



**2023 – 2024
Parent Handbook**



Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year!

Welcome to Brevard Public Schools Head Start. This handbook has been prepared to provide you important information and guidelines concerning Head Start. Parents/caregivers are asked to read and discuss appropriate information with your child in order to help them adjust more successfully at school. You are encouraged to keep in close contact with your child's teacher and family advocate. Also, your school may have additional guidelines which are specific to local school activities and facilities. Active support and engagement of parents is needed continuously as we provide a safe and friendly place for children to learn. The information provided in this handbook can help make the transition from home to school a successful one for your child each school day. It is our goal to provide your child with an environment that is safe, caring, and rich in learning experiences. Check out our [webpage](#) and your school's webpage often.

Vision: Brevard Public Schools Head Start Program will serve our community and enhance the lives of preschool students and families by delivering the highest quality education in a culture of dedication, collaboration, and learning.

Mission: To serve every prekindergarten student and family with excellence as the standard.

2023 – 2024 Head Start Programs

Head Start VPK

Head Start VPK classrooms maintain a class size of 20 children. As required by the Head Start performance standards, there are no less than two paid adults in the classroom at all times. Children eligible to attend must turn 4 years old on or before September 1, 2023.

Classrooms are located at:

- Cambridge Elementary
- Coquina Elementary
- Discovery Elementary
- Endeavour Elementary
- Enterprise Elementary
- Jupiter Elementary
- Mims Elementary
- Palm Bay Elementary
- Port Malabar Elementary
- Saturn Elementary
- Sherwood Elementary
- University Park Elementary

Head Start - 3

Head Start-3 classes maintain a class size of 17 children. As required by the Head Start performance standards, there are no less than two paid adults in the classroom at all times. Children eligible to attend must be 3 years old on or before September 1, 2023.

Classrooms are located at:

- Cambridge Elementary
- Coquina Elementary
- Discovery Elementary
- Endeavour Elementary
- Enterprise Elementary
- Jupiter Elementary
- Mims Elementary
- Palm Bay Elementary
- Port Malabar Elementary
- Saturn Elementary
- Sherwood Elementary
- University Park Elementary

Head Start Program

Brevard Public Schools offers the Head Start program at selected sites throughout the county. The program promotes high quality, full day early childhood education with a focus on approaches to learning, social emotional development, language and literacy, cognition, perceptual, motor, and physical development as indicated by the Head Start Early Learnings Outcomes Framework.

All classrooms are staffed with a Florida Department of Education early childhood certified teacher and two highly qualified instructional assistant. In addition to classroom staff, the program supports the Parent Family Community Engagement Outcomes Framework with a family advocate.

Voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) is a state funded early learning program designed to prepare children for success in kindergarten. Brevard Public Schools offers VPK during the school year to Head Start children as part of a blended funding model. Eligible Brevard county children who do not participate in any school year VPK program have an opportunity to attend summer VPK offered through the school district or private providers.



School Readiness Goals

1. Approaches to Learning

Children will develop the ability to self-regulate and manage their emotions in a variety of situations to increase independence and to enhance their ability to learn.

2. Social and Emotional Development

Children will create and sustain meaningful relationships with adults and other children, use problem solving skills to respond appropriately to others and build confidence in their own skills to fully engage in learning opportunities.

3. Language/Communication and Literacy

Children will develop early literacy knowledge and skills such as book appreciation, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print concepts and early writing.



4. Cognition

Children will develop the ability to think, reason, and use information around them to acquire knowledge, understand the world around them, and make appropriate decisions.

5. Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development

Children will use their senses to gather and understand information and gain an increasing awareness of their bodies to perform tasks, explore their environment, and interact with people and things to keep themselves safe and healthy.



Attendance Awareness

Why It Matters:

Studies show that children who were chronically absent in the early years were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of the 3rd grade. When children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

It is important that your child be on time and attend every school day to ensure the success of your child. Each day is planned to provide valuable learning experiences. Your family support is needed to provide consistency with attendance.

Attendance: What Parents Need to Know

In the event your child must be absent, notify the school immediately and submit written documentation for all absences upon their return to school. Written documentation can be a parent or doctor's note or legal document.

Your child's teacher will keep a daily log of attendance. At the end of the month, you may be asked to review the attendance record, attest to the accuracy and state your desire to have your child remain in the program by signing the Parental Choice. (VPK Only)

After your family advocate has attempted to provide support to your family, withdrawal procedures may begin for any child who has frequent absences and tardiness.

If your child is withdrawn from Head Start VPK, a new certificate of eligibility must be obtained from the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) to re-enroll. A child may only re-enroll in a VPK program one time.

What Parents Can Do For Their Child

- **Communicate regularly with teachers.**
- **Read to your child daily.** Allow ad (tell the story by looking at the illustrations) aloud to you.
- **Make sure your child gets enough rest.** No one does their best when sleepy or tired.
- **Keep your child healthy.** Take your child to the doctor for regular checkups and booster shots.
- **Help children maintain good attendance records.**
- **Monitor and limit TV watching.** Try to watch television together and comment on the show with your child.
- **Give your child choices.**
 - Choices shouldn't include limitless options. Two clear options are all a child can really deal with in order to make a choice. Don't add another choice because your child suggests it. Tell him: "That was a good suggestion. These are the choices I'm offering now. We'll try your suggestion next time."
 - Offer choices that guide your child toward the outcome you're seeking. Make sure both options offered are 100% okay with you.
 - If a child won't choose between the apple or the cranberry juice you need to choose for her. Follow through and choose so your child comes to understand that when you offer her a choice and she doesn't choose, the ability to choose goes away. You can say, "I know you're upset that I had to choose the juice for you. I have another choice for you to try now. Would you like to drink what I chose for you now or not have juice right now?"

Procedures for Arrival & Dismissal

Arrival

Arriving on time provides for a smooth, calm transition for your child from home to the school setting. If you arrive early, you will need to wait with your child until class begins.

Late arrivals create classroom disruption and can affect the educational growth of your child and others in the classroom. If a child arrives after class begins, the parent needs to accompany the child to the school office to sign the child in for the day.

Dismissal

Picking up your child on time eliminates the anxiety they will feel when you are late. **Whether your child is being picked up at the bus stop or at school, the parent or adult picking up the child must be authorized to do so in writing and prepared to show photo identification.**

Parents are expected to follow the school's arrival and dismissal procedures. Please speak with your family advocate or classroom teacher if you have questions.



Student Health

For the well-being and health of all children and teaching staff, parents are requested to please keep your child home if the following symptoms are evident:

- ☞ Fever
- ☞ Vomiting or diarrhea
- ☞ Signs of a contagious illness

If a child has a health-related issue or needs emergency treatment at school, every effort will be made to contact families. Please be sure parent and emergency contact information is current in the school clinic.

MEDICATION

Your child may develop a health condition that indicates the need to bring prescription medication to school. Only medicine approved by a physician will be administered to children at school (including non-prescription and over the counter medication). All medicine must be in the original container and include the child's name, type and date of prescribed medication, amount, and time of dosage. Medication will only be administered through the front office.

Please contact your school clinic or the Head Start Nursing Supervisor, Robin Buckmaster, at 321-615-9321 or robin.buckmaster@flhealth.gov if you have any questions.

Nutrition Services

Good nutrition is important to a child's growth and development. All Head Start children are offered breakfast, lunch and snack at school every day. Please contact your child's classroom teacher or notify the school district Office of Food and Nutrition immediately if your child has a food allergy. As allowed by USDA regulation, along with a physician's statement, substitutions can be made by the school cafeteria.

Health Services

The health services team will work with your family to assist you in identifying a primary medical and dental home. This will ensure your child is up to date on a schedule of primary preventative care including, but not limited to, physicals, immunizations, vision/hearing screening, lead screening and current dental care.

Your child will develop healthy oral hygiene habits through daily tooth brushing in the classroom and will have the opportunity for an onsite exam.

Parent education in the area of mental health and services, as appropriate, will be offered to all children and families in the Head Start program.

Curriculum, Screening and Assessment

Our ***Ready to Advance (RTA)*** curriculum and daily routines align with:

- Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF)
- BPS School Readiness Goals
- Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards

The integration these learning outcomes, readiness goals, and standards provides a strong foundation for young children to develop positive self-concepts, independence, and a sense of responsibility in an early childhood environment.



Developmental Screening

The ***Ages & Stages (ASQ-3)*** is a developmental screening tool used to guide instruction and to identify young children who may potentially need additional services or further screening. The ASQ is administered by the parent within 45 calendar days of the child's first day of enrollment.

Assessments for Ongoing Monitoring

Our program uses a ***Locally Designed Assessment*** that aligns to the RTA curriculum, the HSELOF and BPS School Readiness goals.

In addition, students participating in VPK are administered the ***Star Early Literacy Assessment*** to gauge performance in early literacy and numeracy skills.

Each assessment is administered three times per year. Results are shared during parent-teacher conferences.

Positive Discipline

Promoting children's social development and establishing a positive learning environment are primary goals of the program. Positive discipline is helping children be successful socially. Throughout the day, children are guided toward using appropriate behavior. Challenging behavior can interfere with a child's learning and development. Teachers will support children by teaching acceptable alternatives to unacceptable behaviors so children can interact positively in the classroom environment.

Children are encouraged to do their own problem solving. Conflict resolution strategies are used to help them develop positive social skills. If a child has difficulty practicing appropriate behaviors, teachers may work with parents and together provide supportive strategies to meet the child's needs.

Parents will have the opportunity to attend training in the program's research-based parenting curriculum.

Parent and Family Engagement

Every family plays an important educational role in the life of their child. Family engagement is valued and strongly encouraged. The education of a child is a shared responsibility between families and schools. When families actively participate in the education of their child, at home or at school, children have a greater chance of positive learning experiences at an early age.

Throughout the school year, families can become actively involved in their child's learning experiences through:

Home Visits

Family Communication Folders

Parent Conferences

Parent Meetings

Parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start program are members of the *Parent Committee*. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the program through volunteering and attending parent meetings. Parent volunteer hours help the Head Start program earn the local funding match required by the federal government. Each parent volunteer hour has a monetary value that can be applied to the Head Start non-federal match funding amount. The "non-federal match" requirement means that the program must raise 20 cents through local sources for every dollar of the grant funding. If every parent volunteers just 4 hours each month, this will help us meet our local match.

i AM IN PRESCHOOL

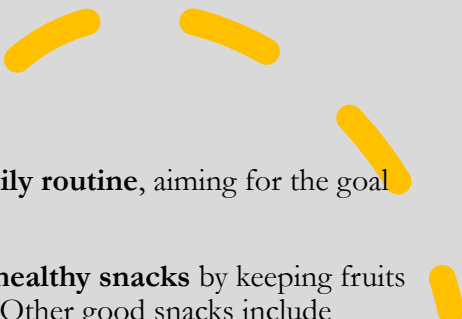
I am not built to
sit still,
keep my hands to myself,
take turns,
be patient,
stand in line,
or keep quiet
all of the time.

I need:
motion,
novelty,
adventure,
and to

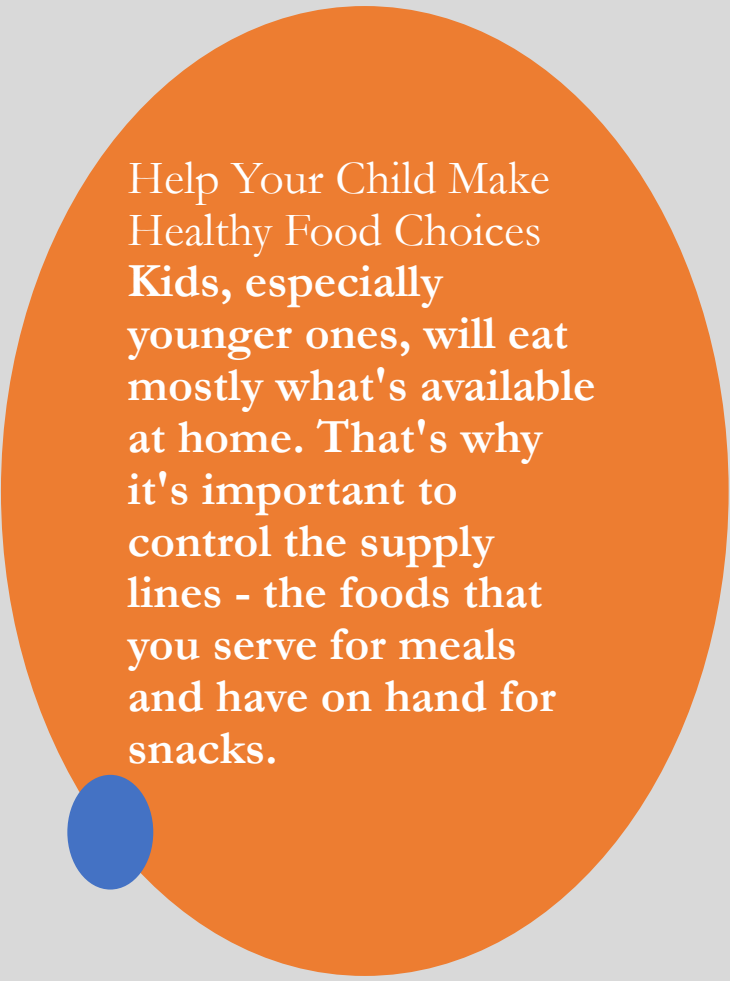
engage the world with my whole body.

LET ME PLAY.

(Trust me, I'm learning!)



Help Your Child Make Healthy Food Choices
Kids, especially younger ones, will eat mostly what's available at home. That's why it's important to control the supply lines - the foods that you serve for meals and have on hand for snacks.





Follow these basic guidelines:

- **Work fruits and vegetables into the daily routine**, aiming for the goal of 5 servings a day.
- **Make it easy for your child to choose healthy snacks** by keeping fruits and vegetables on hand and ready to eat. Other good snacks include yogurt, peanut butter and celery, or whole-grain crackers and cheese.
- **Serve lean meats and other good sources of protein**, such as eggs and nuts.
- **Choose whole-grain breads and cereals** so your child gets more fiber.
- **Limit fat intake by avoiding deep-fried foods and choosing healthier cooking methods, such as broiling, grilling, roasting, and steaming.**
- **Limit fast food and other low-nutrient snacks**, such as chips and candy. But don't completely ban favorite snacks from your home. Instead, make them "once-in-a-while" foods, so your child doesn't feel deprived.
- **Limit sugary drinks**, such as soda and fruit-flavored drinks. Serve water and milk instead.



Head Start Policy Council

Policy Council is a group that works in partnership with the School Board of Brevard County (the governing board) and Head Start staff. Policy Council is made up of community representatives and parents of children enrolled in the Head Start program. At least 51% of the members must be parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start program. Parents are elected each year by the parent committee and serve one-year terms. No parent may serve more than five (5) one-year terms.



One Policy Council representative and one alternate are elected by the parent committee from each of the 12 Head Start sites. The representative elected attends the monthly Policy Council meeting. The representative shares information with the parent committee at monthly meetings. The alternate may attend when the representative is unavailable to attend.



If you are looking for a parent leadership opportunity, click [here](#) to watch a brief informational video.

Standards of Conduct

POLICY

Head Start staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers must implement positive, age-appropriate strategies when managing challenging behaviors and not maltreat or endanger the health and safety of children. The grantee must ensure all staff, consultants and volunteers abide by the standards of conduct.

PROCEDURE

A. These standards specify that staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers will:

1. Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability
2. Use positive methods of child guidance and not engage in corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is defined as physically striking or hitting a child in any manner that is meant as punishment
3. Assure that no child is left alone or unsupervised while under their care
4. Not use isolation or restraint to discipline a child
5. Not bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth
6. Not use or withhold food as a punishment or reward
7. Not use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child
8. Not use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child
9. Not physically abuse a child
10. Not use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family
11. Not use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read Brevard Public Schools Head Start Parent Handbook.

Child Name _____

Parent Signature _____