

# ADAMS COUNTY HEAD START

## PARENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021



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## CENTER LOCATIONS

Head Start Administration Office

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

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



## **Mission**

The mission of Adams County Head Start is to provide high quality early education for children in partnership with their families and the community.

## **Philosophy**

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

## **Vision**

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

“School-Ready Children | Involved and Successful Families”

# PROGRAM OPTIONS

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

**\*\*Program Options are subject to change due to the pandemic\*\***

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

**Tuesday – Friday**

**Distance/  
Remote  
Learning  
Option**

**Tuesday – Friday**



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Classroom/Attendance Hours

Brighton Head Start Hours:

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

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

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

Rainbow Head Start Hours:

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

Sunshine Head Start Hours:

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

### Registration and Enrollment

Adams County Head Start serves children who are 3 – 5 years of age. In order to be eligible for Head Start, a child must be three years old by their school district's cut-off date. The child's family income must be within the Federal Income Poverty Guidelines. The child and family must reside in Adams County.

A child who is enrolled may continue to attend Head Start until he/she is eligible to start Kindergarten. Recertification of income eligibility may occur.

## Calendar and Holidays

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

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Week of Thanksgiving
- Winter Break (two weeks)
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Spring Break (1 week)
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July

## EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The Education Program at Adams County Head Start uses supportive classroom methods to engage children in high quality learning experiences appropriate to their level of development. In a positive, rewarding environment ACHS students interact with materials and print-rich environments that help develop verbal, pre-academic, and pro-social skills necessary to be kindergarten ready. We use developmentally appropriate and research-based curriculum elements to provide a scope and sequence of effective teaching and learning environments that can be individualized to the needs of each child.

### Curriculum Elements



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

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

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

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

The **Kids Play Math** curriculum, along with math activities embedded in the **Creative Curriculum**, provide meaningful activities to foster the pre-numeracy skills needed in kindergarten and beyond.

### **Outdoor Play – Inclement Weather/Excessively Hot Weather**

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

### **Communication with Parents**

The teachers use the following ways to share and receive information with parents:

- Daily conversations (once all children are picked up)
- Monthly Class Newsletters
- Teacher Home Visits
- Parent/Teacher Conferences

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

Classroom teachers will inform parents of classroom activities and topics via a monthly newsletter. The newsletter will cover the broad topics of classroom happenings, as well as personalized information about each parent's child.

### **Teacher Home Visits**

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

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher Conferences occur in the fall and spring. Teachers and parents share information on the developmental progress the child is demonstrating at home and at Head Start. Parents are encouraged to share their comments/concerns on the curriculum and how their child is doing.

## **Lending Library**

Children have the opportunity to choose a book from our lending library to take home and read with their families. We highly encourage parents to read this book with their child. Children return the book and receive another book of their choice twice per month. In addition, families are encouraged to participate in Families and Fathers Reading Everyday (FFRED) and Motherread/Fatheread to support child and family literacy.

## **Special Needs Services**

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

## **FAMILY SUPPORT**

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

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



## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

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

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

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

## **Parent Involvement Opportunities include:**

### Program Governance and Committees

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

### Classroom

- ✧ Volunteer in the classroom
- ✧ Assist with transition field trip
- ✧ Center maintenance & classroom clean up

### Home

- ✧ Help teachers prepare for classroom projects
- ✧ Participate in the Families and Fathers Reading Every Day program (FFRED)

## **Safety and Volunteering:**

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

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

### Collaborative Meetings:

- ✧ These meetings are held to discuss additional support your child may need to be successful in the classroom environment. The Special Education and Support Services Program Supervisor may contact you if your child needs additional support and/or a formal developmental evaluation with any of the District Child Find Teams or any other agency
- ✧ Parents are encouraged to attend and participate during their child's discussion time.
  - The focus of the meeting is to discuss the child's developmental progress and to develop a specific plan(s) to support the student in the classroom and/or at home as needed
  - Meetings are held at centers monthly.
- ✧ If you have a concern about your child or want to participate, contact Monica Lujan, Special Education and Support Services Program Supervisor at (720) 523-4615 or [mlujan@adcogov.org](mailto:mlujan@adcogov.org)

## PROGRAM GOVERNANCE



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

### **Policy Council**

The ACHS Policy Council is made up of Head Start parents (two representatives and one alternate per center) and local community representatives including a Governing Board appointed Policy Council Representative. Policy Council Parent Representatives are elected each year at their individual center Parent Committee meetings. Policy Council members work together with management staff and the Adams County Board of County Commissioners to develop, review, and approve agency policies, goals, and funding applications. In addition, Policy Council members approve/not approve the hiring and termination of Head Start staff and participate in the annual program self-assessment and planning. Policy Council meets on a monthly basis.

### **Parent Committees/Café**

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

- Give ideas to staff in developing and using program policies, activities, and services;
- Plan, lead and participate in programs and activities for parents and staff; and
- Participate in the interviewing of Head Start candidates.

### **Health Advisory Committee**

Our Health Advisory Committee is composed of parents/guardians, ACHS staff, health professionals and other community members from partnering organizations. The committee meets four times a year to discuss and assist local programs developing health related policies, training staff and families on health topics, addressing cultural and health literacy needs, identifying emerging health issues affecting Head Start families and accessing community health resources. This committee is open to all ACHS family members. Please contact your Family Services Specialist or Health Specialist if you are interested in participating in the committee at any point during the program year.

## NUTRITION SERVICES

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

A wide variety of foods are prepared for our children, with a focus on serving whole grains, low-fat milk products, fresh fruits and vegetables. We also include foods from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. ACHS utilizes the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and develops our menus based on CACFP requirements, Healthy People 2020 and the 2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. By following these guidelines, ACHS ensures children receive meals meeting their nutritional requirements for their age. Meals and snacks are served “family style” to help children become more independent and develop socialization skills. Children are encouraged to try new foods and explore their developing tastes. Parents/guardians are welcome to come and sit with their child during meal times. Please note, due to CACFP guidelines we cannot accommodate meals for parents and family members outside of pre-organized events.

### Menu Planning

Menu planning feedback surveys will be handed out to families for their suggestions once a year in the fall. Please take the time to complete this survey so you can provide your ideas to us. Monthly menus are posted in the classrooms. If you do not receive a copy of the monthly menu, please ask your teacher for a copy.

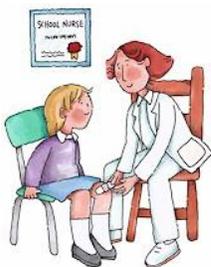
### Dietary Needs

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

Parents who have specific nutrition related questions and/or concerns can also schedule a time to meet with the program’s Health and Nutrition Manager.

## HEALTH SERVICES

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



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

All children attending ACHS must receive the following screenings within their first 45 days of enrollment:

- Vision (Every year)
- Hearing (Every year)
- Growth Assessment (Body Mass Index-BMI) (Twice a year)
- Speech (During child's first year of enrollment)
- Developmental

All children attending ACHS must receive the following screenings within their first 90 days of enrollment:

- Anemia (Every year)
- Lead (At least once after age 2 years)
- Dental (Two times a year for dental exams, cleaning and up to four fluoride applications)

*Parents have the right to refuse screenings and procedures, please talk to your Health Specialist.*

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

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

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

- An annual physical exam
  - Updated immunizations
- \*\*Children without updated immunizations and physicals will be suspended per state law**

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

- **Health Care Plans and Food Allergy Statements** are required for all children with significant health concerns. This includes conditions requiring on-site medication and/or emergency health procedures. Common conditions requiring health care plans include asthma, seizures, food allergies, bee allergies and diabetes. All health care plans and food allergy statements require signatures from the child's doctor, parent/guardian, and Head Start's Child Health Care Consultant (Registered Nurse). If the health care plan or food allergy statement requires medication, this medication must be in its original container (with the prescription label) within its expiration date and labeled with your child's name. All medication required must be accompanied with completed health care plan and/or food allergy statement and must be at the child's center in order for the child to attend the program.

If your child is diagnosed with a condition requiring a health care plan or food allergy statement **during the school year**, your child may not be able to attend school, or may be placed on a medical hold, depending upon the severity of the medical diagnosis. We will try to keep your child in school while this documentation is received and put in place. *A current and accurate health care plan will need to be in place within ten business days from a medical diagnosis received by your medical home.* This decision is based on your child's specific medical need(s), your doctor's input and our Child Health Care Consultant's assessment. It is our intent to keep your child safe while he/she attends school. It is important that your child has a signed health care plan in place as well as all prescribed medication as stated in your child's health care plan while attending school. The Health Specialist assigned to your child's center will be available to assist you with this process.

- **Special Diet Statements** are available for children with food allergies/intolerance(s) as needed. Special diet statements are for foods that do not require medication at our centers. Special diet statements are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by ACHS Health Specialist and a Registered Dietitian. Special diet statements may also require the clearance of the child's doctor. All special diet statements will require a parent/guardian signature.

## **Dental**

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

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

Our program values your child's health and development and requests that you follow-up with any recommendations or concerns regarding your child's mental, physical and emotional well-being at any time during the program year. You may be contacted by a Family Services Specialist, Child Health Care Consultant, Registered Dietitian, Special Education and Support Services Program Supervisor

and/or a Health Specialist during the year in regard to your child's health care needs.

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

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

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

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

Adams County Head Start also maintains a policy where we take care of the classroom to prevent further spread of head lice. We vacuum, remove play clothes and limit head to head contact as well as keep children's belongings separated.

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

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

## **Accidents, Incidents and Injuries**

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

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

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Parents/guardians must update their contact information, to include emergency contacts and pick-up list every August and January. It is for your child's benefit and safety that you keep us informed of any changes in phone numbers, emergency numbers and other parent/guardian contact information as they happen. A signed

consent form must be on file prior to your child's first day in the program. This also includes written authority to arrange medical care.



## TRANSPORTATION

Adams County Head Start provides transportation service for transition field trips **ONLY**.

**Within 30 days of enrollment, a parent/guardian of the student must meet with the Family Services Specialist to receive bus and pedestrian safety rules.**

Transportation staff receives annual training on safe driving practices and vehicle safety, including bus evacuation procedures. Transportation staff conducts emergency bus evacuation drills with children within the first 30 days of the school year, and two additional times during the year. Teachers supervise the seating of children, and will place children next to them that may need more attention/supervision. One teacher sits toward the front of the bus, the other toward the back to ensure appropriate supervision of children. If an emergency occurs while children are being transported, transportation staff will respond using emergency procedures. For situations requiring professional medical or emergency assistance, transportation staff will contact 911 and parents/guardians.

### Field Trips

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

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### Attendance

Regular school attendance helps your child build a positive relationship with their teacher and helps them feel comfortable in their classroom environment. This is important for your child's future success in school. Please call the center and let your Family Services Specialist know if your child will not be attending school that day. If we do not receive a call from you, the Family Services Specialist will contact you regarding your child's absence.

### Arrival and Pick Up

**Arrivals:** Children need to arrive at school on time. If your child is going to be late, please call the center and let the Family Services Specialist know.

**Pick Up:** Children need to be picked up from school on time. Children may only be picked up from the center by the parent/guardian or any other adult who is 18 or older and listed on the child's Pick-Up form. For the protection of children, persons unfamiliar to the staff will be asked to show a valid picture I.D. before the child is released. In the event that someone attempts to pick up a child

who is not on the child's Pick-up form, parents will be immediately notified and local authorities may be contacted.

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



Children are considered late if they arrive any time after the start time or are picked up later than the end time. Parents/guardians are to call their Family Services Specialist to inform them of the late arrival/pick-up.

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

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

### **Anti-Violence**

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

### **Child Abuse and Reporting**

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

### **Complaint Reporting**

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

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

### **Confidentiality**

All information gathered by the ACHS program regarding your family/child is confidential and is not released without written consent of the legal parent/guardian. Information may be used for documentation of Head Start eligibility, for local, state or federal funding and evaluation reporting requirements, litigation procedures, and education planning. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to request and review a copy of documents in your child's file.

ACHS cannot share information related to the development or behavior of other children in the program.

### **FERPA**

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

parent/guardian before releasing education records.

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

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

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

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

*To find out more about FERPA, you can access this website: <http://www.healthinfolaw.org/article/fast-facts-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa>*

## **HIPAA/FERPA and medical records**

ACHS follows HIPAA when we need to transfer any medical documentation electronically when communicating with your healthcare providers. Parents are asked to sign a HIPAA consent form so we are able to contact your healthcare providers with any health care plans and/or advisement that is necessary to care for your child safely while they are enrolled in Head Start. Healthcare plans and special dietary needs are shared with Head Start staff that are “responsible for protecting the health, safety and learning of a student”. Personal identifiable health information of your child is only shared with staff that is providing care to your child. Staff receive annual training on how to responsibly protect that information through education in HIPAA and FERPA regulations. Important health information related to your child’s specific care and safety is posted discretely in the classroom. Red folders affixed with Velcro that identify health care plans and dietary needs specific to your child’s care are posted in the classroom. This helps specific staff involved with your child’s care to easily access this information in the event emergent care needed. It is the staff’s responsibility to ensure this is maintained in a confidential manner. If you have any questions about these policies, please contact the Health and Nutrition Manager at 720.523.4706.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate children from their center. Children

will be taken to a safe place. Parents will be notified if such events occur.

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

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

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

<b><u>Center</u></b>	<b><u>Evacuation Location</u></b>	<b><u>Phone Number</u></b>
<b>Brighton</b>	Southeast Elementary 1595 E. Southern St. (South of the Head Start Center)	303-655-2650
<b>Creekside</b>	Donald C. Ciancio Memorial Building 8989 Huron St. (East of the Head Start Center)	303-853-3500
<b>Little Star</b>	Fire Station No. 1 3948 W. 73 <sup>rd</sup> Ave (South of Head Start Center)	303-427-2006
<b>Rainbow</b>	Mountain Terrace Apartments 3650 W. 84 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (East of the Head Start Center)	303-426-5494
<b>Sunshine</b>	BJ's Auto 7051 E. 56 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (West of the Head Start Center)	303-227-1222

### **Responding to Emergencies**

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

### **Text Messaging**

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

### **Medication**

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

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

- A. Parent/Guardian will bring medications in with completed paperwork. If support is needed, please contact your ACHS Health Specialist.
- B. Medication must be in the original container with a readable label on it and will be stored out of reach of children.
- C. The medication documentation must include the following:
  - Name of child to receive the medication
  - Name of medication
  - Proper dose of medication
  - Route medication is to be given (example: by mouth, injection, etc.)
  - Time medication is to be given
- D. The parent/guardian must check-in the medication with a trained ACHS staff.
- E. If your child is given medication while attending Head Start, your Health Specialist will go over the Medication Log with you at the end of each month. We ask that you sign and date the Medication Log after the Health Specialist has gone over this with you.
- F. Please note that we will write your child's first and last name on all medication and medication supplies (spacers, face masks, etc.) in a black permanent marker so we know what belongs to your child while they attend school.

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

## **Illness/Exclusion Policy**

Young children frequently become mildly ill. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers experience a yearly average of six respiratory infections (colds) and can develop, on average, one to two gastrointestinal infections (vomiting and/or diarrhea) each year.

Deciding when children can go to childcare or school can be difficult. Parents/guardians and caregivers should discuss the child's symptoms with your Family Services Specialist and/or your Health Specialist and decide what to do.

Parents should contact the school when their child is sick and describe the illness and symptoms. If a doctor (health care provider) makes a specific diagnosis, (such as strep throat), let program staff know. Sometimes it is necessary for a child to remain at home.

Information related to classroom infectious disease exposures are posted in the classroom. Please consult these classroom resources regularly and see your child's teacher or Health Specialist for additional information.

## How Sick is Too Sick? When Children and Staff Should Stay Home from School or Child Care

**There are three main reasons to keep sick children and adults at home:**

1. **The child or staff member does not feel well enough to take part in usual activities. For example, a child is overly tired, fussy or will not stop crying.**
2. **A child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.**
3. **The symptom or illness is on this list, and staying home is required.**

**Remember, the best ways to stop the spread of infection is through good hand washing and staying home when sick.**

Symptoms	Child must stay home?
<b>Diarrhea</b> Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine.	<b>Yes</b> - if there are other symptoms along with the diarrhea (such as vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, jaundice, etc.), the diarrhea cannot be contained in the toilet, there is blood or mucous in the stool, the child is in diapers or the staff member handles food or bottles. Children and staff may return 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea unless the diarrhea is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer.
<b>Fever</b> Fever with behavior change or other illness. Babies who are 4 months or younger need to see a doctor right away for a fever of 100° F or higher.	<b>A child should not be excluded if they have a fever with no other symptoms unless they are 4 months old or younger.</b> <b>Yes</b> - if there is also a rash, sore throat, throwing up, diarrhea, behavior changes, stiff neck, or difficulty breathing.
<b>“Flu-Like” Symptoms</b> Fever over 100° F with a cough or sore throat. Other flu symptoms can include tiredness, body aches, throwing up, and diarrhea.	<b>Yes</b> - for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone. The fever needs to be gone, without using medicine that reduces the fever (acetaminophen or ibuprofen).
<b>Coughing</b>	<b>Yes</b> - if the coughing is severe, uncontrolled, or the child has wheezing, rapid or trouble breathing. Medical attention is needed for wheezing, rapid or trouble breathing. <u>Note:</u> Children with asthma may go to school with a written health care plan and the school is allowed to give them medicine and treatment.
<b>Mild Respiratory or Cold Symptoms</b> Stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, and mild cough.	<b>No</b> - children and staff may go to school if they able to take part in usual activities. Children and staff should stay home if the symptoms are severe. This includes fever and if a child is not acting normally and/or has trouble breathing.
<b>Vomiting/Throwing Up</b> Throwing up two or more times in the past 24 hours, there are other symptoms in addition to the vomiting (such as fever, diarrhea, etc.).	<b>Yes</b> - until 24 hours after throwing up stops or a doctor says it is not contagious. If a child has a recent head injury, watch for other signs of illness and for dehydration. Adults who handle food and bottles must be excluded.
<b>Chicken Pox</b>	<b>Yes</b> - until the blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
<b>Conjunctivitis (pink eye)</b> Pink color of eye and thick yellow/green discharge	<b>No</b> - children and adults do not need to stay home unless they have a fever or are not able to participate in usual activities. Call your doctor for advice and possible treatment.

<b>Croup</b> (see Coughing)	Call your doctor for advice. <u>Note:</u> Children and staff may be able to go to school unless they are not well enough to take part in usual activities.
<b>Fifth's Disease</b>	<b>No</b> - the illness is no longer contagious once the rash appears.
<b>Hand Foot and Mouth Disease</b> (Coxsackie virus)	<b>No</b> - unless the child or adult has mouth sores, is drooling and is not able to take part in usual activities.
<b>Head Lice or Scabies</b>	<b>Yes</b> - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment.
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	<b>Yes</b> - until 1 week after the illness starts and when the child or staff is able to take part in normal activities. <b>Children and staff should not go to another facility during the period of exclusion.</b>
<b>Herpes</b>	<b>No</b> - unless there are open sores that cannot be covered or there is nonstop drooling.
<b>Impetigo</b>	<b>Yes</b> - children and adults needs to stay home until antibiotic treatment has started.
<b>Ringworm</b>	<b>Yes</b> - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment. Keep the area covered for the first 3 days if participating in sports with person to person contact.
<b>Roseola</b>	<b>No</b> - unless there is a fever or behavior changes.
<b>RSV</b> (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	<b>No</b> - children and staff can go to school unless they are not well enough to take part in usual activities and/or they have trouble breathing. Call your doctor for advice.
<b>Strep Throat</b>	<b>Yes</b> - for 12 hours after starting antibiotics unless the doctor says that it is okay to return to school sooner. Children and staff also need to be able to take part in usual activities.
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b> Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	<b>Yes</b> - Children and staff can return to school once the doctor says they are no longer contagious.
<b>Yeast Infections</b> Thrush or Candida diaper rash	<b>No</b> - follow good hand washing and hygiene practices.
<b>Other</b> Symptoms or illnesses not listed	Contact the child care center director or school health staff to see if the child or staff member needs to stay home.

**This was developed in collaboration with the Children's Hospital of Colorado School Health Program.**

The information presented is intended for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of your personal doctor's advice and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information should not be used in place of a visit, call or consultation or advice of your doctor or other health care provider.

**References**

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide*. Aronson SS, Shope TR, eds. 5th ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2020.20.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. *Infectious Diseases In Child Care and School Settings: Guidelines for Child Care Providers and Health Consultants, School Nurses and Other Personnel*. 2019

## **Smoking Policy**

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

## **Visitors**

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

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

Parents who are withdrawing their child from Adams County Head Start need to notify the Family Services Specialist as soon as possible.

# **CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

## **Appropriate Dress for Preschool Children**

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

## **Arriving and Leaving Preschool**

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

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

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

## Daily Classroom Checks

Teachers complete a child count at 30 minute intervals throughout the day to be sure all children are present and/or accounted for. At the end of each session, the teacher will check the center, including restrooms, office areas, and playground to ensure that no children are at the center. In addition, teachers will check the sign-in/out forms to make sure that all children have been signed out. If a child is still at preschool, procedures to notify parents/guardians will be followed. Teachers also perform daily health checks and record observations in a daily log and will communicate to the parent any health concerns that they observe during drop off as well as during the school day.

## Supervision of Children

Staff members closely supervise in all preschool settings and during special activities. We maintain a minimum ratio of eight children to one adult at all times. Staff closely watch and interact with children to ensure their safety and educational benefit. Children are counted before and after going from one setting to another. Should a child become separated from his/her class, one of the staff members will retrace steps of the class in order to find the child. If a child cannot be located, the local police department will be contacted by 911 and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

## Personal Items

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



## Guidance/Discipline

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

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

## Outside Food

Due to the health and safety of all Head Start children, we ask that you and your child do not bring any outside candy, food, or water into program. No exceptions will be made; all outside food brought into centers will not be accepted. If your child

requires special diet accommodations, the food will be cleared and purchased by the program. **No food, parties or gifts will be allowed for holidays or birthday celebrations. As a federally funded program we are not allowed to celebrate holidays. In order to respect everyone's valued traditions and beliefs, ACHS celebrates children's unique selves and their accomplishments.**

### **Sunscreen Application**

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



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

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

### **Toilet Trained/Diapers**

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

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

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

## **CENTER CLOSURE**

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

Brighton Head Start center – District 27J  
Creskide Head Start center – District 12  
Little Star Head Start center – District 50  
Rainbow Head Start center– District 50  
Sunshine Head Start center – District 14



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

## **Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

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

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date