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HEAD START OF ROCKLAND, INC. **HISTORY & DESCRIPTION**

In 1963, the “I Have A Dream” speech, the loss of a child, a conference on school dropouts, and a storyteller, all inspired the development of a pre-school program in the Nyack community. In 1963, the agency was the Nyack Community Nursery and later changed to the Nyack Community Child Development Center. In 1965, the Nyack Community Child Development Center began providing Head Start services to children and families. In 1993, the agency accepted the challenge to become the Head Start grantee for Rockland County, and as a result the agency was renamed Head Start of Rockland, Inc. Head Start began services in Haverstraw in 1982.

Currently Head Start of Rockland, Inc., operates three direct-run, center-based programs and an Early Head Start Home Based program. Additionally, Head Start of Rockland, Inc., contracts with West Street Child Care Learning Center, to provide Head Start services to eligible children and families. Head Start of Rockland, Inc. also monitors and offers technical assistance to the Delegate Head Start program operated by New Square Community Improvement Council.

“The mission of Head Start of Rockland, Inc. is to provide opportunities for families and children to learn and grow in order to optimize their potential.”

PHILOSOPHY

The Board of Directors, Policy Council, and the staff of Head Start of Rockland, Inc. believe that the potential for successful living for each child can be increased through participation in a comprehensive birth to five program. Our goal is to help each child learn and grow. We can strengthen children's abilities to deal with the present and help to give them what they will need to flourish in the future. Parents are an integral part of our program. All parents want their children to succeed. We offer an opportunity for parents to increase their knowledge. We help eliminate existing or potential barriers to growth, and help to foster pride and confidence in the family as well as the community. We believe that given an appropriate, supportive and enriched environment, each child will find success and growth.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is responsible for leadership in the following areas: guiding, directing, planning and developing policies and procedures, as well as human resource and fiscal management of the agency. The Board of Directors meets monthly. The group is made up of elected community members and parents of currently enrolled children.

POLICY COUNCIL

The policy council partners with the governing body and management staff to develop, review, approve/disapprove policies and procedures for the Head Start program. The Policy Council, which meets monthly, must have two types of members: 1) Elected parent representatives of currently enrolled children and 2) Selected community representatives. The policy council representatives are elected in the fall by parents who attend the first parent group meeting.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS OF PROGRAMS

Early Head Start

Children between the ages of birth to 3 years old and pregnant women may participate. Families must be income eligible and fall within the Head Start income guidelines. This program is designed to give infants/toddlers exposure to educational and socialization activities. Services are provided at one of the center based programs in Nyack or Spring Valley.

Early Head Start Home Based Program

Children between the ages of birth to 2 years - 9 months and pregnant women may participate. Families must be income eligible and fall within the Head Start income guidelines. This program is designed to give infants/toddlers exposure to educational and socialization activities. Services are provided at home, in Haverstraw only. Families attend monthly Socialization activities held at the Haverstraw location.

Head Start Program

Children must be 3 years of age by the public school eligibility date of December 1st. Families must fall within the Head Start income guidelines. This program is designed to prepare children educationally and emotionally for Kindergarten. Children and their family's health, nutrition, education and social needs will be met with the assistance of a nurse, family workers, certified teachers and therapists.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program

A program funded in partnership with local school districts to prepare children for Kindergarten. Children must be 4 years of age by the public School eligibility date (December 1st) and reside in Rockland County.

SUPPLIES PROVIDED BY PARENTS

Parents are required to supply a change of clothes, underclothes, and a blanket, (if in a full day program).

Blankets are to be taken home every Friday for washing by the parents. Parents are required to take home any soiled clothes when necessary.

Children should not wear open toe shoes or sandals.

PLEASE LABEL ALL CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Please be aware that Head Start is not responsible for the loss of any personal items. This includes clothing, jewelry and school supplies. Please expect children's clothing to become messy. We use paint and other art materials, the children also go out to play. Do not dress children in any clothing they cannot "play" in.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Communication is the key to any successful program. If, at any time there is a problem that you may be experiencing within your child's classroom or your child's behavior, please feel free at any time to speak with your child's teacher about anything related to his/her education experience. Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Conferences may also be held at any time during the school year at the request of a parent or a teacher.

Home visits are conducted throughout the year. An initial home visit must be completed between parent and teacher prior to the child's first day of class. This is done to build a relationship with each family and to assist families with any concerns or questions they may have. Family workers also make a home visit during the school year.

PARENT INVOLVMENT, PARENT MEETINGS & SOCIALIZATIONS

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to participate in the program through parent meetings and parent-teacher conferences. You may volunteer on trips and at special events. Parents may also be asked to participate in various workshops. Parents are encouraged to join committees such as health or education advisory team meetings.

Parent Meetings

Meetings are held once a month. These meetings are designed to provide information to parents through monthly workshops. **PARENTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO SUPPORT ALL PARENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS.** Business and activities of the Parent Group Association are discussed.

Socializations

Socializations are held 3 times a month for families enrolled in the Early Head Start Home Base Program.

Head Start's Expectations from Parents

1. Join and become an active member of the Parent Group
2. Bring your child/children to school daily, attendance is key to learning. Please be on time arriving and picking up your child from school.
3. Bring a change of clothes for your child/children with their name inside of the clothes, in case of an accident during the day and blanket for your child if napping.
4. Please check your child's book bag daily for information on up-coming events and notices regarding school activities.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Head Start of Rockland, Inc. has qualified staff to assist all families with any questions, situations or concerns that they may be having during their enrollment in the program. Family Workers are available and able to meet with you anywhere, school, place of employment or your home.

During the school year a Family Worker will conduct a Home visit in your home. You will have the opportunity to seek assistance or ask questions in the comfort of your own home. Family Workers will assist the parents in obtaining services they may need, establish goals and assist them in reaching their goals.

The Parent Group organizes holiday celebrations, workshops, movie nights and other activities to increase and support Parent Involvement and Family gatherings at our center.

Every family is assigned a Family Worker. Please stop by anytime and meet your family worker and see what they can do for you!

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Parking Regulations

Head Start of Rockland, Inc. is not responsible for any parking tickets due to illegal parking. Please read signs carefully, parking is available on the street, please be courteous and do not block other cars. If you are walking to school please utilize the crosswalks.

Withdrawal

Two weeks written notice is requested should a parent elect to withdraw a child for any reason. Such notice will allow the program adequate time to fill the vacancy.

Policy Change

Recommendations for any changes or amendments may be initiated from either the Board of Directors or the Policy Council. Changes or amendments are subject to review by all concerned with the final decision being made by the Board of Directors.

Children Sick Days and Vacations

Please call the program regarding any absences i.e., sick or vacations.

CENTER CLOSING INFORMATION

In order to find out if Head Start is open or closed, you can log on the internet or listen to:

WHUD 100.7 FM

www.whud.com

or

WRCR 1300 AM

www.wrcr.com

or

Recording at the site

Head Start follows the local School District Calendar for openings and closings

A a Calling Post system with an automated message may also be used.



MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Trips

Children frequently go on trips, walking or by school bus. All trips are well supervised. Parents are always welcomed to accompany their child on trips and volunteer as chaperones.

Birthday Parties

Head Start will recognize birthdays for the month with one celebration. We will provide the party cake. No outside food is permitted.

Holiday Parties

Parties commemorating a specific holiday will be initiated by the program. Religious holidays, such as Christmas, Kwanzaa and Chanukah will be used to teach cultural traditions rather than teach any religious beliefs. Parents wishing to participate in these events are always welcomed. For those children who do not observe certain holidays please inform their teacher so other arrangements can be made.



Clothing

Please have a complete change of clothing in school for your child at all times. Children should be dressed in comfortable clothes. Clothes that they can manage to button, unbutton, zipper, put on, take off, etc., on their own.

We go outside everyday weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

Children play and use various art materials daily. Please send your child to school in comfortable clothing. We will not be responsible for clothing lost or stained. We also ask you not to send children to school with jewelry or other expensive items; we will not be responsible for items lost.

Procedures For Arrival & Pick-Up **Of Children**

The operating hours of the program are Monday – Friday.
Please see site for exact hours of your child’s classroom.

Please walk your child to the classroom at all times. Please be on time to pick-up and drop off your child. For the safety of your child, he/she will be released only to persons whose names have been given to us by you as being authorized to pick him/her up.

- No one under 16 years of age will be allowed to pick your child up.
- Your child will not be released to an unauthorized person. Please notify us of any change in authorization.

All parents must sign-in and sign-out their children from their classrooms or at the front office. No parents should leave the program without properly signing your child in and out of the program. Children will not be released to any person who appears to be impaired.

All persons picking up children at the program will be required to show a valid picture ID to person’s in the office.

Children who are not to be picked up by a biological parent due to custody arrangements must have a court order on file that is valid in order for us to enforce. Custody arrangements that are not arranged through a court order cannot be legally enforced.

Late Drop-Off & Late Pick-Up Policy

All classrooms have set a schedule to help the children work on transitioning as well as maintaining a structured classroom. To fully benefit from our program, it is important that all children are here by the **start of class**.

No child will be accepted one hour after their class starts without prior approval. If your child will be late due to a doctor's appointment, pre-planned event, or other **pre-approved activity** you must inform the Family Workers prior to bringing your child to school.

Grievance Procedure For Parent Or Community

In the event a parent comes to a staff member with a complaint, and the staff member and parent are unable to resolve the issues, the next step in resolving the complaint is to direct the parent to the supervisor in charge.

If the parent is still not satisfied, the parent will meet with the Executive Director.

The above policy also applies to a community person who is making a complaint as well.

HEALTH PLAN

Health Care Philosophy

It is the philosophy of Head Start of Rockland, Inc. that good health is a basic necessity for a child's success and happiness. Based on this, we believe in and encourage every effort to provide the children, staff and parents with the support needed to prevent illness and maintain optimum wellness.

Health Services General Objectives

The general objectives of the health services component of the Head Start program are to provide a comprehensive health service program which includes a broad range of medical, dental, mental, health and nutritional services to toddlers and pre-school children, including disabled children, and to assist the child's physical, emotional, cognitive and social development toward the overall goal of social competence.

At Head Start of Rockland, Inc. emphasis is placed on prevention of illness and the promotion of good health practices. Parents choose their own pediatrician and dentist. Family Workers can assist with obtaining health insurance.

The following items are needed before your child may enter Head Start.

- Dental Exam for children 3yrs +
- Medical report completed by physician including immunizations w/stamped address
- Child's Health History Screening approval including height, weight, vision, blood pressure, etc.

Good health care includes periodic assessment of the child's health status and prompt correction of health problems. We accomplish this goal through an in depth health history of each child during enrollment, dental/medical exams and age appropriate screenings. All health forms and screenings are completed and reviewed by the nurse.

Parents are able to request their child to be evaluated or referred if there is a concern. If a problem is discovered during our screenings, it is first discussed with the parent. If the parent then wishes for a referral to be made, we will then complete a referral and ensure the proper services are performed.

Health Education is considered to be a vital factor in the effort to promote good health. Current health topics are brought to parent's attention through newsletters and through parent-health education programs during the school year with topics focused toward preventative health.

At the time of intake, when the Child Health Record is completed with the parent, the names of the child's past health providers are obtained. The family is assisted with any preventative health questions. Both the Health Component and the Family & Community Services Component work together with the parent to obtain health care for the child and his/her family.

Typical Daily Schedule

Typical Classroom Schedule

Arrival

Breakfast

Tooth brushing

Free Play

Clean Up

Circle Time

Small Group Activity

Outdoor Play

Prepare for Lunch

Lunch & Bathroom

Naptime

Snack

Free Play

Outdoor Play

Circle Time

Prepare for Home

Nutrition

Well balanced nutritious meals are served daily. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are offered each day. Menus are provided and approved by a nutritionist. Meals are served family style in the classrooms. The children learn about food and are introduced to the different food groups. They discuss and observe various textures and colors of foods as they measure, pour, sift and taste with conversation. Eating is a pleasurable learning experience. Monthly menus are sent home with the children.

Information is available from the Family and Community Services staff on the Women, Infant and children Program (WIC) and New York State Child Adult Care Food Program (CACPF).

Transportation

Transportation is not provided by our program.

HEALTH

Please do not send your child to school if he/she is sick. It is not fair to the children who are healthy and we are not equipped to care for a sick child. Keep your child home if he/she has fever, diarrhea, vomiting, heavy coughing, thick nasal discharge, swollen glands, ear ache, abdominal pain, or unexplained rash. A child should be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child shows symptoms of illness during the time he/she is in school, the parent/guardian will be notified and arrangements will need to be made for someone to come for your child immediately. Please make sure your emergency numbers are up to date and you have a plan for the care of your child when he/she is ill.

If a child needs medication, parents are asked to have their doctor schedule the dosage for home administration. If this is not feasible the parent may come to school to administer the medication to his/her child. Other plans if necessary regarding medication will be made on an individual basis. Doctor permission for prescribed medicines is needed, when medication is administered at school.

If your child is sick and will not be able to attend school we ask that you call to let us know.

If your child is injured at the school the parent/guardian will be notified and provisions for emergency medical care and first aid will be made.

CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT

Head Start of Rockland, Inc. will ensure the safety of all children enrolled in the program. Any suspicion or knowledge of child abuse and/or neglect will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities for further investigation.

If you suspect any type of abuse, please call the program, and/or appropriate authority.

All staff is required to complete a state central registry clearance form and finger print card.

Parents needing assistance in this area may speak with a family worker or director.

AGENCY DISASTER PLAN

Head Start of Rockland has an agency disaster plan in place. In the event that an immediate evacuation of the building is necessary the children may be taken to an alternate site without parental notification.

This plan is site specific, and is posted in every building and classroom, you should receive a copy. Please become familiar to the “other” location children will be evacuated to. Practice drills are done regularly, as well as bus drills.

Evacuation due to an emergency at the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant. All programs that lie within the 10 mile radius of the Indian Point “Rockland County Emergency Preparedness” will be evacuated to Rockland Community College, College Road, Suffern, N.Y. Please review your “Community Emergency Planning for Indian Point” guide sent by Rockland County to all households.

DISCIPLINE

Head Start of Rockland provides a supportive environment in which children, birth – 5 years, can begin to grow as individuals and as a group.

Knowing what behavior is appropriate or acceptable in a situation is an important skill. Young children develop this understanding when consistent limits and realistic expectations of their behavior are clearly and positively defined. Understanding and following simple rules can help develop self-control. Children feel more secure when they know what is expected of them. Expectations are age and developmentally appropriate.

Various techniques are used for discipline. The following are some used:

- A. Redirecting a child to an alternate activity
- B. Rewarding acceptable behavior
- C. Encouraging children to talk about their feelings
- D. Being a role model, speaking and interacting with children in a positive manner

Corporal punishment is prohibited, as well as cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.