



HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START HOME VISITING PARENT HANDBOOK

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

WELCOME to the Childcare Network of Evanston Head Start/Early Head Start program! You have chosen a program that ensures you and your child receive personalized, high quality early learning and family support services.

We are here to support your relationship with your child and your family. We know that when families are strong and healthy, children are ready to learn.

How can we support you? Our Head Start/Early Head Start program will:

- introduce you to other parents and **build community**
- **identify supports** you and your family may need
- **help you to learn about healthy development** of your child

A positive, warm, and dependable relationship with caretakers is the foundation on which all children grow and learn. We look forward to sharing information about child development and the best ways to help your child succeed in the classroom and beyond! And we look forward to learning from your family, too!

Head Start/Early Head Start is one of several programs we offer that supports children, pregnant parents, their families, and community early childhood programs. We look forward to working together to create healthy communities in Evanston, Glenview, Golf, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, Northbrook, Northfield and Skokie.

Please visit our website for more information:

www.childcarenetworkofevanston.org

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The Purpose of this Handbook

There are several purposes of this handbook:

- Get to know us and how we work
- Help you understand important policies that help us run the programs safely and smoothly

If you have any questions that we did not answer here, please let us know.

ABOUT HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

What is Head Start and Early Head start? Head Start and Early Head Start are:

- **Federally funded programs for expectant parents and young children** birth through age five (Early Head Start for 0-3, Head Start for 3-5)
- **A program focused on school readiness** for children
- **Prenatal education services** that support families through pregnancy and beyond

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START AT CNE

CNE offers multiple program types within Head Start / Early Head Start to best serve your family:

- Home Visiting for pregnant families and children ages Birth-5
- Center based care at Swift Child Care in Skokie for children ages 6 weeks – age 5
- Center based care at the McGaw YMCA program for children ages 3-5

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR HOME VISIT

In our Home Visiting program, you are matched with a Home Visitor (HV) who will meet with you and your child once a week at your home. Visits last for 90-minutes. If you or your HV can't meet in person, we may meet over a video call or phone call. Each virtual visit will be at least 30-45 minutes with follow up as needed. Your HV will inform you if this is an option.

During these visits, your HV will:

- Work with you to plan age-appropriate activities for your child that teach them the skills they need to grow and learn.
- Teach you new skills to use with your child to help them succeed.
- Support you as your child's first teacher.
- Work with you to create and set family goals.
- Share information with you about available resources, community activities, and ways to get involved at CNE.



CURRICULUM & ONGOING ASSESSMENT TOOL

We use the *Parents As Teachers* curriculum that promotes early child development, learning, and health of young children. Another goal of our visits is to also support and create strong relationships with you as parents and caregivers.

In addition, to track your child's developmental milestones, we use Teaching Strategies Gold as our assessment tool. Your HV will share a report of your child's progress 4 times per year.

SUPPORT WE OFFER

Your HV will work with you to identify family goals. They will also share information about community resources you may find helpful, such as food, clothing, counseling, rental assistance, etc.

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

REGULAR PARTICIPATION

Regular participation will help your child grow, stay healthy, and develop. We expect you to participate weekly in the home visits.

If you or your child is ill, please contact your HV **as soon as possible** before the start of your visit.

HOW SICK IS SICK?

Sometimes, you or your child might get sick. In those times, you must tell your HV if your child or you are not feeling well. We must cancel your home visit so that our staff and the other children we work with can stay safe.

We will not have an in-person home visit if you or your child:

- have thick green drainage from their nose
- have yellow discharge from the eyes
- have had a fever of more than 101 degrees in the last 24 hours
- have vomited more than one time in the last 24 hours
- have had diarrhea more than two times in the last 24 hours
- have cuts or openings on the skins that are pus-filled or oozing
- have lice or nits
- have a communicable disease
- have a rash that you don't know the cause of and it has not been treated
- have COVID-19

To start home visits again, you or your child,

- must no longer have symptoms or a fever for at least 24 hours (without taking medication to stop fevers or symptoms)

OR

- must provide a note from the child's doctor stating the child is no longer contagious

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

At the start of the school year, your HV will spend one of your first meetings assessing your child and learning more about them. During these meetings, you and the HV will complete the following questionnaires:

- ASQ-3 (how your child is growing and learning)
- ASQ-SE (how your child manages feelings and emotions)

The results of these tools help us track your child's progress through the program.

PROVIDING FURTHER SUPPORT

These tools also help us determine if your child would benefit from more support. If so, we will refer you for an evaluation to receive additional services depending on your child's need.

Your HV can answer any questions you have about how we assess your child. They will also guide you through the referral process if you decide your child might need extra support. Here are some examples of how children may benefit from extra support.

COMMON TYPES OF SUPPORT	WHAT IT DOES
speech therapy	Helps children with talking, swallowing, etc.
occupational therapy	Helps children with everyday tasks, like using zippers, using sensory materials, etc.
developmental therapy	Helps children engage in activities appropriate for their age
physical therapy	Helps children feel comfortable and strong moving around
social-emotional support	Helps children manage feelings and emotions in a healthy way

FAMILY NIGHTS

Family nights happen twice a month and include a healthy snack or meal. We hope all families, including your children, can attend our Family Nights.

Family Nights provide a chance for children to play with other children their age and for parents to enjoy activities outside of home. Families can meet and build friendships with other families in the program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your HV and CNE's nurse are here to support you with everything from your pregnancy to keeping up to date with your child's well visits and immunizations. They will also talk with you if you have any questions or concerns about any medical issues related to your child.

SUPPORTING YOU THROUGH YOUR PREGNANCY AND BEYOND



Advocating for your child begins during pregnancy! And we want to support you in getting the best health care possible from the very beginning.

Your HV and CNE nurse will work together to provide education about your new baby for the entire family. They will also monitor your prenatal (before you have the baby) and postpartum (after you have the baby) care.

We provide these services for expectant families and newborns at your home or at our agency.

VISITING YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR

You must follow these health guidelines for wellness checks, immunizations, and dental health for your child to attend CNE. Please talk to us if you need help finding resources.

WELLNESS CHECK

Before your child's first home visit, you must provide us with a copy of the child's most recent physical exam signed by the doctor/clinic and by you as the parent. The exam must follow the Illinois Department of Public Health recommendations by age. The physical exam also cannot be more than 6 months old.

We track a variety of things such as height and weight. We also review:

- hearing and vision
- nutrition
- risk of anemia (how blood carries oxygen through the body)
- your child's developmental growth (if your child needs any support in different areas) including language and speech

It is your responsibility as a parent to review the results for your child. You are also responsible for following-up with any necessary referrals or appointments for your child that we or the doctor/clinic recommend. Your HV can help if you have questions.

VACCINES + IMMUNIZATIONS

Vaccines protect children against many illnesses. Before you and your family can attend a family event, your children must have up to date vaccines. This means that they must have all age appropriate vaccines as recommended by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

You must bring in proof of their vaccines/immunization to CNE or give them to your HV.

DENTAL EXAMS

Healthy teeth are very important! Your child must visit the dentist for an exam starting by age 1.

If your child is age 1 or older, you must visit the dentist and provide CNE with a completed School Dental Exam Form before your child's first home visit.

After the first exam, you must take your child for a checkup at least once a year (We recommend every 6 months whenever possible).

Parents must share a copy of this dental exam with your HV and complete all follow-up appointments.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

CNE works closely with a mental health professional who will be available to meet with the family at their scheduled home visit. They are available to work directly with families as needed.

WELLNESS & NUTRITION

All of the meals we serve meet the State of Illinois Food program and USDA guidelines for infant, toddler and preschool nutrition and safety. CNE also works with a nutritionist as needed if there are any concerns such as allergies or other nutrition challenges.

CAR SEAT CONSULTATION

CNE has staff who are Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. Please notify your HV if you need help or advice on buying or installing a car seat or a booster seat.

GETTING INVOLVED WITH CNE

There are many ways that you can get involved:

- Talk with your HV about how to participate in parent committees and/or Policy Council, which are parent involvement groups
- Check out our Book Nook library on the 1st floor — take a book and return it when you are done
- Attend parent meetings and workshops on many topics aimed at parents such as literacy, self-care, budgeting, etc.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS WE OFFER

CNE is proud to partner with community organizations: Bundled Blessings and Cradles to Crayons.

DIAPERS + PULL-UPS

Thanks to our partner, Bundled Blessings, each child enrolled in our Head Start/Early Head Start program receives one pack of 50 diapers and/or a pack of 40 pull-ups monthly, as needed. If you are a pregnant parent in your last trimester, you can request diapers for your newborn baby.

KID PACKS



Thanks to our partnership with Cradles to Crayons, we are able to provide Kid Packs that consist of all sorts of things that kids often need (gently used seasonally-appropriate clothes, books, hygiene kits, school supplies, etc.) to children 12 and younger. Expectant parents can request kid packs to prepare for the arrival of their new baby.

CNE will offer Kid Packs to families 3 times per year. Your HV will work with you to figure out what items you need and they will place the orders.

YOUR CHILD + FAMILY'S RIGHTS

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

All information in your child's HS/EHS file is private. Only appropriate staff at CNE and your child's school may access children's information. We must have written parent permission and informed consent for other agencies or organizations to access your child's information. At intake we ask you to sign a written release of information that allows us to share the information that we need to share.

We will only share records with parents listed on the program application. If there is another parent whose rights have been legally terminated, please provide a copy of the court order terminating these rights so that we are aware. You, and other co-parents, have the right to:

- Review your children's records and challenge inaccurate information
- Know about and attend meetings about your children
- Discuss concerns with your HV or FSS

Paper copies of your child and family records are kept in locked file cabinets in restricted areas. They are kept 1 year after your child transitions out of our program. After that, we destroy them. Additional records are also kept on a secure electronic database.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Illinois. In Illinois, the law requires that most people who work in education, health care, law enforcement and social work report neglect or abuse if they suspect it. These individuals are called **Mandated Reporters**.

If we suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, we at CNE are mandated by law to report it to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) or to a law enforcement agency. We must make a report within 48 hours of the time we learn that a child has been or may be abused or neglected.

Here are some ways we work to prevent and address child abuse and neglect. We:

- Require yearly training for all Head Start/Early Head Start staff
- Raise awareness around issues regarding abuse and neglect including warning signs that a child may be a victim
- Train staff and parents on child abuse prevention strategies
- Train parents about how to get help and support if their child is a victim of abuse or neglect

CODE OF CONDUCT

At CNE, we have a Code of Conduct so that we — parents/guardians, visitors, staff, and anyone else at CNE — all have the same understanding and expectations while at CNE.

We expect parents/guardians, visitors, and staff to have an understanding and commitment to engage in respectful verbal and written communication, as well as, respectful and appropriate behavior at all times.

PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

We hope that all families at CNE are happy with our services, but we respect your opinions about services, policies, and procedures. The following procedures are designed to encourage open, helpful communication, and more importantly protect your rights according to the law.

Friendliness, a problem-solving approach, and working openly together usually solve most problems. If these strategies don't work, we have a system to address your concerns.

IF...	THEN...
You have concerns or questions about your child,	Please start with your Home Visitor. Ask for more explanations, talk over your concerns or questions, and suggest solutions
You have a concern with a Home Visitor,	Please contact the Home Visiting Manager.
You have a concern with another CNE staff person,	Please contact our Director of Programs/Head Start Director who will work with you to find a solution.
You have concern with another parent,	Please contact your Home Visitor.
You have tried the methods above but still have concerns,	We will forward your concerns to our Executive Director.

We will continue to serve your family during this complaint procedure unless you decide otherwise.

THANK YOU AND WELCOME TO CNE!



We are thrilled to have you as a part of our community.

Stay connected with us by following us on Facebook:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChildcareNetworkOfEvanston/>

Instagram: [@childcarenetworkofevanston](https://www.instagram.com/childcarenetworkofevanston)