunshine Shop on the Darden Center campus makes items available to *Head Start/Early Head Start parents free of charge*. Items that may be available include clothing (including career clothing), household items (furniture appliances, etc.), toys, books, and more. Please be sure to sign a receipt form when you receive items.

- 4.1. Access to goods from the Sunshine Shop is available for emergencies, such as if a family has had a home fire or other serious problem. Contact your Family Engagement Advocate/Home Based Parent Educator for more information.
- 4.2. If you have specific needs for goods of any type at any time, contact your Family Engagement Advocate or Home Based Parent Educator. They have forms to list what is needed. If we have it, or can locate it, we will arrange for you to pick it up.
- 4.3. The Sunshine Shop may occasionally be open for parents to come to "shop." When that happens, notification will be through text messages, our Facebook page, postings in the center, and/or a note in the *Head Start Herald*. When the shop is open, the days parents may come will be decided by alphabetical order of your last name. The group to come first will rotate. Only the child's parent or guardian may shop. ***ID is required.***
- 4.4. When we have open shopping days, please be considerate of other shoppers and staff. If you pick something up, change your mind and do not want it, put it back where you got it. Parents who leave a mess or whose children cause difficulty or an unsafe situation may be asked not to return. If you tell staff you want a large item (like a chair) and will return for it, come to pick it up when you say you will, or we will have to give it to someone else.
- 4.5. The amount of goods any parent or guardian can take will be limited so every family will have a fair chance to receive useful items.

If you have any questions, please call the In-Kind Manager at (334) 821-8336, ext. 352.

5. In-Kind or Match. Our Child Development Program requires that we "match" 20% of the funds we receive with "in-kind" (donations of goods, time, and services).

- 5.1. If you donate items to the program, *please fill out an in-kind form*. For example, if you donate cookies for your child's birthday party, those items can be counted as "in-kind."
- 5.2. We receive in-kind credit for volunteer time. *Please consider helping as a volunteer in the classroom, on a field trip or at the Sunshine Shop or other ACHR-CDP facility*. Please be sure to sign in/out of the center in the center office as well sign the parent volunteer sheet in the classroom.
- 5.3. Turning in completed Time Sheet for RAGS, described in Section A.12.4, also generates in-kind for the program. When you and your child participate in RAGS homework related to what children are learning in the classroom (such talking about/naming various fruits & vegetables and their shapes and colors at the grocery store), you are spending quality time with your child, increasing skills such as vocabulary and language and helping your child with school readiness. That time is so important to your child's learning that it counts as volunteer time.

When you fill out the RAGS Time Sheet, you are letting your child's teacher know you are doing things to help your child learn (words, ideas, numbers, motor skills, sharing etc.). In addition, you are helping ACHR meet its required in-kind or "match," which is critical to continuation of the program. If you do not have information about RAGS, or if you do not regularly receive the activity sheets from your child's teacher, please call your Center Assistant/Manager and ask!

6. We enroll children all year. Early registration is March through April of each year. Families who have completed an application for Head Start or Early Head Start previously should contact a

Family Engagement Advocate.

Staff enter information such as age, family size, income, special needs and handicapping conditions into the priority system on computer, which selects those who are eligible. The National Poverty Income Guidelines are used in determining eligibility for Head Start and Early Head Start. ***We keep a waiting list.***

6.1. To **apply to enroll** your child in Head Start or Early Head Start and the child care program, you must have the following documentation:

6.1.1. **Application** (completed).

6.1.2. **Income verification:** W-2 Form, 1040 Form, child support statement from the courthouse (a letter from Social Security or DHR verifying monthly income may be used). **All** income for the family must be included. If enrolling your child for childcare, you will need documentation of **current** income – payroll check stubs for everyone in the family.

6.1.3. **Birth certificate.**

6.1.4. You need to know that Head Start law requires that children be selected based on a points system based on needs, not first-come, first-served.

6.2. **If your child is accepted** into the program, he/she will need for our files:

6.2.1. **Immunization certificate:** current immunization certificate from Health Department (if your child receives immunizations from a physician who does not provide an immunization certificate, you can take the physician's record showing the dates of your child's shots to the Health Department to get a certificate). This is a state requirement for childcare and we must have and keep our license as a childcare center.

NOTE: Immunizations must be kept updated throughout the year, as shots are due. Children cannot remain at the center past the expiration date.

6.2.2. A **completed, recent well baby/well child check, or physical** (including lead screening). Documentation of a screening within the past few months is fine). Or bring **proof** of an appointment (and then please keep the appointment and bring the form to the center health staff or send it with the bus aide). *After your child is enrolled in the center, we must follow the Medicaid schedule for well child checks. Your child needs a well-child check at least every year (more often for infants and toddlers).*

6.2.3. **Number** for Medicaid, ALL Kids or other insurance, or best of all, a copy of card.

I. CHILD CUSTODY – ENROLLING PARENT INFORMATION

1. Parent Responsibility: Regarding child custody, the parent must:

- 1.1. Provide ACHR staff with court papers showing the enrolling parent has custody rights to enroll the child.
- 1.2. Notify ACHR in writing of any changes in custody.

2. ACHR Responsibility: Regarding child custody, ACHR staff:

- 2.1. *Cannot deny a parent who is listed on a child's birth certificate rights to a child at the request of the other parent without court papers saying it should do so.*
- 2.2. Will release a child only to persons authorized by the enrolling parent (but this cannot exclude the other parent unless court papers state this).
- 2.3. Will keep family information confidential.

