



HEAD START  
— OF LARAMIE

# Parent Handbook

## 2022-2023



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## Welcome to Head Start of Laramie

We're so glad we get the opportunity to work with you and your child. This handbook is intended to share information with you about a variety of topics. Please refer to this for any questions you may have about the program or upcoming school year.

You are an important part of our Head Start family. We look forward to providing you with many opportunities to be involved with our program. We will provide many engaging and enriching experiences for your child. Our hope is that we can inspire the whole family to become lifelong learners.

### Mission Statement

*The mission of Laramie Child Development Corporation/Head Start of Laramie is to prepare children and families for success in school and society. Valuing the voices of families, children and staff, we work together, through shared caring and concern for children, to reach families' goals.*

### The Administrative Team

Executive Director	Amber Hutchinson
Fiscal and USDA Coordinator	Debbie Sullivan
Education and Disabilities Coordinator	Annie Fenczik
Education Coach and Transitions Coordinator	Jesmin Banu and Kim Baldivia
Family and Community Partnership Coordinator	Crystal De Boer
Health and Safety Coordinator	Jana O'Brien

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## School Times

School days are Monday - Thursday.

School begins at 7:45 am. Children may not be dropped off before 7:45 am.

School ends at 3 pm. Children **MUST** be picked up by 3 pm.

A school calendar is available on our website and at the front desk. This calendar lists important dates and closures. Throughout the year, if you have any questions about the school calendar please contact the school office or your family advocate.

The office is open during school days and also on Fridays from 8 am to 2 pm.

If you need to meet with someone on a Friday, please call ahead of time to make an appointment.

You are able to leave a message on the office phone at any time.

## Drop off & Pick-up

### Drop-off:

Come in through the front doors and walk your child all the way into the classroom. At first, your child may need support to learn the morning routine and expectations. As your child learns the routine, after practicing daily, they will be able to do it independently . If your child has separation anxiety, please work with your teacher to find the best strategy that works for your child.

If you are more than 30 minutes late to school, please be aware that you may not be able to drop off your child in the classroom. Your child may miss breakfast if they are too late to school. Please feel encouraged to bring your child after they have breakfast at home.

### Pick-up:

At the end of the school day, come in through the front doors and head into the classroom to pick up your child. You initially may have to help your child learn the routine for leaving, but soon they will be able to do this independently as well.

If you pick up your child more than 15 minutes before pick up time, please be aware you may not be able to go into the classroom. Speak with the front desk person first.

Your child must be picked up on time at the end of the day. If you are running late picking up your child, please call right away so we know. If you do not pick up your child at 3 pm, we will immediately begin calling you and the people that are listed on your authorized contact sheet.

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**Please note: If we are unable to get ahold of you or any of your emergency contacts by 3:15 pm we are required to call the Laramie Police Department or the Department of Family Services to find an appropriate person to care for your child after school until you have been reached.**

**IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!**

**ALWAYS LET HEAD START STAFF KNOW WHEN YOUR PHONE/ADDRESS/PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT CHANGES. IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY, WE MUST BE ABLE TO REACH YOU.**

## **Authorized Child Release Form**

The Authorized Child Release Form is for your child's safety and your peace of mind.

- It is a list of people who you say can pick up your child. This helps ensure your child is being released to approved adults..
- Staff will ONLY let your child go with someone if their name is on your Child Release Authorization Form.
- Picture ID is required for adults on your list that the staff does not know.
- It is your responsibility as the parent/guardian to update the Authorized Child Release Form as needed. This includes adding people to pick up and/or removing people from the list.
- The Authorized Child Release Form will be updated three times a year and as necessary.

If you need someone to pick up your child that is not listed on the Authorized Child Release Form you must call the Head Start office and give your permission before class ends that day. After you call they can only leave with that person when staff has looked at a picture ID. Please add that new person to your Authorized Child Release Form as soon as possible.

**\*\*Information such as custody agreement, phone number, address, authorized persons to pick up your child must be included in each child's file.\*\***

## **Transportation**

Head Start of Laramie has limited transportation services. We are required to keep our bus route under an hour, which limits the number of students we can have riding the bus.

If you do not have the means to transport your child please ask for a Transportation Request Form.

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## Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is a requirement of the program. Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to maintain 85% or better attendance each month. Head Start of Laramie is not a drop-in daycare service and funding is dependent upon regular child attendance. Your child may be dropped if your child misses 8 days of school in a row without any contact from the family. They may also lose their spot if there is a chronic attendance problem and the family is unwilling to work with Head Start staff to resolve the problem.

Head Start staff is available to discuss issues that may come up that could keep your child from participating in class. If you, or your child, are struggling with getting to school, please see the family and community partnership coordinator to discuss options. If your child's attendance becomes a chronic problem, the family and community partnership coordinator will ask to set up a meeting to put an attendance plan in place. Head Start staff will work with your family to make sure you and your child are working toward success.

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority, you help your child get better grades, develop healthy life habits, and have a better chance of graduating from high school and beyond.

## Attendance Procedure

- Parents/Guardians will call Head Start within ONE HOUR of school start time to let us know of your child's absence.
- If you do not call, you will be contacted by the office assistant or a family advocate to find out the reason(s) for your child's absence.
- If a child is absent for two consecutive days, a Head Start of Laramie staff member is required to conduct a home visit to find out the reason(s) for the absences and check on the child & family's well-being.
- If your child is at risk of chronic attendance issues, an attendance plan will be put in place.

## General Program Information

### Weapons

No weapons are allowed in this facility per Child Care Licensing regulations. The only exception is for on-duty emergency responders.

## **Smoke Free**

Head Start of Laramie maintains a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited inside the building. Smoking is prohibited within a 25 foot perimeter around all external doorways. Any smoking within view of children is prohibited.

## **Closures**

Head Start may close when weather conditions are unsafe for children, families or our staff. Examples of weather conditions that are unsafe include:

- Temperatures that are 30 or more degrees below zero
- Severe snow and unsafe travel conditions
- Possible threat for tornado
- Other extreme weather condition
- School-wide illness

In the event of a school cancellation, all families will be notified by a member of the Head Start of Laramie staff via text, email, or phone call.

## **Pets and Animals**

Pets are NOT permitted on school grounds.

Any trained and certified service animals must have an up to date vaccination record on file with Head Start of Laramie. Permitted service animals will not be allowed around children who have identified allergies.

## **Accidents & Extra Items**

Accidents happen. During a typical day at Head Start of Laramie, we may have potty accidents, wet snow, milk spills or even paint mishaps. At this time, we are requesting, if possible, for parents to send at least one change of clothes for their child. This may include:

- Pants
- Underwear
- Socks
- Shirts
- Shoes (especially if your child is potty training)

## **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

Head Start of Laramie has a detailed emergency preparedness plan to assist staff during any emergency. This plan will be available for all families to look at. There are also color-coded plans posted throughout the building.



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If it is necessary to close school for a day or part of a day due to weather or other emergencies, the following procedures are followed:

1. The school will attempt to notify all families of school closing by phone or our automated email and text message system.
2. Parents are notified by announcements through our website, and our Facebook page.
3. If the school becomes unsafe due to a gas leak or other emergency, the school will evacuate the building. Parents will be notified and will be instructed on how to pick up their children.
4. If we need to evacuate the neighborhood, we will evacuate the building and parents will be notified and will be instructed on how to pick up their children.
5. Delayed openings or early closures: Parents will be notified by phone or by automated phone messages. This information will also be updated to our Facebook page and our website.

## Emergency Drills

Students practice emergency drills at school so we all know what to expect in the event of an emergency. Every month we practice a fire drill and twice a year we practice a bus evacuation drill, a lockdown drill, a building evacuation drill, and a tornado drill.

## Confidentiality

All the information you share with Head Start of Laramie is held in strictest confidence. However, information may be shared among Head Start of Laramie staff that work directly with your child to provide the best possible services to your child and family.

No information will be shared or released to individuals and/or agencies that are not Head Start without **YOU GIVING WRITTEN PERMISSION FIRST**. (Unless we suspect child abuse/neglect or harm to self or others. See Mandatory Reporting section below).

As the parent/legal guardian, you can view your child's file at any time during Head Start of Laramie office hours.

All employees sign a Confidentiality Agreement every year to ensure we understand the importance of confidentiality within our program. Any employee who releases unauthorized information is subject to reprimand, suspension and/or dismissal.

## Your Rights as a Parent Concerning Your Child's File

You have the right:

- To inspect your child's file with a staff representative present

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- To a hearing to correct false or misleading information contained in the file
  - To obtain the program's policy for reviewing, challenging and removing improper data
  - To obtain a copy of your child's file
  - To ask what information is kept in your child's file
  - To request, in writing, that the program does not publish or have available, for use by persons other than staff, any phone directory or personally identifiable information

## **Mandatory Reporting**

Head Start of Laramie employees are required to follow all mandatory reporting procedures.

Wyoming state law (statutes 14-3-205 & 35-20-103) mandates that any person who suspects child/vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or exploitation is required to report. According to Wyoming law, everyone must report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of children or vulnerable adults, if they have reasonable cause to believe that it may be occurring. Child or adult abuse, neglect or exploitation has no boundaries according to sexual orientation, ethnic background, age, religion, disability, or gender.

To learn more about mandatory reporting and help protect Wyoming's vulnerable population, you can access DFS' Guide for Mandatory Reporting of Abuse or Neglect by visiting this website: <http://victimservices.wyoming.gov/>

## **Employment Opportunities**

When Head Start of Laramie has job openings, they will be posted on our Facebook page, on our website, and around the Head Start building. Parents are welcome and encouraged to apply for job openings.

## **Parent/Community Concerns**

Sometimes concerns among teachers, staff, parents and others come up. We want concerns to be resolved quickly and without disrupting children's learning.

If someone has a concern about our program we kindly ask that they take the following steps:

- Talk to the person directly with whom you are concerned. Share your concerns in a calm respectful manner and listen to what the other person has to say.
- Each family is assigned a family advocate once enrolled in the program, and it is the family advocate's job to make sure that any concerns or issues the family has

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are addressed. If you have any concerns, talk to your family advocate, as it is likely they will be able to help you resolve them.

- If you do not feel that the concern or problem was resolved, talk to the executive director for further help.

## **Parent/Community Complaint Procedure**

If someone has a complaint we ask that they follow these procedures:

- Document the complaint in a letter. Be as detailed as possible with the date, details of the complaint, steps that have already been taken, and sign and date the letter.
- Give the letter to the executive director within five (5) working days of the complaint.
- If the executive director is unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the individual, the individual making the complaint should contact the Parents' Policy Council President within three (3) working days.
  - The executive director must provide you with the information to contact the Parents Policy Council President.
- The president will call an emergency meeting or put the complaint on the agenda for their next scheduled meeting for resolution.
  - The president will call the individual and ask that he/she attend the meeting to express his/her concerns.
- The decision made by the Parents' Policy Council will be binding between the individual and Head Start of Laramie.
  - Parents' Policy Council may move the complaint to the Head Start of Laramie Board of Directors. In this case, the decision made by the Board of Directors will be binding between the individual and Head Start of Laramie.
- The executive director, Board of Directors, and Parents' Policy Council will be made aware of the complaint and its resolution.

## **Payments**

Head Start of Laramie is a Federal Grant recipient; therefore, all services provided are free of charge. You will never be asked to pay for anything that your child needs while at school, ex. pull ups, wipes, school supplies, etc.

# Health Services

## Health Plans

If your child has an allergy or special health need we must have a health plan in place before your child can start attending. If your child is in need of prescription administration while at school we must have doctors orders with specific instructions. The health coordinator

## Health Requirements and Deadlines

Head Start of Laramie is required to gather health information from every child enrolled. We are required to get a copy of your child's current well child exam, dental exam, lead screening, hemoglobin screening, and immunization record. Head Start will conduct a health assessment, nutrition assessment, developmental screening, and a hearing and vision screening while the child is at school.

Head Start of Laramie is required to follow all federal rules regarding health requirements. Compliance of federal rules directly affects the funding that our program receives. Head Start families are responsible for completing and submitting all health requirements.

**\*Non-compliance of Federal Rules can and will jeopardize the federal funding that our Head Start program receives.**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's/family's insurance (Medicaid, Kid Care, CHIP, private insurance, etc.), please contact the health coordinator or your family advocate. We may be able to assist you in obtaining the information that you need.

The timelines for required health information are listed below.

Due Date	Requirement
<b>30 Calendar Days</b>	<b>Immunization Record</b> – an up-to-date copy of your child's immunization record must be received.
<b>45 Calendar Days</b>	<b>Developmental Screening</b> – Conducted at Head Start of Laramie with Developmental Preschool and Day Care – A screening that includes the following areas: sensory, behavioral, vision and hearing. <b>Nutrition Assessment</b> – Completed in orientation forms – A form for nutritional and health information about your child.
<b>60 Calendar Days</b>	<b>Well-Child Exam</b> – This is your child's yearly well-child exam (or general physical).

**Lead Screening** – This is an important screening to check your child’s blood/lead level. (Please ask your child’s health provider to complete this during your Well-Child Exam.)

**Hemoglobin Check** – This test is to check your child’s Iron levels. (This can also be completed during your child’s Well-Child Exam, or at a WIC appointment.)

**Dental Exam** – This is your child’s yearly dental exam, which usually consists of an X-ray, cleaning and exam.

## Immunizations

Your child must have an updated copy of their immunization record in their Head Start health file within 30 calendar days of enrollment (of the first day of school attended). This is mandated by the Office of Head Start and child care licensing for all schools. If your child does not have the required immunization record, we are required to ask you to keep your child home until they have received immunizations, a catch-up schedule is in place, or you have a state approved immunization exemption document.

**\*If you have concerns about getting your child’s immunizations, please contact the health coordinator.**

## Sick Child Policy

Any child who cannot participate in regular classroom activities due to illness **must** stay home. Keeping your child home when they are sick will help to protect the health of ALL children and staff. If your child is ill and unable to attend school, please call the office at (307) 742-6792. If your child becomes ill or is injured during the school day, he/she may be sent home by the health coordinator or other staff. Reasons for a child to be sent home include:

- Your child does not feel well enough to participate in ALL program activities.
- Staff cannot adequately care for a child without compromising care of other children.
- Your child requires medication such as Tylenol, to make it through the day.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will follow these procedures:

- Your child’s teacher will assess your child’s symptoms. The health coordinator will follow up with the teacher and your child to determine if they need to go home or see a doctor.
- The parent or legal guardian will be notified immediately if the child needs to go home or see a doctor. If a parent cannot be reached, staff will call the emergency phone numbers listed on the Child Release Authorization form.

## Illness Chart

Due to COVID-19 parents/guardians may be required to provide a doctor’s note clearing their child to return to school. This will be determined on a case by case basis. In

accordance with the Wyoming State Department of Health and Wyoming Childcare Licensing, Head Start of Laramie will stand firm on this policy.

**If your child has any of the following illnesses, please refer to the information below concerning when he/she can return to school:**

Illness	Child Can Return
Fever – temperature 100 ° or higher	When fever has been absent for 48 hours WITHOUT MEDICATION (Tylenol, Ibuprofen) and has been cleared to return by a doctor.
Vomiting – 1 or more times within 24 hours	When there has been no vomiting for 48 hours; is fever free & child feels well enough to participate in all activities.
Diarrhea – 2 or more times within in 24 hours	When there has been no diarrhea for 48 hours; is fever free & child feels well enough to participate in all activities.
Strep Throat	48 hours after starting antibiotics (2 doses) & the child feels well enough to participate in all activities.
Pink Eye	24 hours or after 3 doses of medication have been given
Chicken Pox	When all chicken pox marks are scabbed over.
Lice	When no live lice are present
Ringworm	After antifungal treatment has begun.
Scabies	After treatment (24 hours of treatment are completed).
Hand, Foot & Mouth	When no fever, rash or lesions are present. When child is taking fluids.
Your child says they are not feeling well, or a bad cold, coughs, runny nose, etc.	Child can return when they feel “better” and are well enough to participate in the classroom.

## Medication Administration Policy

We encourage the parent/guardian to arrange for medicine to be taken at home.

If medication must be taken at school, contact the health coordinator to set up a Medication Administration Plan for your child.

Please note:

- The medication must have the original prescription label or a manufacturer’s label (for over the counter medications, such as Tylenol).
- In order for staff to give your child any medication (prescription or over the counter), we must have written approval from the doctor who prescribed the medicine or understands the illness being treated.

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- This can be done by using the Request for Administration of Medication at Head Start form.
  - If you are giving your child a different dose from what is written on the label there must be a note from the doctor with specific written instructions.

## Emergency Treatment

An Emergency Medical Care form is filled out during orientation. This form makes you aware that all staff are trained in CPR/First Aid for children and that we will take necessary action to address any injury or illness that your child experiences while at Head Start. In the event that we feel emergency medical treatment is necessary, we will contact an ambulance.

It is very important that you keep the Authorized Child Release Form up to date. This form allows us to know who to contact in case of an emergency.

**IF YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF PHONE OR ADDRESS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR FAMILY ADVOCATE IMMEDIATELY AND UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION.**

## Sick Staff Policy

Head Start of Laramie will follow our most updated policy regarding staff illness and symptoms. Our policies are updated to follow Child Care Licensing, Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Wyoming Department of Health guidelines.

## Nutrition Services

Your child is provided with nutritious meals daily with the help of USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). During breakfast, lunch and snack, the adults teach your child about nutrition, healthy habits and explore different types of food. Children are encouraged to taste all foods served. Head Start staff do not use food as a punishment or reward. A weekly menu will be available for families.

## Allergies, Religious Exemptions, or Dietary Needs

Head Start must be notified of any food, milk or environmental allergies before your child begins school. Please discuss with the health coordinator your child's food/milk and/or environmental allergies. Accommodations must be made before your child starts the program, so we can avoid possible allergic reactions.

- If your child requires an alternative food, it must be for a medical, cultural, or religious reason.

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- Children requiring a meal substitution must have a Meal Substitutions Form filled out.
    - If the accommodation is for a medical reason, the Meal Substitution form must be filled out and signed by a medical provider. Special milk accommodations cannot be made without this form completed by your child's medical provider.

Please contact your family advocate or the health coordinator for the paperwork.

## **Classroom Celebrations/Outside Food**

Head Start of Laramie encourages families not to bring outside food into the program. There are many children with dietary restrictions, allergies, and religious diets. Outside food will only be permitted in the building with approval from the health coordinator. Head Start of Laramie does not allow sweet treats, such as cakes, cupcakes, brownies and cookies.

If you would like to bring a food item for a celebration it must be pre-approved by the health coordinator and must also meet the following requirements; must be store bought and in original packaging, must be able to be given to all children in the classroom, meeting all dietary, allergy and religious needs.

Head Start of Laramie encourages non-food items for celebrations.

## **Family and Community Partnerships**

### **The Head Start Vision for Family Involvement**

Head Start envisions partnerships with all Head Start families to:

- Support parents as primary educators, nurturers and advocates for their children.
- Provide every parent with opportunities for a meaningful experience in Head Start.
- Ensure that parents are involved in making policy and program decisions for their Head Start program.

### **Family Engagement**

Head Start of Laramie is focused on supporting the whole family. At Head Start of Laramie, we believe that you, the parent, are your child's first and most important teacher. We know that children learn best when families are engaged in the program and working together with staff in the child's best interest. When family members take the lead and make decisions about children's learning, they are truly engaged.

Family Engagement at Head Start means:

- Building trusting relationships with Head Start staff.



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- Sharing information about your child with teachers and staff.
  - Collaborating with staff on how to best to support your child and your family.
  - Sharing your ideas and opinions to help make decisions regarding school policies and procedures.
  - Helping with recruiting other children and families in our community .

### Family Engagement Opportunities

Keep an eye out for the following opportunities to engage with our program:

- Self-Assessment Teams
- Policy Council
- Classroom Volunteer
- Health Services Advisory Committee

A limited number of volunteers will be allowed in the building at the same time. Parent volunteers must sign up in advance. If you are not feeling completely healthy or have any illness, please stay home. The health of the children and staff and Head Start of Laramie is very important. If you do come in to volunteer while sick, we will ask you to leave.

If you have an idea for how you would like to be involved, help out or share your ideas for making Head Start of Laramie the best it can be, talk to your child's teacher or your family advocate. Your thoughts and ideas are always welcome!

### **Parents' Policy Council**

The Parents' Policy Council puts the parent in the leadership position. This group is part of the governance of our program and plays a key role in helping to set program policy, monitor for quality, and help to make important program decisions. This is a unique volunteer opportunity that allows you to serve as a voice for Head Start of Laramie children and families. The Policy Council is made up of parents of currently enrolled children and community members. Parents are elected to serve each fall (usually September) and serve for the entire school year.

Policy Council members work in partnerships with management and the Board of Directors to develop, review and approve:

- Policies and procedures
- Strategic Goals
- Criteria for Selection
- Parent education
- Hiring personnel
- Other business orientated activities that require Policy Council approval

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## Family Partnerships and Goal Setting

Head Start supports families in recognizing their strengths and goals. Your child has the best chance at success when you, as a family, establish and maintain positive goal-oriented relationships. Family Advocates assist you in brainstorming different goals and ways to achieve those goals, how to overcome barriers, and how Head Start of Laramie can best support your family and your child.

We want our families to succeed in 7 different areas of the Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) framework:

- Families Well-being
- Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders

Head Start Family Advocates are here to work with each individual family to support you in the process of preparing your child and your family for success, now and in the future. Your family advocate is your go-to person for help with finding resources, working with you on setting realistic goals for your child and family, and being there for support throughout the school year. Your family advocate will be in touch with you on a regular basis and will be an important person for your family to connect with at Head Start.

## Supporting Families with Major Concerns

If your family has a big concern, for whatever reason, we hope you feel safe enough to speak with your family advocate. Oftentimes we feel we have to deal with things on our own, or there's nothing anyone can do to help, or we're afraid someone will judge us. Please know that our staff are dedicated to helping the families involved with our program. The job of your family advocate is to advocate on behalf of your family. Sometimes this looks like researching resources, getting informational materials for you, or just being a person to talk to.

## Community Partnerships

In order to provide the most complete services to children and families our Community Partnerships include:

- Advisory committees
- Partnerships with other agencies in our community (Interfaith, Developmental preschool etc.)

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- Transition services (when your child goes to kindergarten or another place of care)
  - Social service agencies (places where families can go when they need help with food, clothing etc.)
  - Families, with programing, education goals, and program governance (policy council)

## Transition Services

Head Start of Laramie helps families transition into and out of the program. We work with you to provide support and make the transitions from home and/or childcare into our program and then to the public school system.

Every year in the spring we host a Kindergarten Transition meeting with the public schools and Head Start parents. We discuss how and to register for kindergarten and how to keep your child prepared over the summer months before kindergarten.

## Parent Education

Parenting a child is one of the most important and difficult jobs you will have. However, parenting is not always a natural skill and children do not come with instructions. This means that all parents need support from time to time, regardless of their skills and former experience. Head Start can play a role in providing parents access to the information and skills needed to be the best parents they can be.

Head Start of Laramie offers programs and provides written materials on a variety of topics for parents. Topics may include parenting a child with challenging behaviors, managing stress, eating healthy meals, reinforcing your child's positive social skills and preventing child abuse and neglect. We will be looking for your ideas throughout the school year.

We also have many supplies available such as books and/or videos. Please let staff know about your topic(s) of interest and we will attempt to obtain and provide the information to you.

Families are encouraged to actively participate in Head Start of Laramie. We believe that parent involvement is important to the success of our program. Parents come together in our program for monthly meetings, educational programs and special interest parent gatherings. Some key values about family involvement:

- Children do best in life when they grow up with an active and positive involvement of both a mother and father.
- Studies have shown that children are more likely to lead healthy and productive lives when both parents are actively involved in their lives in positive ways.

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- In some ways moms and dads tend to parent differently and their complementary parenting skills and attitudes combine to give children the best environment to grow up healthy and successful!

## Volunteer Opportunities

There are other opportunities for you to be involved. You can volunteer in the classrooms. This not only helps the teachers, but you also learn more about your child during work and play. You don't have to volunteer with your child's classroom, you can also volunteer for other classrooms.

Spare time is precious and although you may not always have time in your busy schedule, it would be helpful if you could give some time to volunteering.

### IDEAS FOR BUSY PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED ARE:

- Come during your lunch hour and read to the children.
- Stay or come in an extra 15-30 minutes each school day or once a week.
- Come in for your child's birthday and have lunch or breakfast.
- Complete reading logs and turn them in to your child's teacher.
- Serve on our parent committee or policy council.
- Volunteer to help with the playground.
- Help with field trips.

If you have questions about volunteering, talk to your family advocate.

Long after your child's formal education ends, he/she will continue to feel your influence. We invite you to take an active role in the program. Parents, volunteers and staff work together to develop a program that responds to the needs of the child and family. Most of all, consider how proud your children are of you when you come into the classroom or other program areas to volunteer; you can tell by their BIG smile!

## Social Media

Promoting Head Start and sharing some of the experiences you and your child have together is something that we encourage and would love to see on social media! However, we do ask that you respect the privacy of fellow Head Start families and **DO NOT POST PHOTOS ONLINE OF CHILDREN OTHER THAN YOUR OWN.**

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# Education

## Curriculum Overview

Curriculum refers to the planned and unplanned experiences that we offer for educational purposes.

- HSL uses Creative Curriculum
  - Academic concepts are interwoven into all experiences throughout the day.
  - Learning is hands-on, engaging, related to real-life experiences, and done through play.
  - The environment is planned intentionally to be developmentally appropriate, easily manipulated by children, and thought-provoking.

HSL strives to connect home learning with what is being learned within the classroom

- We know that parents are our kids' first teachers and we aim to work with you to help your child get the most out of their time at HSL.
- Home visits and parent/teacher conferences will be held twice a year to help us create a shared understanding of your child's strengths, goals, and how we all can best support and challenge them.
- Teachers will communicate to you regularly with updates about their classroom, and your children's learning, as well as with ideas for how to continue that learning at home.
- Our staff encourages you to share ideas, ask questions, and otherwise discuss your children's learning and daily experiences at Head Start; at any time!

## School Readiness

Social and Emotional development is a priority with regard to school readiness. Helping your child to learn healthy behaviors, problem solving, use empathy, have higher self-esteem and become more independent are a part of this learning process.

At Head Start of Laramie, education is more than learning your ABC's and 1-2-3's. We believe that school readiness starts at birth, and for us, as soon as our children walk through the door! We teach to the "whole child" which means that we foster growth in all aspects of our students' lives. Education at HSL is about learning to think in new ways, understand and manage emotions, work with others, grow physically, and experience new things that will build the foundations for success in school like ABC's and 1-2-3's.

## **Quiet Time**

All classrooms have a quiet time for students after lunch. Since all classrooms are multi-age we understand that not all students will rest during this time. Students who do not rest will have quiet activities they can engage in. Students who do rest will be provided blankets and floor space to rest. Quiet time is scheduled for 30 minutes.

## **Guidance & Discipline**

To assure the Head Start experience is positive and pleasant for children, Head Start of Laramie has adopted a social/emotional philosophy called Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline focuses on brain functioning and development and empowers both staff and children to learn about their emotions, manage them in healthy ways, and utilize challenging experiences as an opportunity to learn and practice new skills. Teachers practice being proactive and supporting children to be successful in their growing understanding and independence of impulse-control, managing emotional reactions, and solving problems. We recognize all behaviors as a form of communication and strive to understand what our students need, and what they are telling us through both words and actions.

Head Start of Laramie also understands that relationships and safety are the foundation for emotional and intellectual growth. We strive to ensure that every child in our program is seen, heard, and feels loved. We do this through getting to know the children and their families in our program, and by creating consistent, predictable expectations and environments. This gives our children the ability to experiment, grow, and even fail. Our intention is to understand that upset and misbehavior will happen as our children are learning new social skills and experiencing new situations. Rather than punish them for not knowing what to do in these situations, the adults at Head Start lend students their understanding, support, and knowledge to better equip them to deal with similar situations in the future.

Any form of physical or emotional punishment including isolating, ignoring, humiliating, or threatening physical punishment are not tolerated.

## **Suspension and Expulsion**

Our Head Start Program Performance Standards state that our program is not allowed to expel a child for unsafe or dangerous behaviors. It is our policy to engage the parent/guardian in a conversation surrounding their child's behaviors and providing supports to the child and parent to help limit or eliminate the behavior. When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, we explore all possible steps and

document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program.

Please know that we are willing to work with each child and their parent to help the child learn how to regulate their behaviors, both at home and here in school.

## **Variance**

Head Start of Laramie has a variance in place with Developmental Preschool and Daycare (DPDC) to provide evaluations and services to children. DPDC is contracted with Head Start of Laramie to work with students in and out of the classroom.

## **Insurance**

Head Start of Laramie has liability insurance coverage that is current at all times.

## **In-Kind Donations**

In-kind is a term you will hear often in Head Start. Our program is funded by a grant awarded by the federal government. Therefore, we are required to provide local matching funds. These funds can be actual dollars or in-kind hours, which equate to dollars. The time that you spend outside of the program doing educational and physical activities with your child count as in-kind (or volunteer hours). Throughout the school year, you will be sent reading logs, physical activity logs, and curriculum at home logs. Simply fill them out and return them to us and we can count all your time as in-kind!

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## USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

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

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

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

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



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By signing this, I acknowledge that I have received the Parent Handbook for the 2022-2023 Head Start of Laramie school year.

I understand that I am responsible for reading the document and asking for clarification on any points I do not understand.

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Child's Name

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Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Staff Signature

Date