



Family Handbook

2025-2026



**365 W Grand Ave
Laramie, WY 82072
(307) 742-6792
FAX: (307) 742-5749**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to Head Start of Laramie	4
Mission Statement	4
The Administrative Team	4
School Times	5
Drop off & Pick-up	5
Frequent informed late pickup policy	5
Authorized Child Release Form	6
Transportation	6
Attendance Policy	7
Attendance Procedure	7
General Program Information	7
Respect	7
Payments	8
Weapons	8
Smoke Free	8
Closures	8
Pets and Animals	8
Accidents & Extra Items	8
Employment Opportunities	9
Overnight Care	9
Infant Care	9
Swimming/Wading	9
Insurance	9
Confidentiality	9
Your Rights as a Parent Concerning Your Child's File	10
Your Responsibility as a Parent	10
Mandated Reporting	10
Social Media	11
Parent/Community Concerns	11
Parent/Community Complaint Procedure	11
Violation History	12
Emergency Preparedness Plan	12
Reunification Plan	12
Emergency Drills	13
Health Services	13

Health Plans	13
Health Requirements and Deadlines	13
Immunizations	14
Sick Child Policy	15
Illness Chart	15
Medication Administration Policy	16
Emergency Treatment	16
Sick Staff Policy	16
Mental Health Support	17
Nutrition Services	17
Allergies, Religious Exemptions, or Dietary Needs	17
Classroom Celebrations/Outside Food	17
Education	18
Curriculum Overview	18
School Readiness	18
Field Trips	19
Quiet Time	19
Guidance & Discipline	19
Suspension and Expulsion	20
Services for Children with Disabilities	20
Variance	21
Family and Community Partnerships	21
The Head Start Vision for Family Involvement	21
Family Engagement	21
Parents' Policy Council	22
Family Partnerships and Goal Setting	22
Supporting Families with Major Concerns	23
Community Partnerships	23
Transition Services	23
Parent Education	24
Volunteer Opportunities	24
In-kind Donations	25
Educational Institution Partnership	25
USDA Nondiscrimination Statement	26

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	Jesmin Banu
Education Coach	Jenelle Bennett
Health and Safety Coordinator	Jana O'Brien
Family Services Coordinator	

School Times

School days are Monday - Thursday.

School begins at 7:30 am. Children may not be dropped off before 7:30 am.

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

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

Drop off & Pick-up

Drop-off:

Come in through the front doors and walk your child all the way into the classroom.

Please help your child with getting adjusted and ready for their day. Mornings can be hectic for everyone but it really does help your child to ease their way into the day with your help and support. Once your child knows the routine they will be more independent with getting ready but they still really enjoy your presence during this time. Additionally, your teacher will ask you to complete the morning health check list.

If your child has separation anxiety, please work with your teacher to find the best strategy that works for your child.

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. Your child will likely be very excited to see you and head home. Your teacher may have different documents or forms they are sending home. Please check your child's cubby and mailbox regularly for forms.

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 begin calling you and the people that are listed on your authorized contact sheet.

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.

Frequent informed late pickup policy

Head Start is initiating a Late Pick Up Policy for the school year 2023/2024 for children not picked up on time from school. As stated in our Family Handbook pick up is at 3:00

pm. Our teachers have end of the day responsibilities they have to fulfill before they are able to leave school. Please be considerate of them and all staff by picking your child up in a timely manner.

Our new policy is as stated below if time of pick up is after 3:15:

1st late pickup: a parent will be required to sign in our Late Pick Up binder at the time of pick up. The teacher staying with your child will have this binder and will notate the time.

2nd late pickup: the same

3rd late pickup: the same

When it is the 4th time a parent is later than 3:15 picking up their child, the Police Department and/or Child Services will be called to come pick your child up.

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 adults 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 and they provide a Picture ID.
- The person must be an adult aged 18 or above.
- 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.

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, give your verbal permission, and make sure that the person is an adult. That person must show a picture ID for staff to be able to release your child to them. Please add that new person to your Authorized Child Release Form as soon as possible.

Transportation

Head Start of Laramie does not have transportation services. If you are struggling with finding transportation for your child to attend school, please reach out to a family advocate.

Attendance Policy

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success in school. 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.

Regular attendance is a requirement of this program. Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to maintain 85% or better attendance each month. If your child starts having chronic attendance problems, your family advocate may meet with you to discuss ideas on how to increase attendance.

If your child is experiencing chronic attendance problems and you are not willing to work with a staff member on coming up with solutions to increase attendance, your child may be dropped from the program. Your child may be dropped if your child misses 8 days of school in a row without any contact from the family.

By missing school your child misses out on important educational and developmental opportunities. If your child receives IEP services, they may miss their DPDC services if they are absent from school.

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 a family advocate to find out the reason(s) for your child's absence.
- If a child is absent for two consecutive days without a parent/guardian communicating a reason why, a Head Start of Laramie staff member is required to conduct a home visit to find out the reason for the absences and check on the child and 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

Respect

We believe everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Please avoid the use of profane or inappropriate language around Head Start students, parents, and staff members. Please also avoid rude or aggressive behavior. Treat everyone the same regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.

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, meals etc.

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, and/or phone call.

Pets and Animals

Pets are NOT permitted inside the school building.

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

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

If your child does not have a change of clothes, we will provide some so your child can remain comfortable. We do ask that you return Head Start clothing so we can use it again for other children.

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.

Overnight Care

No overnight care is provided.

Infant Care

No infant care is provided.

Swimming/Wading

HSL does not go on swimming or wading field trips. We do not have a swimming or wading pool on site.

Insurance

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

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
- 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

Your Responsibility as a Parent

We ask that you also act to preserve the confidentiality of other families and children. You can do this by not taking pictures of children other than your own. If you take a group picture, blur the other children out of the image before posting to social media. We want to encourage you to capture memories and moments but we also want to help protect everyone's privacy.

Mandated Reporting

Wyoming law (statutes 14-3-205 & 35-20-103) requires that any person who suspects child/vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or exploitation is required to report it to the authorities.

Head Start of Laramie employees are required to follow all mandated reporting procedures. Head Start employees do not inform the caregiver before making a report to DFS. If DFS comes to speak with your child they are still in the care of a HSL staff member during the interview. Staff are not allowed to share information from that meeting with anyone. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our mandated reporting procedures please speak with the executive director.

To learn more about Wyoming's mandated reporting law and help protect Wyoming's vulnerable population, you can access DFS' Guide for Mandatory Reporting of Abuse or Neglect by visiting this website: dfs.wyo.gov/i-need-to-report/abuse-neglect-exploitation/

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.**

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 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.
- If parent concerns are not resolved, contact the Department of Family Services, Child Care Licensing for further action.

Violation History

Parents can obtain a complaint and compliance report at <https://findchildcarewy.org/>

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.

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. 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.
3. 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.
4. Delayed openings or early closures: Parents will be notified by phone or by automated phone messages.

Reunification Plan

In case of any natural or man-made emergencies, we have set in place a safety plan for Head Start children to keep them safe.

The following information will tell you WHERE your child will be in case of an emergency and HOW we will contact you if this were to happen. Each teacher and our office staff will have a copy of the Contact and Authorized Release form you filled out during registration. If you have had any phone number changes or any changes of who can pick

your child up, please update your form. I.D.'s will have to be shown to pick up children from an emergency situation.

Type of Emergency	Location	Contact Method
FIRE	Church on the corner of Pine and Iverson. During inclement weather we will move children to Bernie's.	Phone Call Mass Text/Email
TORNADO	We will shelter in place.	Phone Call Mass Text/Email
GAS LEAK	Bernie's Restaurant on the corner of N Cedar St and W Clark St	Phone Call Mass Text/Email
INTRUDER	Will be determined at time of incident.	Phone Call Mass Text/Email
FLOODING	Bernie's Restaurant on the corner of N Cedar St and W Clark St	Phone Call Mass Text/Email

Emergency Drills

Students and staff 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 lockdown drill and a tornado drill.

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 will ensure everything is in place for your child to safely attend Head Start.

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 on the next page.

Due Date	Requirement
30 Calendar Days	Immunization Record – an up-to-date copy of your child's immunization record must be received.
45 Calendar Days	Developmental Screening – Conducted at Head Start of Laramie with Developmental Preschool and Day Care – A screening that includes the following areas: sensory, behavioral, vision and hearing. Nutrition Assessment – Completed in orientation forms – A form for nutritional and health information about your child.
90 Calendar Days	Well-Child Exam – 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, after 30 days, we are required to ask you to keep your child home until we receive the immunization record or we have a state approved immunization waiver.

***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 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.

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.

Illness Chart

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 24 hours WITHOUT MEDICATION.
Vomiting – 1 or more times within 24 hours	When there has been no vomiting for 24 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 24 hours; is fever free & child feels well enough to participate in all activities.
Strep Throat	24 hours after starting antibiotics (2 doses) & the child feels well enough to participate in all activities.
Pink Eye	24 hours and 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	24 hours after treatment has started.

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.	The child can return when they feel better and are well enough to participate in all classroom activities.

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. This policy is only for prescription medication. HSL is not allowed to administer over the counter medications but the parent may come into HSL to administer OTCs during the school day.

Please note:

- The prescription medication must have the original prescription label.
- In order for staff to give your child any prescription medication, we must have written approval from the doctor who prescribed the medicine or understands the illness being treated.
 - This can be done by using the Request for Administration of Medication at Head Start form.

Emergency Treatment

An Emergency Medical Care Procedure 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 and the child's primary guardian.

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.

Mental Health Support

HSL partners with Wyoming Early Childhood Behavioral Consultants (WYECBC) to help support our students with their mental health. WYECBC will do classroom observations to support the teaching staff. Teaching staff and WYECBC staff will request parent permission for WYECBC to work with children specifically.

Nutrition Services

Your child is provided with three 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 monthly menu is provided to families.

Allergies, Religious Exemptions, or Dietary Needs

Head Start must be notified of any food, milk, environmental allergies or cultural dietary restrictions before your child begins school. Please discuss with the health coordinator your child's food, milk, environmental allergies and/or cultural dietary restrictions. Accommodations must be made before your child starts the program and updated before each program year.

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

Classroom Celebrations/Outside Food

Outside food will only be permitted in the building with approval from the health coordinator. 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. Please speak with the health coordinator to receive a list of approved outside foods. **Head Start of Laramie encourages non-food items for celebrations.**

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.
- Creative Curriculum has a system for documenting and tracking progress, this means that your child will have pictures and videos taken of them to be uploaded into our curriculum's secure system to track progress.

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, using empathy, having higher self-esteem and becoming 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.

Field Trips

Head Start classes may go on walking field trips within a 6 block radius of our Head Start building. For longer field trips we will have the parent/guardian sign a permission form before the field trip.

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 offered their home 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 support 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 parents to help the child learn how to regulate their behaviors, both at home and here in school.

Services for Children with Disabilities

Head Start of Laramie (HSL) ensures that all children entering the program receive developmental, hearing, vision, and social/emotional screenings. Head Start of Laramie collaborates with Developmental Preschool (DPDC) to help support children that may be referred for services. Parental permission and the child's developmental history are obtained before the screening. The screening procedure is sensitive to the child's cultural and linguistic background. This developmentally appropriate process may identify children who need to be referred for a more formal evaluation. If a child is a dual language learner (DLL), the family may be a part of the screening process to obtain the most accurate results.

Screenings are conducted within 45 days of the child's entry into the program at Head Start. All screening results are shared with families. Hearing and vision screenings can sometimes help HSL and DPDC staff identify a child's need for a referral to a medical, hearing and/or vision doctor. Preschool children with special needs or disabilities learn and play in the Head Start program in fully integrated classrooms. At least 10% of Head Start enrollment space is reserved for serving children with disabilities.

Speech language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and special education teachers work with Head Start of Laramie staff to support each child's individual needs in the classroom. Accommodations are made to give each child the additional tools and supports to be successful along with their peers.

Please talk to your child's teacher or the Education/Disabilities Coordinator at any time if you have any concerns or questions about your child's development.

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.

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.
- Sharing information about your child with teachers and staff.
- Collaborating with staff on how to best 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

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

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.)
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 Head Start Committees and/or policy council.
- Volunteer to help with the playground.
- Help with field trips.

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

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!

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 (volunteer 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 your teacher and we can count all your time as In-kind!

Educational Institution Partnership

Head Start of Laramie partners with the University of Wyoming and Laramie County Community college to receive student interns every semester. During their educational experience with Head Start some of them may work with your family or your child. They are supervised by Head Start staff and their internship supervisor to ensure that they are abiding by both places' institutional rules and regulations.

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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

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