

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy

Head Start/Early Head Start

2026-2027 Family Handbook



Head Start
Center Based Program
Home Based Program
Early Childhood Education

Expectant Families
Child Care
Early Head Start
EHS Child Care Partnership



"Promoting school readiness by helping children learn and grow."

www.headstartworks.org

Updated August 2026

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start

We appreciate your involvement with your child and hope that we can be partners with you in reaching goals you may have for your child and family. Together we can create a solid foundation to build strong children, families, and communities. If parents have any concerns or questions at any time it is recommended that the following chain of command be used until an answer or solution is found:

1. Child's Teacher 2. Site Administrator 3. Head Start Director

My child will be attending the _____ center for Child Care/Early Head Start/Head Start/Early Childhood Education/Group Socializations. The address is:

The center phone number is: _____ My classroom days/times: _____

The center administrative staff may be emailed at: _____

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy/Head Start Director is: Sharon K. Daniels.

The Site Administrator(s) at my child's center: _____

My child's Teacher and Teacher's Aide are: _____

Our Family Advocate is: _____

My child's Bus Driver and Bus Aide are: _____

We support mothers who elect to breastfeed and/or pump breastmilk at our site by providing the following space:

This page must be completed and provided to each family.

The Family Handbook is available on our website: <https://headstartworks.org/>

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Center Parent Information

ACTION: Final
Appendix C to Rule 5180:2-12-07

ENACTED
Appendix
5180:2-12-07
Center Parent Information

DATE: 06/18/2026 9:11 AM

Note: A copy of this document is required to be given to the parent upon enrollment of their child in the licensed child care center.

The child care center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free phone number is listed on the license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules governing child care are available for review-online at <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-5180:2-12>.

Administrators and each employee of the center are required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center is permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center, or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall is to notify the Administrator of their presence.

Licensing records, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, are available for review upon written request from DCY. Early care and education program information and inspections are also online using the Child Care Search Tool on the DCY website at <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-families/early-care-education/child-care-search>.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or DCY. HHS and DCY are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call:
OCC/ACF/HHS
Southwest Region
1301 Young Street, Suite 958
Dallas, TX 75202
214-767-3849

Write or Call:
ODJFS
Bureau of Civil Rights
30 E. Broad St., 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-3414
(614) 644-2703 (voice)
1-866-277-6353 (toll free)
(614) 752-6381 (fax)
1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961
bcr-fax@jfs.ohio.gov (e-fax)
Civil_Rights@jfs.ohio.gov (e-mail)

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, please visit <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-families>.

For more information on Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your child, please visit <https://medicaid.ohio.gov/families-and-individuals/citizen-programs-and-initiatives/healthcheck/> and <https://ohioearlyintervention.org>.

For information on cash food assistance, please visit <https://jfs.ohio.gov/cash-food-assistance>.

Ironton-Lawrence County
Community Action Organization Head Start



Dear Families:

We are excited your family will be joining us! The first five years of life are crucial to health and well-being. Your child will be making friends and learning new skills that will prepare them for kindergarten.

Family engagement is vital in this learning experience. Daily attendance is essential for productive outcomes to achieve kindergarten readiness. Positive attendance habits impact learning, social development and skills that are critical for lifetime success.

Welcome to our early education program!

Sharon K. Daniels, EdD
Director

Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

To measurably improve the well-being of our community by providing opportunities for those in need.

VISION

To be the role model community agency for positively impacting peoples' lives.

A.C.T.I.O.N. VALUES

- Accountability:** We hold ourselves accountable for our performance and actions.
- Compassion:** We focus on supporting our customers at all times.
- Teamwork:** We work together for the good of our customers and our team.
- Integrity:** We act honorably and fairly in all circumstances.
- Opportunity:** We continuously seek opportunities to better support our community, improve our organization, and positively impact peoples' lives.
- Needs-Oriented:** We focus efforts and resources on the needs of our community.

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy
ILCAO Head Start/Early Head Start

Philosophy of Early Education

A Safe and Loving Place to Learn

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy believes every child deserves a safe, loving, and enriching environment. We create calm, organized, and engaging classrooms where children feel secure, supported, and excited to explore and learn each day.

How Children Learn Best

We use The Creative Curriculum®, a play-based approach that helps children learn through hands-on activities, exploration, and meaningful interactions. This approach supports growth in all areas-language, math, science, social-emotional skills, creativity, and physical development.

Families as Partners

We believe that parents are their child's first and most important teacher. Families know their children best, and we value the culture, strengths, and experiences they bring. We work closely with parents to support learning at home and in the classroom, celebrate progress, and build a strong foundation for each child's success.

Our Commitment to Every Child

We welcome and celebrate all children. Our program is dedicated to helping each child develop confidence, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning. By partnering with families, we prepare children for school and for a successful future.

School Readiness Plan

Our program is committed to helping every child build the skills they need for success in school and in life. School readiness grows strongest when the school and families work together to support each child's development.

The School's Role

We help children prepare for school by:

- Providing safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate learning environments
- Using hands-on, play-based learning to support growth in all developmental areas
- Supporting children's social-emotional skills, self-regulation, and confidence
- Offering daily opportunities for language, literacy, math, science, and creative expression
- Observing each child's progress and planning activities that meet their developmental needs
- Providing screenings, assessments, and individualized support when needed
- Communicating regularly with families about their child's learning and development
- Partnering with community agencies to support children's health, nutrition, and well-being

The Family's Role

Families are a child's first and most important teachers. You support school readiness by:

- Talking, reading, and playing with your child every day
- Creating routines that help your child feel safe and ready to learn
- Encouraging independence with simple daily tasks
- Supporting healthy habits such as good sleep, nutrition, and active play

- Participating in family events, conferences, and workshops
- Sharing your family's culture, language, and traditions
- Communicating with teachers about your child's needs, interests, and progress
- Using home-learning activities provided by the program

Our Shared Commitment

When families and teachers work together, children:

- Build strong social-emotional skills
- Develop early literacy and math foundations
- Strengthen physical health and motor skills
- Grow curiosity, confidence, and problem-solving abilities
- Learn routines, cooperation, and self-help skills
- Develop a lifelong love of learning

Together, we create a strong foundation for every child's future success.

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy

General Policies

The purpose of this statement is to establish the rules and regulations governing the Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start/Early Head Start Program.

Operations

1. The Ironton-Lawrence County Community Action Organization Inc., located at 305 North 5th. Street, Ironton, OH 45638, operates Head Start/Early Head Start. The phone number is 740-532-3534.
2. The Head Start Administration Offices are located at 1518 South 3rd Street, Ironton, OH, 45638 and 1722 Co. Rd. 60, South Point, OH, 45680. The phone numbers are 740-533-9077 and 740-377-4710.
3. The Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) licenses our centers. The license is posted at each center. Head Start funding is provided through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
4. A copy of the DCY Rules and Regulations is available for review upon request. DCY compliance reports are posted at each center.
5. Any person may report a suspected violation to DCY by calling 1-844-234-5437, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
6. Any parent/guardian of a child enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start may visit a center at any time during regular operating hours. Upon arrival a visitor must sign in with the assistance of a staff member.
7. Building inspection reports of centers (e.g., fire inspections, health inspections, or daycare licensing inspection) are available for review upon request. Additional information may be obtained from Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start/Early Head Start or from the Office of Equal Opportunity, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.
8. The Head Start/Early Head Start staff recognizes and adheres to the fact that it is unlawful to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.
9. If all local school districts in Lawrence County, Ohio are closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, Head Start centers will also be closed. Local school districts are defined to include Ironton City Schools, Fairland Local School District, Chesapeake Exempted Union Village School District, South Point Local School District,

Dawson-Bryant Local School District, Rock Hill Local School District, and Symmes Valley Local School District. Sites that are housed within a school district will follow the district schedule regarding delays. Program administration reserves the right to modify schedules, delay opening, close specific sites, or implement alternative service plans when conditions impact the safety of children, families, or staff.

10. Staff will utilize Brightwheel to notify families in the event of early dismissal or closings due to weather or other events.
11. All Head Start/Early Head Start staff, by Ohio law, are mandated reporters if they have any reason to suspect child abuse or neglect. Parents should be aware that this law applies to all community agencies and professionals.
12. The Head Start/Early Head Start Program is available to all eligible residents of Lawrence County, Ohio.
13. Families must maintain at least two emergency contacts on the removal list and ensure those individuals can be reached during program hours. At least one of the contacts must be able to assume care of the child.
14. The program supports breastfeeding families by providing a private, sanitary space for nursing or expressing breast milk and by supporting the safe storage and handling of breast milk.

Confidentiality

The LCECA maintains confidentiality of child, family and staff records in accordance with grantee and state requirements. Written parental consent is obtained before records can be released to another agency. The parental consent form includes an expiration date. Access to records of all children, families, and staff is controlled through a locked filing system at each site. The program takes reasonable measures to protect information shared through electronic systems, including, but not limited to, Brightwheel, Child Plus, and email. Any staff violating the procedures outlined by the Head Start/Early Head Start program or who otherwise endanger the confidentiality of information will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal.

Holiday/Celebration Policy

Holiday celebrations can be wonderful opportunities for children to learn about the traditions and values that are cherished parts of people's lives. However, many early childhood professionals often wonder which holidays to celebrate and how to respect the cultural diversity reflected by all children.

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy follows the belief of the National Association for the Education of Young Children concerning holiday celebrations. LCECA believes that decisions about what holidays to celebrate are best made together by teachers, parents, and children. **In an effort to reduce childhood obesity, accommodate allergies, and ensure safety, no outside materials including candy and food will be accepted.**

The important thing for all to remember is that when planning holiday activities, the rules of good practice continue to apply.

- 1) Are the activities meaningful to children?
- 2) Are their needs and interests being met?
- 3) Is the activity a valuable use of children's time?

The following measures will be implemented:

- 1) Parents will inform Site Administrator in WRITING if their child is not permitted to participate in a specific activity or celebrations due to religious, cultural, or personal preferences.
- 2) Alternative activities will be provided by a staff member.

All items needed for celebrations will be provided by the Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy.

Transportation Safety Policy

1. The center shall have written and signed permission from the parent or guardian before transporting a child to and/or from the center for routine trips, field trips or special outings.
2. If a child requires emergency transportation the parent or the emergency squad will be contacted, if permission has been granted by the parent or guardian on DCY 01234. If permission has been denied the family will be contacted to provide transportation.
3. Written permission for routine trips, special outings, or field trips shall include all of the information requested on DCY 01225 including, but not limited to, the following: child's name, the destination(s), signature of parent or guardian, date on which the permission was signed, and date of permission for the field trip or special outings.
4. A first aid kit shall be kept on each bus while transporting children to and from the center and on all field trips or special outings.
5. A person trained in CPR, First Aid, and Communicable Disease shall be available on the bus when transporting to and from the centers, field trips or special outings.
6. Each child on a field trip or special outing shall wear identification stating the name, address, and telephone number of the center in the event the child becomes lost.
7. An Emergency Transportation Authorization Form shall be available on the field trip or special outing for each child on the trip.
8. The Health Record of any child who has allergies or health conditions such that special procedures or precautions may be indicated during the course of the field trip or special outing, shall be available on the field trip or special outing.
9. While on the field trip or special outing, there shall be one adult assigned to each group of five children.
10. Child restraints shall be used when transporting children to and from the center, on field trips, and on special outings in accordance with state laws (ODOT).
11. Bus drivers will conduct daily pre-trip checks. Monthly emergency bus evacuation drills and weekly vehicle inspections are conducted. These records are maintained at each center for inspection.
12. An annual bus safety inspection is conducted by an Ohio State Highway Patrol Inspector representing the Ohio Department of Transportation.
13. All bus drivers and bus monitors receive annual Transportation Safety Training.

Services

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy provides comprehensive early childhood services to eligible families. The Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start and Early Head Start Programs have a variety of service options available. These service options are provided at various locations throughout the county. Please contact any center for information regarding the program options listed below. Refer to the Center Directory in this handbook for contact information.

Center-Based

This method of service delivery consists of 4 classroom sessions per week provided Monday through Thursday for preschool children age 3-5 years old (primarily 4 year olds preparing for kindergarten), or 5 days of classroom sessions per week provided Monday through Friday. Each classroom is scheduled for a minimum of 3.5 hours. Each family will receive a minimum of 2 home visits provided throughout the program year. Transportation is available at some sites.

Home-Based

Home based services provide Head Start and Early Head Start families with one 90 minute home visit per week and 2 group socialization experiences per month scheduled at times convenient to enrolled families. The home visits are designed to include all aspects of child development using the home as the primary learning environment. Head Start families receive 32 visits and Early Head Start families receive 48 visits per year. Parents take an active role in their child's learning. The home-based option serves pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

Early Childhood Education (in collaboration with school districts)

State-funded Early Childhood Education Services are provided in Chesapeake, Dawson-Bryant, South Point (served at our Sybene location) and Symmes Valley school districts. This program option provides services to preschool children ages 3-5 years old (primarily 4 year olds preparing for kindergarten). Each family receives a minimum of 2 home visits provided throughout the program year. An income-based sliding fee scale is used to determine if a fee applies.

Early Head Start Collaboration

Early Head Start provides comprehensive services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers (birth to three yrs.) and their families. Families can choose home based or center collaboration services, whichever best meets their needs. Families can transition from one option to another as needed, provided there is an opening.

The Center Child Care collaboration provides Early Head Start services to families in need of childcare, while enhancing the child care environment. Ongoing training and mentoring is provided to childcare center staff through hands-on activities. Families receive two home visits per year to update the progress of their child.

Early Childhood Lab Sites

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy is a lab site for high schools, Collins Career Center, and local colleges, providing training for the next generation of Early Childhood Professionals.

Admissions

Enrollment in the Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy programs begins with completion of the application process. This process requires verification of the following information: proof of income, guardianship/divorce/custodial forms (if applicable), Medicaid card/proof of insurance (if applicable), child's birth certificate, primary adult's Social Security number, and the family's food stamp case number and printout verifying the approval period (if applicable.)

Once enrollment records are completed a criteria points system is used to ensure that enrollment slots are filled without bias or preference to children with the greatest need. Information from the application process is used to complete the Enrollment Priorities Selection Criteria entry, which contains information related to the application but does not identify the applicant to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee uses the calculated points to make specific program and site assignments.

A child is considered to be enrolled only after the Site Administrator confirms the availability of space and the required paperwork is received. This includes basic enrollment and health information. Any change to this information must be communicated to staff at your child's center immediately so that current information is always on file. A medical form signed by a physician or a certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of admission. This medical form must be updated every 13 months.

Pedestrian Safety Education

Pedestrian Safety Education is required for all parents and children. It will be provided to children who ride the Head Start Bus by the child's bus driver before the child is transported. The child's teacher will provide the training on the initial Home Visit if the child is transported by the parent.

Purpose

The purpose of the Ironton-Lawrence County Community Action Organization (ILCAO) Head Start and Early Head Start Program is to partner with families to promote children's school readiness, healthy development, and family well-being through comprehensive, high-quality services.

Our program strives to:

1. **Provide comprehensive services** that support the education, health, nutrition, mental health, disabilities, family engagement, and overall well-being of children and their families.
2. **Promote school readiness** by offering developmentally appropriate learning experiences that support children's growth in language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, creative arts, physical development, social-emotional development, cognitive development, and approaches to learning.
3. **Create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment** where every child feels valued, respected, supported, and encouraged to reach their full potential.
4. **Ensure the safety and well-being of every child** by maintaining active supervision and implementing comprehensive health and safety practices in classrooms, on playgrounds, during transportation, and throughout all program activities.
5. **Partner with families** by encouraging meaningful family engagement, respecting parents as their child's first and most important teacher, and providing opportunities for families to participate in their child's education and program decision-making.
6. **Communicate regularly with families** about their child's development, learning, and progress while providing resources and support to help families achieve their own goals.
7. **Support children with disabilities or suspected developmental delays** by collaborating with families and community partners to ensure children receive appropriate screenings, evaluations, individualized services, and inclusive learning opportunities that help each child reach their fullest potential.

Head Start Goals

Head Start serves children ages three to five years and their families by providing comprehensive services that promote school readiness, healthy development, and family well-being.

The goals of the Head Start program are to:

- Promote children's school readiness through developmentally appropriate learning experiences that support language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, physical development, creative arts, technology, and social-emotional growth.
- Foster each child's physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.
- Provide comprehensive health, nutrition, mental health, and family support services that enhance children's overall well-being.
- Partner with families to strengthen family engagement, encourage parents as their child's first and most important teacher, and support families in achieving their personal and family goals.
- Ensure all children learn in a safe, nurturing, inclusive, and culturally responsive environment.
- Collaborate with community partners to connect families with resources and services that support long-term success.

Early Head Start Goals

Early Head Start serves pregnant women, infants, toddlers from birth to age three, and their families, including children with disabilities or suspected developmental delays.

The goals of Early Head Start are to:

- Promote healthy prenatal outcomes for expectant families.
- Support healthy physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers.
- Strengthen secure, responsive parent-child relationships and promote positive family interactions.

- Support parents and caregivers in understanding their child's development and building nurturing home learning environments.
- Provide comprehensive health, nutrition, mental health, developmental, and family support services.
- Ensure children receive services in safe, nurturing, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate environments.
- Employ highly qualified, caring, and responsive staff who build trusting relationships with children and families.
- Partner with community agencies to ensure coordinated, seamless services that meet the unique needs of families.

Expectant Families

Early Head Start partners with expectant families to promote healthy pregnancies, healthy births, and positive family outcomes. Staff serve as advocates, educators, and liaisons between families and community service providers throughout pregnancy and after birth.

Services for expectant families include:

- Providing education on healthy pregnancy, nutrition, prenatal care, breastfeeding, postpartum recovery, infant development, and safe sleep practices.
- Encouraging consistent prenatal and postpartum medical care and assisting families in scheduling and keeping healthcare appointments.
- Educating families on the effects of alcohol, tobacco, substance use, and environmental risks during pregnancy.
- Assisting eligible families with enrollment in community resources such as WIC, Medicaid, housing assistance, transportation, food assistance, and other supportive services.
- Supporting families in preparing for childbirth, parenting, and caring for a newborn.
- Encouraging the involvement of fathers, partners, and other significant family members while respecting each family's culture, values, and individual circumstances.
- Helping families identify natural support systems, including relatives, friends, and community organizations.
- Collaborating with healthcare providers and community agencies to coordinate comprehensive prenatal, postpartum, medical, dental, nutrition, and mental health services.
- Providing developmental information and home-based learning activities using evidence-based curricula, including *Partners for a Healthy Baby*, to promote healthy habits, positive parenting, child development, and family well-being.
- Providing referrals for mental health services, substance use prevention and treatment, domestic violence resources, and other specialized services when needed.

- Assisting families in obtaining essential infant supplies and resources, including diapers, formula, clothing, safe sleep equipment, transportation, and other necessities, as available.
- Supporting breastfeeding families by providing education, encouragement, referrals to lactation resources, and a private, comfortable space at Head Start facilities for breastfeeding or expressing milk.
- Maintaining regular home visits and ongoing communication to provide individualized support based on each family's strengths, needs, and goals.

Head Start/Early Head Start Policies

Child/Adult Ratios

We have chosen to adhere to the Head Start Program Performance Standards that are more stringent than the state of Ohio regulations to ensure high quality services. We maintain the following ratios to ensure a high quality program:

1. Infants - 1:4 (Maximum Group Size of 8)
2. Toddlers - 1:4 (Maximum Group Size of 8)
3. Preschoolers (predominately 3 year olds) - 1:9 (Maximum Group Size of 15-17)
4. Preschooler (4-5 year olds) - 1:10 (Maximum Group Size of 17-20)

Following are the ODJFS State required Child/Adult Ratios:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. 1:5 or 2:12 | Infants (0-12 months) |
| 2. 1:6 or 2:12 | Infants (12 months-18 months) |
| 3. 1:7 or 2:14 | Toddlers (18 months-30 months) |
| 4. 1:8 or 2:16 | Toddlers (30 months-36 months) |
| 5. 1:12 or 2:24 | Preschoolers (3 years-4 years) |
| 6. 1:14 or 2:28 | Preschoolers (4 years until eligible for kindergarten) |
| 7. 1:18 or 2:36 | School-agers (eligible for school) |

The youngest child within a group determines staff/child ratio when there is a mixed-age grouping.

Arrival/Departure

All children transported to a center must be signed in. Once a child is signed in their assigned staff assume responsibility for their care. Upon departure each child must be signed out by a parent/guardian or an adult, age 18 or older, who is listed on the child's removal list. Any special messages, medications, special pickup notes, etc., are to be given to the teacher. Children may not be dropped off at the entrance of the building or be sent inside alone. Staff must be made aware of each child's presence before the parent departs. At the time of pickup parents are asked to make contact with their child's supervising staff member to ensure that the staff is aware that the child has been picked up. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child before and after sign-in. No child is permitted to be passed over the playground fence for pickup or drop off.

Only authorized persons (18 years or older) on the removal list are permitted to sign out a child. Identification will be required if staff are not familiar with the authorized person picking up the child.

Custody Agreements

When custody arrangements apply families must provide the center with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. Ohio Revised Code 3108.042 states, "An unmarried female who gives birth to a child is the sole residential parent and legal custodian of the child until a court of competent jurisdiction issues an order designating another person as the residential parent and legal custodian."

Release of Child

For the protection of the children, every parent/guardian is required to complete and sign a release form giving the names and relationships to the child of any person (s) authorized to remove the child from the center. Authorized representatives will be asked to show a valid picture ID in instances where the staff do not recognize the representative. No child will be released, even in case of emergency or late pick up, unless the person's name is listed on the removal list. When an adult's judgment seems to be impaired by drugs and alcohol and there is concern that release to this adult could compromise this child's safety, every effort must be made to persuade the adult not to remove the child from the center.

Attendance Policy

Head Start/Early Head Start is required to ensure that monthly average daily attendance in center-based classrooms does not fall below 85 percent. We encourage and support families in maintaining regular attendance.

Parents are required to contact the center to explain the reason for their child's absence. If the parent/guardian fails to contact the center, the Family Advocate will call within an hour of the scheduled start time. If contact is unsuccessful for 2 consecutive days, a home visit will be attempted to ensure the child's safety. If necessary, every attempt will be made by the program to offer an alternative program option to the family, such as home-based services, prior to withdrawing the child from the program.

Refusal to Comply with Program Policy

When a family is unable or unwilling to comply with program policy, they will be given the opportunity to transition their child to an option that better meets their needs. Reasons children might be considered for a different program option include: 1) When the program does not meet the child's individual needs; 2) The child misses two consecutive weeks or eight consecutive school days for unexcused absences in the center-based program option; 3) A home-based family misses two consecutive home visits or three home visits in a month that are unexcused; or 4) The child's family fails to comply with any agency policy.

In circumstances where a child's attendance does not resume, then the program must consider that slot vacant under Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.16 (a) (3).

Up-to-Date Information

All children's information must be kept up-to-date. This is important to ensure timely communication in case of emergency. Staff is responsible for maintaining current addresses, telephone numbers and emergency contacts and removal information at all times. Please notify your child's Teacher or Family Advocate immediately of any changes.

Smoke-Free Policy

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start/Early Head Start has a Smoke-Free Environment policy posted at all centers. This policy applies to cigarettes, tobacco products, and vaping devices. The purpose is to eliminate exposure to children, staff, and parents. Support for smoking cessation will be provided to all parents and staff who want to stop smoking. Ohio Revised Code numbers 3313.751, 3794.01, and 5104.25 provide additional clarification regarding smoking bans.

Community Complaint Policy and Procedure

Parents or employees who need assistance in resolving problems are encouraged to speak with the Site Administrator to attempt to resolve the concern. Any parent or party who might have a complaint can request a copy of the Ironton-Lawrence County Community Action Organization Formal Written Complaint form to escalate the complaint beyond the site level.

Observed Holidays

Head Start/Early Head Start programs **(including child care)** observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Spring Break (following local school district calendars), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, and Christmas Day. Please refer to your site calendar for additional information.

Make-up Days

If it is necessary to make up any missed days of school, notification will be given to families.

Positive Behavior Support Policy

The Ironton-Lawrence County CAO/ Head Start and Early Head Start Program is committed to serving Head Start and Early Head Start children in the least restrictive and most inclusive environment possible. The program will not expel, unenroll, or request that a family withdraw a Head Start/Early Head Start child because of challenging behavior. Temporary suspension may be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances and in strict accordance with 45 CFR §1302.17. When all required interventions and supports have been provided and documented, the program may work with the family and other required parties to facilitate a transition to a more appropriate placement in accordance with §1302.17.

Positive Behavior Support

Program staff promote children's social-emotional development by:

- Building warm, responsive relationships with children and families.
- Creating safe, engaging, and well-organized learning environments.
- Establishing predictable routines and clear, consistent expectations.
- Teaching social-emotional skills, problem-solving, and self-regulation through modeling, coaching, and positive reinforcement.
- Using redirection, distraction, encouragement, descriptive praise, and meaningful choices to guide behavior.
- Helping children identify and appropriately express their emotions.
- Supporting children in resolving conflicts respectfully and independently whenever possible.
- Collaborating with families to promote consistent expectations between home and school.

Individualized Support for Challenging Behavior

LCECA recognizes that behavior communicates a need. When a child demonstrates persistent, serious, or escalating challenging behaviors that interfere with learning or safety, the program will work collaboratively with the child's family to identify the underlying causes of the behavior and develop individualized support that promotes the child's continued success in the program.

Support may include:

- Observation and documentation to identify patterns, triggers, strengths, and the function of the behavior.
- Ongoing communication and partnership with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Individualized positive behavior support strategies implemented within the classroom.
- Consultation with the program's Mental Health Consultant, Education/ Disabilities Manager, Child Assistance Team, and other specialists as appropriate.
- Classroom coaching for staff.
- Development and monitoring of an individualized behavior support plan.
- Referrals, with written parental consent, to behavioral health providers, Early Intervention, the local school district, or other community agencies when appropriate.

For children with an **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** or **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**, LCECA will collaborate with the family and the agency responsible for implementing the plan to ensure appropriate services, accommodations, and supports are provided. When developmental concerns are identified for children without an IFSP or IEP, the program will assist families, with written consent, in accessing appropriate evaluation and intervention services.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy for Head Start/Early Head Start

Suspension

1. Our program severely limits the use of suspension for **Head Start/Early Head Start** children due to a child's behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.

A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a **serious safety threat** that has not been reduced or eliminated by the provision of interventions and support recommended by the mental health consultant and the program needs time to put additional appropriate services in place.

Examples of serious safety threats may include, but are not limited to:

- Attempting to seriously injure themselves;
- Physically assaulting staff or other children in a manner that could cause injury;
- Throwing objects or engaging in behaviors that create an immediate risk of harm;
- Repeated or persistent elopement (running away) that places the child in danger; or
- Any other behavior that presents an immediate risk of serious physical harm.

Immediate safety interventions may include:

- Moving child(ren) or staff to a safe location;
 - Providing a calm, supportive space for de-escalation while maintaining supervision; and
 - Notifying parents/guardians for significant, repeated, or safety-related incidents.
2. Our program will engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources as needed, to determine if no other reasonable option is appropriate.
 3. If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, our program will help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety. We will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address the behavior(s) and supports needed to facilitate the child's safe reentry and continued participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum:
 - Continuing to engage with the parents, mental health consultant, and other appropriate staff, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;
 - Providing additional program supports and services, including home visits; and,
 - Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate, or if the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), consulting with the responsible agency to ensure the child receives the needed support services.

Expulsion

1. LCECA cannot expel or unenroll a child from **Head Start or Early Head Start** services because of their child's behavior.
2. When a child exhibits persistent and serious behavioral concerns, our program will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program.
3. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. §705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child's teacher, and:
 - If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), the program must consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the support services needed; or,
 - If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the program must collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.
4. If, after we have explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken, our program, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a **continued serious safety threat** to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, we will work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

Family Partnership

Families are children's first and most important teachers. LCECA partners with families by sharing information about children's development, encouraging family participation in planning individualized support, and providing resources that strengthen positive parenting practices. Parents and guardians are essential partners in supporting children's behavior.

Families are expected to:

- Share relevant information that may help staff understand and support the child.
- Participate in conferences and behavior-planning meetings.
- Review and sign a child-specific behavior management plan before implementation.
- Inform the center of changes that could affect the child's behavior or well-being.
- Work respectfully with staff to support consistent expectations and strategies.
- Pick up the child promptly when contacted because the child cannot remain safely in care.

Staff Responsibilities

LCECA will communicate with families respectfully, objectively, and confidentially. ***Information about one child's behavior will not be shared with another child's family.***

All staff are responsible for maintaining active supervision, modeling respectful interactions, implementing approved positive guidance practices, participating in ongoing professional development, and immediately reporting any concerns regarding inappropriate guidance practices.

Policy Compliance

This policy applies to all children, staff, substitutes, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and individuals supporting child services. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service and may require reporting to the appropriate licensing or regulatory authorities.

Reporting and Documentation

Significant behavior and safety incidents will be documented objectively and confidentially. When an incident meets Ohio DCY reporting requirements, LCECA will complete the required incident documentation, provide required information to the parent or guardian, and submit required reports through the Ohio statewide licensing system.

Nothing in this policy limits the responsibility of LCECA employees to report suspected child abuse or neglect as required by Ohio law.

Prohibited Guidance Practices

Consistent with Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) licensing regulations and the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the following practices are strictly prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or any form of physical punishment.
- Physical restraint except only to prevent “imminent serious harm” and as allowed by law and program procedure.
- Isolating, locking, or confining a child in any room or enclosed area.
- Humiliation, ridicule, shaming, intimidation, threats, yelling, profanity, sarcasm, or other verbally abusive language.
- Derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family.
- Withholding or forcing food, drinks, rest, sleep, outdoor play, toileting, medical care, or participation in routine activities as punishment.
- Punishing children for toileting accidents, sleeping, eating, crying, developmental abilities, or expressing emotions appropriately.

- Withdrawal of unrelated privileges, excessive physical activity, or any practice that frightens, humiliates, or endangers a child physically or emotionally.

Emergency Procedure for Incident, Injury, or Illness

A serious incident, injury, or illness includes any situation occurring while a child is in the care of the center that requires emergency medical treatment, professional consultation, or transportation for emergency treatment.

1. In the event of an emergency, serious incident, injury, or illness, an adult will remain on the scene and give help until emergency services arrive.
2. A designated staff person shall be contacted to take charge in the event of an emergency.
3. No severely injured/ill person shall be moved unless it is absolutely necessary for their safety. If it is necessary to move an injured person, his/her back and neck must be supported in a straight position. If pulling is necessary, pull on the long axis of the body, not sideways.
4. A responsible authority shall notify the parents of the emergency and a course of action shall be agreed upon.
5. If the parents cannot be reached, the persons or health care providers listed on the emergency medical form shall be contacted. Transportation shall be arranged in an emergency vehicle.
6. A responsible staff member will stay with the child until the parent arrives.
7. The Site Administrator shall be notified as soon as possible.
8. Staff members shall complete an Incident, Injury, or Illness form if the following occurs:
 - a. An illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid treatment;
 - b. A bump or blow to the head;
 - c. Emergency transportation is needed;
 - d. An unusual or unexpected event, which jeopardizes the safety of children or staff, such as a child leaving the center unattended.
9. Emergency numbers shall be posted in each classroom, by each phone, and in areas used by children.
10. In the event of a serious incident, injury, illness, or threat of violence, the Site Administrator will:
 - a) Call 911 or the appropriate emergency number
 - b) Contact the parent
 - c) Complete an Incident/Injury Form to provide to the parent
 - d) Contact DCY

Emergency transport authorization will be arranged in accordance with the parent's indication on DCY 01234 – Child Enrollment and Health Information for Child Care.

General Emergency Procedures

Our agency has an extensive Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan including lock down, shelter in place, evacuation and other protective measures. Be assured that every possible step will be taken to protect your child and inform you of the situation. This plan includes actions that are to be taken in case of any threat to the safety of children due to the environmental situation or threats of violence, natural disasters such as fire, tornado, flood, etc., and loss of power, heat or water. The Emergency Preparedness Committee reviews and approves the plan annually. Staff receive annual training on emergency preparedness and practice safety drills with children on a monthly basis. A written record of emergency drills is maintained at each site.

In the event of a general emergency the center will be evacuated using the following procedure:

1. Staff will contact the proper authorities (Electric Company, Water Company, etc.)
2. Parents will be called for early dismissal and asked to pick up their child.
3. Children riding buses will be transported home.

If an evacuation of a center is necessary, the staff and children will report to the following locations per site:

1. Applewood – Proctorville Family Medical Center
2. Chesapeake – The Chesapeake Plaza
3. Dawson-Bryant – Dawson Bryant Bus Garage
4. Deering - Parking lot at the far side of the school building
5. Getaway - Field behind Superintendent's Office
6. Hanging Rock - Hanging Rock Police Department
7. Ironton - Moulton Field Shelter
8. Small Miracles – Hanging Rock Center
9. Sybene – Easter Seals Building (Former Senior Citizens Center)
10. Symmes Valley – Symmes Valley Baseball Field

When an evacuation occurs, Administrative staff will contact you to coordinate pick up; for the safety of your child and family, please remain at home until further directed. You will be notified as soon as possible. Stay tuned to local media for details.

*** Attendance records will remain with the group at all times. Staff are required to conduct a face to name-to-face head count to insure all children are accounted for during this time. ***

Early Childhood Development and Health Services

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

What DAP Means in Our Program

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy uses **Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)** to guide how we teach and support young children. DAP means we provide learning experiences that fit each child's age, individual needs, and cultural background. This approach helps children feel confident, capable, and excited to learn.

Age Appropriate

Children grow and learn in predictable ways. What is right for a three-year-old is different from what is right for a five-year-old. We use what we know about child development to:

- Plan activities that match children's developmental stages
- Offer hands-on, play-based learning experiences
- Support skills that naturally develop at each age, such as sharing, problem-solving, early literacy, and motor skills

Age-appropriate practice ensures learning feels natural and achievable.

Individually Appropriate

Every child is unique. Children learn at different speeds, have different strengths, and show interest in different things. We support individual needs by:

- Observing each child to understand their abilities, interests, and learning style
- Adjusting activities to offer the right level of challenge and support
- Encouraging independence while providing help when needed
- Celebrating each child's progress and personal growth

Individually appropriate practice ensures each child is supported as a unique learner.

Culturally Appropriate

Children learn best when their home language, culture, and family traditions are respected and included. We honor cultural differences by:

- Valuing each family's beliefs, traditions, and ways of learning
- Including children's home languages and cultural experiences in the classroom
- Building strong relationships with families to understand what matters most to them
- Creating a welcoming environment where every child feels seen and respected

Culturally appropriate practice ensures children feel a strong sense of belonging.

School Readiness Assessments

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy completes formal assessments through the collection and analysis of child outcome data based on the alignment of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, State of Ohio Birth Through Pre-K Early Learning and Development Standards, the Early Learning Assessment Tool, and the assessment objectives stated in Teaching Strategies Gold. Teaching Strategies Gold is the tool utilized for ongoing assessment.

Reports are generated and assessment results are analyzed at the completion of each of the 4 checkpoint periods throughout the program year, occurring in November, February, May and August, to ensure progress in all areas of development. Teachers, parents, guardians, care givers, school district personnel, and stakeholders discuss the results of the analysis during various events including: home visits, school conferences, parent meetings, visits to centers, and school district leadership team meetings. Assessment data is reviewed by the Ohio Department of Education/Office of Early Learning and School Readiness via the Ohio Head Start Association.

Disability Services

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy welcomes and supports all children. We believe every child deserves to learn, play, and grow in an environment where they feel safe, included, and valued. Children with disabilities or developmental delays are full members of our classrooms, and we work closely with families to ensure they receive the support they need to thrive.

Inclusive Learning Environment

We create classrooms where every child can participate by providing:

- Individualized instruction and accommodations
- Adaptive materials or equipment
- Support for communication, social-emotional skills, and behavior

- Modifications to routines or activities
- Collaboration with therapists and specialists

Our goal is to help each child grow in all areas of development.

Screenings and Assessments

All children receive developmental, behavioral, vision, and hearing screenings within 45 days of enrollment. These screenings help us understand each child's strengths and identify areas where extra support may be helpful. If concerns arise, we talk with families right away and plan next steps together.

Individualized Plans (IFSP/IEP)

For children who qualify for services:

- **IFSPs support children birth to age 3**
- **IEPs support children ages 3-5**

We partner with families and local agencies to implement these plans in the classroom and throughout the daily routine.

Ohio's Quality Rating System

OHIO STEP UP TO QUALITY (SUTQ)

★ **QUALITY RECOGNIZED. CHILDREN THRIVE.** ★

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy (LCECA) is proud to participate in Ohio's Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) system, the Ohio Department of Children and Youth's quality rating and improvement system for licensed early care and education programs.

Step Up To Quality recognizes programs that exceed Ohio's minimum licensing requirements by implementing research-based best practices that support children's learning, development, health, and school readiness.

PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING IN SUTQ DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN:



Highly qualified and well-trained staff



Family engagement and partnerships



Developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices



Program leadership and continuous quality improvement



Positive teacher-child interactions



Safe, healthy, and nurturing learning environments



Ohio's Quality Rating & Improvement System
Ohio Department of Children and Youth



SCREENINGS & ASSESSMENTS

As part of both Head Start Program Performance Standards and Ohio licensing requirements, children participate in developmental screenings and ongoing assessments to monitor growth, individualize instruction, identify strengths and needs, and ensure children receive appropriate supports and services when needed.

Information collected through screenings and assessments is shared with families and is used to improve both individual learning experiences and overall program quality.

OUR GOLD RATED SITES

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ★ LCECA – Chesapeake | ★ LCECA – Ironton |
| ★ LCECA – Dawson Bryant | ★ LCECA – Proctorville |
| ★ LCECA – Getaway | ★ LCECA – Sybene |
| ★ LCECA – Hanging Rock | ★ LCECA – Symmes Valley |



IMPORTANT NOTE: Ohio's Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) system uses a three-tier rating system: **Bronze**, **Silver**, and **Gold**. All Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy (LCECA) sites are currently rated **GOLD** by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth.

*Quality today.
A better tomorrow.
Stronger together.*



Daily Routines/Sample Daily Schedules

Daily Routines

The daily routine is a balance of quiet and active play. Children are given the opportunity to participate in various individual and group activities. Interactions and activities are designed to develop children's self-esteem and positive feelings toward learning.

Children may select the activity in which they want to participate from a variety of learning areas that the teacher prepares. These learning areas may include, but are not limited to: dramatic play, blocks, science, math, games and puzzles, books, recordings, art, music, library, writing, and computers.

Children are provided many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems.

Cots are available to children for use during resting and nap periods, according to the individual needs of each child.



Sample Daily Schedule

Infant Child Care

6:30 am-6:00 pm

- Good Morning (floor time, tummy time)
- Breakfast/Lunch/Snack (infants fed on their individual time schedule)
- Oral Health Practices
- Rest Time on their individual time schedule
- Free Play/ Outside Play
- Physical Health Practices (Hand washing)
- Motor Activities
- Language Activities
- Pre-Literacy Activities
- Cognitive Activities
- Music & Movement
- Social-Emotional Activities
- Infant Art Activities



Infant schedule is individualized based on the needs of the infant. Nurturing, responsive care determines the infant schedule/routine. The trained caregivers follow the lead of the infants' cues.

***The program's policy is to check diapers every 2 hours, unless otherwise indicated on JFS 01234 – Child Enrollment and Health Information for Child Care. Diapers are changed by the child's primary and secondary caregiver throughout the day as needed.

***Bottles and drinks are given as indicated by the infants' needs. ***

Sample Daily Schedule

Toddler Child Care

6:30am-6:00pm

- Arrival
- Health Check
- Free Play
- Wash Hands
- Breakfast/Lunch/Snack
- Brush Teeth (after each meal)
- Outside Play (weather permitting)
- Large Muscle Play
- Fine Motor Activities
- Planned Activity for Toddlers (if they choose to participate)
- Stories/Language & Pre-Literacy Activities
- Music & Movement
- Social-Emotional Activities
- Cognitive Activities
- Self-Help Activities
- Toddler Art Activities
- Rest Time
- Free Play/ Prepare for snack
- Transition Activities
- Prepare for Departure



Diapers are changed by the child's primary and secondary caregiver throughout the day as needed.

Potty learning begins on an individual basis as the toddler indicates maturation and readiness.

Sample Daily Schedule

Preschool Childcare

6:30 am - 8:30 am	Arrival/Free Choice
8:30 am - 9:00 am	Wash Hands/Breakfast
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Outdoor/Gym/Physical Activity
9:30 am - 10:00 am	Circle Time
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Centers/Free Choice
11:00 am - 11:30 am	Planned Activity
11:30 am - 12:15 pm	Wash hands/Eat Lunch
12:15 pm – 12:30 pm	Toileting/Prepare for Rest Time
12:30 pm - 2:00pm	Rest Time
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Free Choice
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Hand washing/Snack
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Outdoor/Gym/Physical Activity
4:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Planned Activity
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Free Choice/Departure



Sample Daily Schedule

Head Start, Early Childhood Education, Center-Based & Home-Based Socialization Schedule

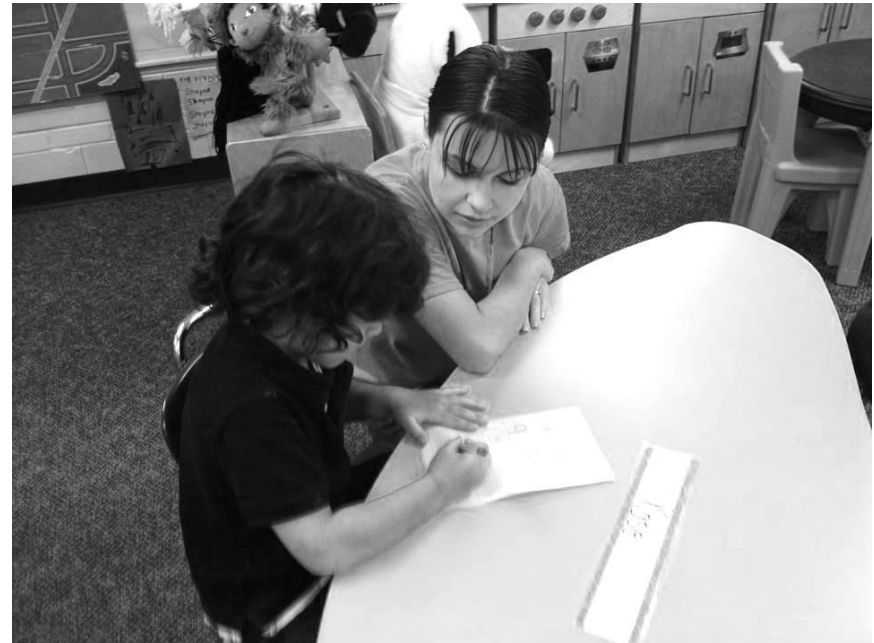
8:30am-12:00pm

- Arrival/Use Library Center materials while waiting for group time to begin
- Circle Time/Whole Group Gathering (daily message, review topic being studied, introduction of new vocabulary words, overview of the day)
- Hand washing
- Breakfast/Lunch
- Tooth brushing
- Activity Time in literacy-enriched play settings, small group time where teacher works on activities suited to individual children's needs
- Shared storybook reading with discussion
- Outside Play (weather permitting)/Gross Motor Play
- Music/Poems/Movement
- Storybook Reading in small groups
- Math-related activities, Science & Social Studies activities, Fine/Gross Motor activities, Social-Emotional activities, Creative Art activities, Self-Help activities, Computer Literacy activities
- Review of the day, predictions for tomorrow's activities, preparation for going home
- Free Play

Home-Based Socialization

10:00am-12:00pm

- Arrival/Sign-In
- Circle Time/Calendar/Story
- Learning Labs/Small Group
- Handwashing
- Snack/Lunch
- Tooth-brushing
- Outdoor Play
- Recall/Departure



Health Requirements

Physical Examination

Within 45 days of admission all children must have a complete physical examination. The examination includes height, weight, hearing and vision screening, hemoglobin or hematocrit (12months or older), immunizations, lead test, and sickle cell test (if applicable). Infants enrolled in Early Head Start are required to have well-baby checks in accordance with the *EPSDT guidelines. The Early Head Start program must have documentation of well-baby checks (health maintenance visits). Early Head Start requires enrolled pregnant moms to have a dental and medical examination on a schedule deemed appropriate by the attending healthcare providers as early in the pregnancy as possible and documentation of ongoing prenatal care.

Dental Examination

A dental examination is required annually for all Head Start children aged three and older and prenatal moms enrolled in Early Head Start. Staff will observe infants and toddlers, birth to three-years and review oral health screening results on child health assessments for normal growth and development. If concerns are identified, staff will discuss these concerns with the parents and assist the family by referring them to the appropriate health care provider. If there are no concerns, a referral to the dentist will be made at the age of 30 months as a part of the child's transition to preschool.

Immunization Requirements

Immunization records must be on file prior to the first day of attendance. Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy will follow the immunization guidelines recommended by Ohio Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Ohio Statute 3313.671. Every child must have received or be in the process of receiving the age-appropriate immunizations listed below before attending any center. Children who are participating in a catch-up schedule must have documentation from a health care provider to attend. All children must maintain an up-to-date schedule of immunizations while enrolled in our program.

Immunization requirements may be waived upon request for exemption by the parent for medical or religious reasons. Prior to the child attending, parents must complete a waiver detailing the circumstances for the request. The waiver from Ohio Department of Health will be utilized to document these cases. Staff may contact the Registered Nurse to obtain this waiver when needed. The signed waiver will be kept on file at the center and must be updated annually. During an outbreak of any of the vaccine preventable diseases, the child is subject to exclusion from the center for the duration of the outbreak. During this time the family will be offered home-based services.



This Immunization Guideline was written in compliance with Ohio Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines.

Policy Concerning the Management of Illness

ACTION: Final

ENACTED
Appendix
5180:2-12-16

DATE: 06/18/2026 9:11 AM

Appendix A to Rule 5180:2-12-16

Caring for Sick Children

A child is considered to be sick when demonstrating any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of at least one hundred and one degrees Fahrenheit (one hundred degrees Fahrenheit if taken axillary) when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness.
- Diarrhea (three or more abnormally, unexpectedly or unexplained loose stools within a twenty-four hour period).
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain.
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
- Unusually dark urine and /or gray or white stool.
- Stiff neck with elevated temperature.
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness.

When caring for sick children, the center shall:

- Isolate the sick child away from other children in another room or portion of a room, but maintain supervision at all times.
- Provide the sick child with a cot or mat or the sick infant with a crib, and make comfortable.
- Notify the child's parent(s) immediately to arrange discharge and if the child's condition worsens during isolation.
- Sanitize the thermometer after each use.

Additional guidance:

- Children and employees will follow the criteria for exclusion and re-admittance recommendations of the ODH “Communicable Disease Chart”.
- The family advocate or teacher will notify parents if the child is suspected of being exposed to a communicable disease.
- The ODH “Communicable Disease Chart” is posted at each center readily available to center staff and parents.
- Employees who have probable signs of communicable disease or cannot perform their duties due to illness will not remain at the center.
- Staff are trained in prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases and standard precautions.

When is My Child Too Sick to Send to School



WHEN IS MY CHILD TOO SICK TO SEND TO SCHOOL?

Keeping children home when they are sick helps them heal and protects other children and staff from getting sick.

This guidance is based on recommendations from:

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) • Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY)
Ohio Department of Education (ODE) • Office of Head Start (OHS)



GENERAL RULE OF THUMB

If your child is too sick to participate comfortably in school routines and learning activities, they should stay home and rest.

SYMPTOM/ILLNESS	KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF...	YOUR CHILD CAN RETURN WHEN...
 FEVER • 101°F (38.3°C) or higher • Chills or sweating	Your child has a fever of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher.	 Fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine (such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen).
 COUGH, COLDS & CONGESTION • Frequent cough • Runny nose with thick drainage • Mucus causing frequent wiping	Coughing is frequent, uncontrolled, or causing difficulty breathing . Nasal drainage is thick, yellow or green.	 Symptoms are improving, cough is mild and controlled, and your child can participate comfortably.
 VOMITING • Throwing up	Your child has vomited 2 or more times in the past 24 hours.	 No vomiting for 24 hours and your child can keep food and liquids down.
 DIARRHEA • Loose or watery stools	Your child has 3 or more episodes of diarrhea in a 24-hour period.	 No diarrhea for 24 hours and your child can control bowel movements.
 RASH • New rash with fever or behavior change	Rash with fever, open sores, draining , or not diagnosed by a medical provider.	 Rash is improved, healed, or diagnosed and provider states child may return.
 EYE INFECTION • Red eyes • Thick drainage or crusting	Eyes are red with thick drainage or crusting, or your child is rubbing eyes frequently.	 After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment AND eyes are improving.
 SORE THROAT, HEADACHE OR BODY ACHES • Pain, fatigue, or feeling unwell	Your child has severe pain , or symptoms that make it hard to participate.	 Symptoms are improved and your child can participate comfortably.
 CONTAGIOUS DISEASES • Strep throat, RSV, Flu, COVID-19, Hand, Foot & Mouth, Impetigo, etc.	Your child has a contagious disease . Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.	 Your child meets the return-to-school guidelines for the specific illness.

OHIO DCY GUIDELINES

CHILDREN MUST BE EXCLUDED FROM CHILD CARE IF THEY HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:



Fever of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher.



Vomiting, diarrhea, or other illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.



Severe sore throat with fever, swollen glands, or difficulty swallowing.



Rash with open sores, pus, or undiagnosed skin infections.



Eye infection with drainage.



Head lice (until treated) or scabies.



A reportable communicable disease as required by Ohio law.

Children must be symptom-free or have provider clearance, as required, before returning. Refer to OAC 5101:2-12-13 and OAC 5101:2-12-04.



DCY also requires that children can participate comfortably in the daily routine, including play, learning, meals, and rest.



WHEN IN DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT!

Children recover faster with rest and fluids. Thank you for helping keep our school healthy for everyone!

GOOD TO KNOW

- ✓ Children must be fever-free for 24 hours without medicine.
- ✓ Children must be vomiting/diarrhea-free for 24 hours.
- ✓ They should be able to participate in normal activities.
- ✓ They should not need more care than we can safely provide.



PLEASE NOTIFY US IF:

- Your child has a contagious illness
- Your child has been exposed to a communicable disease
- Your child has been diagnosed by a healthcare provider

REFERENCES

Guidance based on:

- Ohio Department of Health (ODH)
- Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY)
- Ohio Department of Education (ODE)
- Office of Head Start (OHS) Performance Standards



LCECA

Lawrence County
Early Childhood Academy



Healthy today. Stronger tomorrow.
Thank you for partnering with us!



If your child becomes sick at school, we will contact you. Please keep your contact information up to date.



Medication Administration

All medications should be given at home. If this is not possible, parents are encouraged to come to the center to administer medication to their child.

LCECA may administer emergency medication required during the time children are at the center.

LCECA will follow the guidance and requirements of DCY and Head Start Program Performance Standards pertaining to administration of medication. Medication will not be administered until requirements are met. Written consent must be obtained from the parent and the physician, and staff must be trained in each specific case prior to medication being administered.

LCECA will administer topical products such as sunscreen and diaper cream, as needed. Written permission from the parent must be obtained. The product must be used in compliance with written instructions provided by the product manufacturer.

These safety steps will be followed:

- (1) Ensure all required paperwork is completed accurately.
- (2) Safely store all medication, food supplements, and medical foods immediately upon arrival at the center. Ensure the medication or product is in the original container with the child's name affixed.
- (3) Keep medication and products out of the reach of children.
- (4) Refrigerate, in a separate container, medications or products immediately upon arrival at the center, if needed.
- (5) Ensure that medications and products are accessible to employees at all times.
- (6) The medication or topical product is stored in the original container with a manufacturer's label containing directions based on the age and/or weight of the child.
- (7) Ensure that medications and products are removed from the center when no longer needed or expired.

Head Lice Policy

The LCECA will follow guidance from the DCY Communicable Disease Chart pertaining to head lice. When it is identified a child may have head lice, the child will not be allowed to stay at school. Parents will be contacted to pick up the child. The child will be isolated from other children, but staff will supervise the child, and educational activities will be provided until the child is picked up. The child shall be excluded until after the first treatment with an effective solution to kill lice.

Staff encourage parents to talk with the child's pediatrician for diagnosis and recommended treatments. Staff will provide families with a handout detailing information about head lice.

A staff person trained in communicable disease will check the child's hair prior to returning to school. Staff will make arrangements to check the child's hair at the child's home or in a private setting at the center. If there are no live lice, the child may remain at the center.

Outdoor Play Policy

Outdoor play is incorporated into our daily schedule to support the growth and development of each child. Children will be taken outside when weather permits in accordance with DCY 5180:2-12-17. Child/staff ratios are maintained during outdoor play. Assigned staff shall remain outdoors with the children during all outdoor activity, and they shall be able to summon another adult without leaving the group unsupervised. We provide outdoor play in suitable weather for any infant over twelve months of age, toddler, preschool, and school-age child in attendance four or more consecutive daylight hours. Suitable weather is at a minimum of twenty-five to ninety degrees Fahrenheit, (taking into account humidity, ozone levels, pollen count, lightning, wind chill, heat index, high winds, rain, or ice). Shaded areas are available for children's outdoor play. Please send your child with the appropriate clothing for outdoor play, as well as sunscreen. Indoor gross motor play such as, climbing, jumping, running, riding wheel toys, yoga, other physical fitness or music and movement on days when outdoor play is not provided. A daily health and safety check is completed prior to using outdoor play environments each day. If any safety concerns are identified they are addressed prior to utilizing the space.

Nutrition

Head Start/Early Head Start encourages healthy eating habits. Balanced meals are provided and offer a variety of food choices. Nutrition activities are integrated into the daily curriculum. Parents are provided nutrition education and invited to be a member of the meal-planning committee. Healthy and well-balanced meals and snacks are provided based upon the length of time the child attends the center.

Each child enrolled in a part-day program receives meals and snacks that provide at least 1/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs. Each child enrolled in a full-day program receives meals and snacks that provide 1/2 to 2/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs. All children in a morning center-based center are served a nutritious breakfast. Supplemental food is maintained at each center. The daily schedule ensures meals are served to each child in accordance with CACFP guidelines. Infants are fed on demand.

Meals are served family-style. Children are encouraged to use utensils, pour from pitchers, and clean-up their own place setting. Staff sit with children and eat the same menu. Families are provided access to the menu through our website and copies are available upon request. The menu is posted in classrooms. Cultural preferences and special dietary requirements for each child with nutrition related health problems are addressed, including food supplements and modified diets. Sufficient food must be provided for the day in these instances at the time the child is signed in for services. Nutrition activities are conducted in classrooms and during home visits. Nutrition workshops may be provided to families.

CACFP Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint](https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Health Practices

HANDWASHING remains the single most effective measure to prevent the spread of disease.

Employees shall wash hands using soap and water or hand sanitizer, at the following times:

- Upon arrival for the day and upon entry into a classroom
- After toileting or assisting a child with toileting
- After each diaper change or pull-up change
- After contact with bodily fluids or cleaning up spills or objects contaminated with bodily fluids
- After cleaning or sanitizing or using any chemical products
- After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects that have come in contact with the pet
- Before eating, serving or preparing food or bottles or feeding a child
- Before and after completing a medical procedure or administering medication
- When visibly soiled (must use soap and water)

Children shall wash hands using soap and water or hand sanitizer at the following times:

- Upon arrival for the day
- After toileting/diaper change
- After contact with bodily fluids
- After returning inside after outdoor play
- After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects that have come in contact with the pet before moving on to another activity
- Before eating or assisting with food preparation
- After water activities
- When visibly soiled (must use soap and water)

Young children who are unable to stand by themselves or require additional assistance will be supported by a staff person to wash and rinse their hands.

Adults model appropriate hygiene practices. Families are encouraged to practice good hygiene habits at home. Singing songs while washing hands or brushing teeth, such as: “This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands...This is the way we wash our hands before lunch time” is a fun way to model good health habits with children.

DISINFECTION of articles and surfaces touched by contaminated objects are disinfected with a bleach solution or through use of an approved spray. All soiled surfaces are cleaned with soap and water before disinfecting the area. Tables are washed and disinfected prior to and after mealtime and messy activities. Washable toys and other contaminated objects are cleaned daily by immersing items in the bleach solution, rinsing and drying thoroughly. Dropped mouthing toys and other items that require disinfection are removed until they are properly sanitized.

Safety Policy

*All children are supervised by trained staff at all times. No child shall be left alone at any time in the center, on the playground or on the bus.

*The aide on the bus takes attendance as children get on the bus. The bus aide and the assistant teacher assist the children to the classroom and attendance is taken in the classroom at that time.

*Attendance and emergency information remain with the children throughout the day even during outdoor play.

*Safety drills are practiced monthly. These include fire drills, tornado drills and emergency preparedness drills. Fire emergency and weather alert plans are posted in each room.

*Classroom and playground safety checks are conducted on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. These include the following:

1. Daily Indoor/Outdoor Health and Safety Checklist: classrooms, restrooms, and playgrounds are checked daily for cleanliness and debris prior to children arriving
2. Weekly Audio/Video System Checklist: inspected to ensure equipment is working properly
3. Monthly Inspection of Emergency Equipment Checklist: this includes smoke detectors, carbon dioxide detectors, fire extinguishers

4. Monthly First Aid Kit Checklist: first aid kits are kept at each site and inspected monthly to ensure all items are included

5. Monthly Playground Checklist: completed monthly to ensure all equipment is safe for children

6. Record of Monthly Evacuation Drills: safety drill must be conducted as required by ODFJS and include fire drills, tornado drills, shelter in place, etc.

7. Active Supervision Monitoring Checklist: completed monthly by managers to ensure all active supervision tools and strategies are being implemented

* Emergency phone numbers are posted in every space utilized by children.

*Health information and emergency medical information is obtained from the parent for each child.

*All staff persons are required by law to immediately notify the local public Children Services Agency when the staff member suspects that a child has been neglected and/or abused.

*All staff persons are required to pass criminal background checks that include child abuse and neglect sexual predator checks, also.

Active Supervision

Staff must directly supervise infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at all times during all daily routines, including sleeping, eating, and diapering or bathroom use. Active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times.

Staff set up the environment so they have clear sightlines and access to children. The height and arrangement of furniture and equipment allow effective monitoring and supervision of children at all times.

Staff will carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent harm to children. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all of the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Staff will stay close to children who may need additional support.

Each child is always supervised by a qualified teacher/caregiver while attending the program. There shall be at least two employees at the center if at least 1 child is present. Ratios, group size, and qualifications of teacher/caregiver meet the Head Start/Early Head Start and Ohio's QRIS System's (Step Up to Quality) recommendations. Required staff: child ratios must always be maintained, including indoors, outdoors, on field trips, and during rest periods. Volunteers, student teachers/observers, and parents/guardians are never counted as part of staff: child ratio.

Water Activities/Swimming

Our program does not participate in swimming or wading pool water activities. Children may participate in Splash Day activities involving the use of a sprinkler with parent permission or play with water in sensory/water tables. The depth of the water in these tables will never reach eighteen inches.

Breastfeeding Policy and Supports

The Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy (LCECA) Head Start and Early Head Start Program supports each family's feeding choices and recognizes breastfeeding as the recommended source of nutrition for infants. In accordance with the recommendations of the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** and the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for approximately the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding along with the introduction of complementary foods for two years or longer, as mutually desired by the parent and child.

Breastfeeding provides many benefits for both infants and parents, including:

- Supports healthy growth and brain development.
- Helps protect infants from many childhood illnesses and infections.
- Reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Strengthens the infant's immune system.
- Promotes healthy attachment and bonding between parent and child.

- Supports school readiness through healthy physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development.
- Provides lasting health benefits for both the breastfeeding parent and child.

LCECA is committed to creating a welcoming, supportive environment for breastfeeding families. Parents are welcome to breastfeed their child at any time while at the center. Each Early Head Start site provides a clean, comfortable, and private space for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk if desired.

Families who have questions about breastfeeding or infant feeding may contact their Home Visitor, Family Advocate, Health Services staff, or the child's teacher for information and community resources, including referrals to lactation support when available.

Breast Milk and Formula Feeding

LCECA follows all Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) licensing requirements and safe feeding practices to ensure infants receive individualized care based on their nutritional needs and family preferences.

Our program will:

- Follow each infant's individual feeding plan developed in partnership with the parent or guardian.
- Follow written feeding instructions provided by the parent or, when applicable, the child's healthcare provider. Feeding instructions include the type of milk or formula, amount to be offered, and feeding schedule.
- Update feeding plans whenever a child's nutritional needs change.
- Introduce new foods only after consultation with the family and after the child has successfully tried the food at home, unless otherwise directed by the child's healthcare provider.
- Not serve solid foods to infants younger than four months of age unless prescribed in writing by the child's licensed healthcare provider.
- Feed infants based on their individual hunger and fullness cues rather than a rigid schedule whenever developmentally appropriate.
- Hold infants while bottle feeding and never prop bottles.
- Never place a child in bed with a bottle or allow a bottle during sleep.

- Ensure bottles, breast milk, formula, and infant food are prepared, stored, and served safely in accordance with Ohio DCY licensing requirements.

Breast Milk Storage and Handling

To ensure the safety of expressed breast milk:

- Parents should clearly label each container with the child's name, the date the milk was expressed, and the date the bottle was prepared.
- Breast milk will be stored, thawed, warmed, and served according to current Ohio DCY licensing requirements and CDC safe storage guidelines.
- Frozen breast milk will be thawed in the refrigerator or under cool running water. Breast milk will never be thawed at room temperature or in a microwave.
- Bottles will be warmed only using approved bottle warmers or warm water. Microwave ovens will never be used to heat bottles.
- Bottles will be gently mixed—not vigorously shaken—to preserve the quality of breast milk.
- Any remaining breast milk or formula left in a bottle after a feeding will be discarded and will not be reheated or served again.

Formula Feeding

When formula is provided:

- Formula will be prepared and stored according to the manufacturer's instructions or the written instructions of the child's healthcare provider.
- Prepared formula that is not used within the recommended time frame will be discarded.
- Parents are responsible for labeling prepared bottles with their child's name and the date of preparation.

Family Partnership

Parents are encouraged to discuss their infant's feeding preferences, routines, allergies, dietary needs, and developmental milestones with program staff. Working together helps ensure each infant receives individualized, responsive care that supports healthy growth, development, and family goals.

Family Engagement & Community Partnerships



STRONG FAMILIES. STRONGER TOGETHER.

Your Voice. Your Program. Our Community.

Family partnership is at the heart of our program. Families help guide decisions, share ideas, and make a difference for all children and families we serve.



WHAT IS PROGRAM GOVERNANCE?

Program governance means families and community members work together with program leadership to plan, make decisions, and improve our services.

Why it matters

- ✓ Families help ensure the program meets real needs.
- ✓ Parents help shape policies, budgets, and services.
- ✓ Your ideas and feedback make our program stronger.
- ✓ Children and families benefit when families have a voice.



We believe families are our most important partners!



POLICY COUNCIL

Families Leading. Decisions That Matter.

The Policy Council is our program's governing body. It is made up of elected parent representatives, community members, and program staff. Policy Council members work together to make important decisions about program policies, finances, and services.

WHAT POLICY COUNCIL DOES



Approves policies, budgets, and plans that guide the program.



Reviews program reports and ensures services meet federal Head Start standards.



Advocates for families and the community.



Works with program leadership to improve quality and outcomes for children and families.

WHO SERVES?



A majority of Policy Council members are parents of children currently enrolled in the program.



Community members bring diverse skills and perspectives.



Program staff participate as non-voting members.



MEETINGS

Policy Council meets monthly. Meetings are open to the public, and we encourage all families to attend.



PARENT COMMITTEES

Share Ideas. Take Action. Build Community.

Parent Committees are made up of parents and caregivers from our program. Committees help plan activities, share feedback, and support family engagement.

WHAT PARENT COMMITTEES DO



Share ideas and feedback about program services and family needs.



Plan family events, workshops, and activities.



Help connect families with resources and each other.



Communicate ideas and concerns from families to the program.



MEETINGS

Parent Committees meet quarterly. Additional meetings can be scheduled at the pleasure of committee members.

HOW IT ALL WORKS TOGETHER



FAMILIES

Share ideas, needs, and feedback through events, surveys, and conversations.



PARENT COMMITTEES

Bring ideas forward, plan activities, and share feedback with program leadership.



POLICY COUNCIL

Reviews information, makes decisions, and sets policy to improve services for all children and families.



STRONGER PROGRAM

Better services, stronger families, and brighter futures for our children and community!



GET INVOLVED!

Your voice makes a difference! Ask your Family Advocate or Program Staff how you can join a Parent Committee or run for a seat on the Policy Council.

Together, we make a difference!



THANK YOU FOR BEING OUR PARTNER!

Questions? Contact your Family Advocate or Program Staff.



Your involvement helps us build a better program for every child and family.

At Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start, we believe families are their children's first and most important teachers. We are committed to building respectful, trusting relationships with every family and providing opportunities for families to strengthen their skills, achieve personal goals, and advocate for themselves and their children.

Each enrolled family is offered the opportunity to participate in a Family Needs Assessment and develop a Family Partnership Agreement with their Family Advocate. Participation is voluntary and tailored to each family's interests, strengths, and goals. Together, families and Family Advocates identify available resources, develop achievable goals, and create a plan to support success. Goals may include continuing education, obtaining employment, improving housing, strengthening family relationships, accessing health care, or meeting immediate needs such as food, clothing, or transportation.

Family Advocates provide ongoing support by connecting families with community resources, celebrating progress, and assisting families in overcoming barriers. Family Services are available to every enrolled family, regardless of whether they choose to establish formal family goals.

We welcome and value families from all cultures and language backgrounds. To support meaningful participation, classroom materials are provided in the primary languages of enrolled families whenever possible, and classrooms include books and learning materials that reflect the cultures and languages of the children we serve. Families are also invited to participate in ParentPowered, our research-based family engagement curriculum, which is available in both English and Spanish.

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start works collaboratively with schools, health care providers, social service agencies, and other community partners to connect families with resources and services that promote healthy child development, family well-being, and school readiness. Through these partnerships, we strive to ensure that every family has access to the support they need to achieve their goals and build on their strengths.

Developed according to the guidance of Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.52 and 1302.53

Program Leadership

ILCAO Head Start uses **shared decision-making** to help ensure our program meets the needs of children and families.

The **ILCAO Governing Board** provides overall oversight of the Head Start program. Its members bring knowledge and experience in areas such as finance and accounting, early childhood education, law, business, and community affairs. The Board also includes former Head Start parents and members who reflect the community we serve. Governing Board members are not involved in the day-to-day operation of the Head Start program.

The **Head Start Policy Council** gives parents an important voice in program decisions. Policy Council members help review, provide input on, and approve important areas of the program, including certain financial, personnel, and program matters.

The **Governing Board and Policy Council have different members and responsibilities, but they work together to support a high-quality Head Start program for children and families.**

Policy Council

1. What is Policy Council?

Policy Council is an important way for **Head Start and Early Head Start parents to have a voice in our program**. Parents work together with program leadership and the CAO Governing Board to help make decisions that affect children and families. Policy Council reviews, discusses, and votes on certain program plans, policies, and decisions. Members also help share information between Policy Council and Parent Committees.

2. Who can serve on Policy Council?

Policy Council includes:

- Parents or legal guardians of children currently enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start; and
- Representatives from our community.

Parents of currently enrolled children make up the majority of Policy Council members.

3. How do I become a Policy Council member?

If you are interested in serving, let your child's **teacher or Family Advocate** know. Interested parents may be nominated through their Parent Committee, and elections are held each year according to program procedures. You do not need special experience or training to get involved. **Your experience as a parent or caregiver is valuable!**

4. How long can I serve?

Policy Council members serve for **one year at a time**. Members must be elected again each year and may serve for up to **five years total**.

5. How often does Policy Council meet?

Policy Council meets **monthly**. Occasionally, a special meeting may be needed when an important program decision cannot wait until the next regular meeting.

6. Will I receive training?

Yes! New members receive an orientation to help them understand Head Start, Policy Council, and their role in making program decisions.

Members also receive ongoing training and support throughout the year. You are encouraged to ask questions—**you are not expected to know everything about Head Start before joining**.

7. Is support available to help me participate?

Yes. We want families to be able to participate without creating an unnecessary financial burden. A **stipend is provided** to help with costs related to participation, such as childcare and transportation.

8. Are there opportunities to attend trainings or conferences?

Sometimes! Policy Council members may have opportunities to attend additional Head Start trainings, meetings, or conferences at the state or national level.

When opportunities are available and approved, expenses such as transportation, meals, and lodging may be covered according to program policies and available funding.

9. What will I do as a Policy Council member?

As a Policy Council member, you will:

- Attend monthly meetings;
- Review information and ask questions;
- Share your ideas and experiences as a parent or community representative;

- Help make decisions by voting on certain program matters;
- Share information between Policy Council and Parent Committees; and
- Work with other members and program leadership to support children and families.

Your voice matters. You are encouraged to speak up, ask questions, and share your perspective.

10. Why should I consider joining?

Serving on Policy Council is an opportunity to **make a difference in your child's Head Start program** while building your own skills and confidence.

Members can:

- Develop leadership and decision-making skills;
- Learn more about how Head Start operates;
- Meet and work with other parents and community members;
- Learn about community resources and partnerships;
- Gain experience that may be useful in future employment or volunteer opportunities; and
- Help shape program decisions that affect children and families.

Policy Council is more than attending meetings—it is an opportunity for parents to have a meaningful voice in Head Start.

Male Involvement

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start recognizes the important role that fathers and positive male role models play in the healthy development and well-being of children. We welcome and encourage the involvement of fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers, uncles, brothers, foster fathers, mentors, and other significant men who positively influence the lives of children.

Our program promotes meaningful father and male engagement by:

Encouraging responsible and positive involvement in children's lives.

Building strong, supportive relationships between children and the important men in their lives.

Providing opportunities to strengthen parenting knowledge and skills.

Offering activities that encourage participation, leadership, and family engagement.

Connecting fathers and male role models with community resources and supports when requested.

Fathers and other positive male role models are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program, including Family Needs Assessments and Family Partnership Agreements, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, Parent Committee meetings, family engagement events, classroom activities, volunteer opportunities, and program celebrations.

Leadership opportunities are available through Parent Committees, Policy Council, the Health Services Advisory Committee, and other committees or workgroups that support program planning and continuous improvement. We value the perspectives and contributions of fathers and male role models and encourage them to actively participate in shaping our program and strengthening outcomes for children and families.

Parenting Curriculum

IRONTON-LAWRENCE COUNTY CAO HEAD START

ParentPowered

Learning Together at Home

♥ We partner with families every day to help children learn, grow, and succeed! ✨



WHAT IS PARENTPOWERED?



ParentPowered is a research-based parenting program for families with children from birth through age five.

Each week, you'll receive short text messages with simple, practical ideas to support your child's learning and development.

SIMPLE IDEAS FOR EVERYDAY MOMENTS

Activities are easy to fit into your daily routines—no special materials needed!



Mealtime & Snack Time



Bedtime & Morning Routines



Playtime



Reading Together



Car or Bus Rides



Everyday Conversations

MORE WAYS TO LEARN & CONNECT



ParentPowered includes workshops and other family learning opportunities.

You can connect with other families, learn new strategies, and partner with our staff to support your child's growth and learning.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR YOUR CHILD



Our teachers and Family Advocates get to know your child through observations, assessments, and conversations with you.



ParentPowered adds to this partnership by sending you easy-to-use activities you can enjoy at home.

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Everyday moments can become learning opportunities.



Talking, reading, playing, singing, asking questions, and spending time together all help your child learn and grow!



BUILT ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

ParentPowered is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.



Together, families and staff work as a team to promote children's learning, development, and long-term success.



SMALL MOMENTS. SIMPLE ACTIVITIES. BIG OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING!



At Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start, we believe **parents and caregivers are their child's first and most important teachers**. That's why we use **ParentPowered**, a research-based parenting curriculum for families with children from birth through age five.

What is ParentPowered?

ParentPowered sends families **short, helpful text messages each week** with simple ideas for supporting their child's learning and development.

The activities are easy to fit into everyday family routines—**no special materials or extra preparation are needed!** Families may receive ideas to try during:

- Mealtime or snack time;
- Bedtime and morning routines;
- Playtime;
- Reading together;
- Car or bus rides; and
- Everyday conversations.

These simple activities help children build important skills in **language, early literacy, thinking and problem-solving, social-emotional development, and physical development**.

More Ways to Learn and Connect

ParentPowered is more than text messages. Families may also have opportunities to participate in **workshops and other family learning activities**. These experiences provide opportunities to learn new strategies, connect with other families, and work with Head Start staff to support children's growth and learning.

Working Together for Your Child

Every child and family is unique. Our teachers and Family Advocates learn about your child through classroom observations, ongoing assessments, and conversations with you. This helps us share activities and resources that match your child's individual strengths, interests, and needs.

ParentPowered adds to this partnership by giving you **quick and practical ideas you can use at home** to continue the learning that happens in Head Start.

You Make a Difference!

Everyday moments can become learning opportunities. **Talking, reading, playing, singing, asking questions, and spending time together all help your child learn and grow.**

ParentPowered supports our commitment to partnering with families and is aligned with the **Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework** and the **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework**.

Home Visits/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents of children who attend center-based classrooms will receive two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Parents may request additional parent-teacher conferences and/or home visits if needed. Parents will be informed of their child's progress and encouraged to be active participants in their child's education. Family Advocates will also make home visits throughout the program year.

Most information is sent home in writing to the parent and followed up verbally. The most recent information for parents is posted on our website and Facebook pages, such as Children's Menus, Parent Training, Parent Meetings, Job Postings, etc.

Engagement Opportunities

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start believes that strong partnerships between families and staff support children's learning, development, and school readiness. Throughout the program year, families are invited to participate in a variety of activities designed to build relationships, share information, celebrate children's progress, and strengthen family engagement.

Examples of family engagement opportunities include:

Open House – Meet teachers and staff, explore the classroom, and learn about the program before the school year begins.

Parent Committee Meetings and Family Engagement Events (*typically held in October, November, February, and May*) – Connect with other families, participate in educational activities, provide input, and learn about program services and community resources.

Parent-Teacher Conferences (*typically held November–December and February–April*) – Meet with your child's teacher to discuss developmental progress, celebrate accomplishments, review assessment information, and plan together to support continued learning and growth.

Teacher Home Visits (*offered twice each program year*) – Your child's teacher will schedule two home visits to build a strong partnership with your family, learn about your child's interests, strengths, culture, and routines, share activities that support learning at home, and discuss your child's progress and school readiness goals.

Family Advocate Home Visits (*offered twice each program year*) – Your Family Advocate will schedule two visits focused on family well-being and support. During these visits, families may discuss goals, complete or review the Family Needs Assessment and Family Partnership Agreement, receive information about community resources, and obtain assistance with accessing services related to health, employment, education, housing, transportation, or other family-identified needs.

Additional family engagement activities, workshops, volunteer opportunities, and special events are offered throughout the year. Please refer to your program calendar, classroom communications, and newsletters for specific dates and additional opportunities. Families are encouraged to participate whenever possible, and alternative arrangements may be available if scheduling conflicts arise.

Early Head Start/Head Start Home-Based Socializations

Socializations will be held two times per month. Information on dates and times will be provided by your teacher.

Volunteering/Parent Involvement

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start encourages families to share their skills, talents, and time in support of their child's learning and development. Family involvement strengthens the connection between home and school and helps families gain a deeper understanding of the Head Start program.

Families are welcome to participate in classroom and program activities whenever possible. Opportunities may include family engagement events, classroom celebrations, special activities, and program-wide events. Teachers and staff are also available to meet with families to discuss a child's progress or needs. Families are encouraged to schedule appointments for longer conversations so staff can provide the best support and attention.

Volunteer Services in the Classroom

Family members may have opportunities to:

- Serve on the Policy Council or Parent Committee
- Support classroom activities under staff direction
- Assist with organizing or sharing information about family engagement activities
- Participate in program self-assessment or program improvement efforts

Volunteer Services at Home

Family members may also support classroom learning from home by:

- Preparing or assembling classroom materials
- Donating age-appropriate items such as magazines, newspapers, catalogs, empty food containers, or other reusable materials for learning activities
- Contributing photos for classroom displays or learning centers

Volunteer Requirements

To ensure a safe and supportive environment for children, volunteers who participate on a regular basis may be required to complete program health and safety requirements in accordance with applicable licensing and Head Start standards. These requirements may include background checks and other documentation as determined by program policy.

All volunteers are expected to:

- Complete a volunteer orientation or training provided by program staff
- Follow confidentiality requirements regarding children, families, and staff
- Work under the supervision of program staff at all times

- Not be left alone with children or assume primary responsibility for any child
- Not administer discipline to children; any concerns should be shared with classroom staff
- Interact with children, families, and staff in a respectful and professional manner
- Respect and support the cultural, linguistic, and individual identities of all children and families
- Record volunteer hours using program in-kind documentation forms when applicable

These expectations are consistent with Head Start Program Performance Standards related to program governance, safety, and volunteer involvement.

Additional Information

Family volunteer participation is an important part of our program. We value the time, energy, and contributions of all volunteers and recognize that every level of involvement supports children's learning and school readiness.

Ways Families Can Be Involved Without Formal Volunteering

Families who would like to be involved without formally volunteering can participate in various ways including:

- Attending family events
- Reading with your child at home
- Sharing cultural traditions with your child's Teacher/your Family Advocate
- Participating in surveys or program feedback
- Supporting learning through ParentPowered activities

Transition

Transition is an ongoing process, which may occur in many different stages during your child's course of learning. Our focus is on your child's transition from Early Head Start to Head Start and then to kindergarten. The process can ensure effective communication that provides opportunities for the family, the child, and the teacher to engage in conversation on behalf of the child. These opportunities help to celebrate the child's achievements as well as an opportunity to share any other information that will benefit the development of the child.

The three major Transition Objectives, which help support the transition process, are:

- To establish program continuity from pregnant women into Early Head Start. Developmentally appropriate curricula is provided for Early Head Start children transitioning to Head Start and Head Start children transitioning to kindergarten. Smooth transitions are accomplished by our history of inter-agency collaboration; and coordinating with the local education agencies. Together we promote continuity of services and effective transitions.
- To promote the continued involvement of Head Start parents in the education of their children.
- To provide education and training to parents preparing them to exercise their rights and responsibilities which will enable them to better participate in decisions about their child's education.

Family engagement plays a critical role in a child's success in school. With the continued parent/teacher partnership and transition support services, we can ensure successful transitions from home to Early Head Start and Head Start to kindergarten.

Transition Tips

During transitions, children often need a little extra time, attention and support from their parents. School transitions also signal a new stage of family life for everyone.

Children may feel.....

- Sadness over separation from parents;
- Anxiety about the unknown;
- Apprehension about new routines, etc.

Parents/Guardians may feel.....

- Sadness about their child growing up and moving on to the next stage;
- Anxiety about whether the new school and/or teacher is the best for their child;
- Uncertainty about what their own role should be in the new setting and how the new school views parent involvement

Here are some events that each parent/guardian is encouraged to participate in to help their child with a smoother transition.....

- If the school has scheduled an open house, orientation, welcome day or other opportunity for parents and/or children to get acquainted with the school and teacher, be sure to attend;
- Take time to talk. Ask your child what he would like to know about the new school. Write down the questions and find out the answers;
- Take time to visit the school. Call ahead to get an appointment or get permission for you and your child to take a tour of the building. Practice the walk to school, or the walk to the bus stop (even at the end of your driveway).
- What is expected of him/her to know upon entering pre-school or kindergarten? Ask for a list of supplies that your child will need to have on his/her first day of school;
- Talk about what will happen during a typical day. Go through the schedule with your child;
- Let your child know it's normal to feel worried. Share childhood memories of times when you were worried about a new situation and it worked out okay.

Transition Within A Childcare Setting

All children transitioning from one age group to another will have a transition plan including parent/guardian input and signatures. The transition plan will include a beginning transition date, goals/transition activities, and a schedule of transitional classroom visits, persons responsible, timelines, and current childcare fees.

Early Head Start Transitions

What Will Be Similar and Different in the Next Setting?

Consider the following questions during preparation for an upcoming transition:

Environment/Physical Space

- Will the next setting be a different room at a different location? How will my child react?
- Will materials and equipment be different or familiar to my child? How accessible will they be?

- What choices will my child be able to make?

Routines

- What will daily activities be like, and how will my child react to these experiences?
- How are the routines listed below handled?
 - (1) Feeding
 - (2) Napping
 - (3) Diapering/toileting
 - (4) Indoor/Outdoor activities

Staff

- Will my child be assigned a new primary teacher? If so, how will my child react?
- How do adults interact with the children, and when do they intervene?
- How do adults relate to each other? Are they friendly and respectful?

Social Interactions

- What opportunities will my child have to interact with other children?
- Will any of the children be familiar to my child?
- What is the family role?
- What are the opportunities for family interaction?

Other Comments and Observations

- What can be done now to begin preparing my child for this transition?
- What partnerships need to be formed to build continuity and ease the transition?

Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy Center Directory

Head Start Administrative Offices – Ironton and Early Head Start Home Based Services 1518 S. 3rd Street, Ironton, OH 45638 740-533-9077 Fax: 740-533-9477	LCECA - Getaway 11627 State Route 243 Chesapeake, OH 45619 740-867-3893 Fax: 740-867-4904
Head Start Administrative Offices - Delta Lane 1722 County Road 60 South Point, OH 45680 740-377-4710 Fax: 740-377-4724	LCECA - Hanging Rock 300 Main Street Hanging Rock, OH 45638 740-532-0178 Fax: 740-532-0184
LCECA – Applewood 10699 Co Rd 107 Unit A Proctorville, OH 45669 740-886-0504 Fax: 740-886-0604	LCECA - Ironton 305 N. Seventh Street Ironton, OH 45638 740-532-2905 Fax 740-532-0606
LCECA - Chesapeake 11359 County Road 1 Chesapeake, OH 45619 740-867-4700 Fax: 740-867-1110	LCECA - Sybene 8978 County Road 1 South Point, OH 45680 740-894-4100 Fax: 740-894-4689
LCECA - Dawson Bryant 1 Hornet Lane Coal Grove, OH 45638 740-532-8258 Fax: 740-533-6013	LCECA - Symmes Valley 14860 State Route 141 Willow Wood, OH 45696 740-643-2690 Fax: 740-643-2690
LCECA - Deering 4503 State Route 243 Ironton, OH 45638 740-532-6898 Extension 5500 Fax: 740-534-5582	Small Miracles 410 Scioto Avenue Ironton, OH 45638 740-533-0101

Resources

AMBULANCE/EMERGENCY SERVICES – 911

APPALACHIAN FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST COUNCIL – 740-357-0674

CABELL HUNTINGTON HOSPITAL – 304-526-2000

CHESAPEAKE COMMUNITY MISSION OUTREACH – 740-867-0648

CAO MEDICAL CLINICS:

CHESAPEAKE FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER-740-867-6687
IRONTON CAMPUS – 740-534-9202
IRONTON CAMPUS DENTAL – 740-534-9231
Mental Health Crisis Hotline – 1-855-381-1010
ONE STOP – 740-532-3140
PROCTORVILLE FAMILY DENTAL – 740-302-0541
PROCTORVILLE FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER – 740-302-0541
ROCK HILL FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER – 740-643-8688
SOUTH POINT FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER – 740-377-2712

CARESOURCE HEALTH CARE – 1-800-488-0134

CENTRAL CHRISTIAN FOOD BANK (M & W 10:00-12:00) 740-532-2930

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING – 740-532-3324 option 3

FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER HOTLINE – 740-532-0557

HARVEST FOR HUNGRY (M & W 9:00-12:00) 425-301-0168

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE (HEAP) – 740-532-3140, EXT. 203

HOMELESS PROGRAM – 740-532-3140, EXT. 1247

IRONTON METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY – 740-532-8658

KING'S DAUGHTERS MEDICAL CENTER – 606-408-4000

LAWRENCE COUNTY ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION – 740-532-3140

LAWRENCE COUNTY DEPT. OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES – 740-532-3324

LAWRENCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT – 740-532-3962

LAWRENCE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – 740-532-3525

MOLINA HEALTH CARE – 1-866-642-9279

OHIO MEANS JOBS – 740-532-3140

PATHWAYS HUB – 740-594-8499 ext. 230

POISON CONTROL CENTER – 1-800-762-0727

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION – 740-532-2269

RENTAL HOUSING – 740-534-0375

SOCIAL SECURITY – 1-800-772-1213

SOUTHEASTERN OHIO LEGAL SERVICES – 1-800-837-2508

ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CAMPUS IRONTON – 740-533-9710

ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER – 304-526-1234

TWO HEARTS PREGNANCY CARE CENTER – 606-325-7654

UNITED HEALTHCARE MANAGED PLAN – 1-800-895-2017

WIC IRONTON CLINIC – 740-532-2646

Additional resources are available in the Lawrence County Whole Child Resource Guide located in the Family Handbook section of our website.