Home Visit
Parent Handbook



312 North Main Street
P.O. Box 67
Badger, MN 56714

(218) 528-3258

www.nwcaa.org

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WELCOME TO EARLY HEAD START

Northwest Community Action's (NWCA) Head Start program has been serving families in Northwestern Minnesota since 1965. Our Head Start and Early Head Start programs can serve more than 1177/27/20267/27/2026 children annually in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Kittson, and Marshall Counties. Head Start programs throughout Minnesota serve approximately 11,000 families annually, and more than one million children are served nationally.

Northwest Early Head Start is a family-oriented program that provides services to families expecting a child or having children from birth to 3 years old. Information is provided on education, health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, parent involvement, and family services. Parents are the most important influence in their child's life, and parent involvement in all aspects of the program is essential. Your participation is needed for a successful year with Early Head Start.

MISSION STATEMENT

NWCA Head Start assists children in achieving appropriate physical and developmental growth. We also increase self-confidence and expand each child's ability to think, reason, and communicate. Head Start assists parents and families in improving their parenting skills, self-sufficiency, and the conditions in which they live, learn, and work.

HEAD START OFFICE STAFF

Head Start Director – Sara Lee

Education Manager – Crystal Peterson

Assistant Education Manager-Melissa Kostrzewski

Early Head Start Manager- Brittany Carpenter

Health Manager – Jo Christian

Assistant Health Manager – Monica Byre

Family Services Manager – Jackie Stinson

Family Service/IT Support-Aubrey Johnson

Instructional Coach-Emily Kuznia

Office Assistant – Natasha Lee

The Head Start office is open Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you have questions about any aspect of the Head Start Program,
Please call our office at (218) 528-3258 or 1-800-568-5319.
www.nwcaa.org

School Readiness

School Readiness Goal:
Children will have an internal motivation to learn.

School Readiness Objectives:
80% of children will show growth in each indicated measure from Fall to Spring each program year and
82% of children transitioning to kindergarten will meet MNHSA School Readiness target scores indicating Kindergarten Readiness.

Approaches to Learning	Children will persist in tasks. Children will demonstrate initiative and independence. Children will show an interest in and curiosity about the world around them.
Social-Emotional	Children will show an interest in, interact with, and develop personal relationships with other children. Children will show confidence in their own abilities through relationships with others. Children will express confidence in their own skills and positive feelings about self. Children will engage in and maintain positive interactions and relationships with other children.

Language/Literacy	Children initiate non-verbal communication and language to learn and gain information. Children understand and respond to increasingly complex communication and language from others.
Cognition	Children will actively explore people and objects to understand self, others, and objects. Children will ask questions, gather information, and make predictions.
Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development	Children will demonstrate healthy behaviors with increasing independence as part of everyday routines. Children will demonstrate knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.

Parent and Family Engagement
Early Learning Outcome Framework

1. Family Well-Being

Families are safe and healthy. They also have opportunities for educational advancement and economic mobility. NWCA ensures families have access to physical and mental health services, housing and food assistance, and other support services.

2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Beginning with the transition to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's health, development, and learning.

3. Families as Lifelong Educators

Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.

4. Families as Learners

Parents and families learn about their child's personality, development, and learning style. They also advance their own learning interests through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.

5. Family Engagement in Transitions

Parents and families encourage and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments within and between Early Head Start, Head Start, early childhood services, early elementary grades, and beyond.

6. Family Connections to Peers and Community

Parents and families form connections with peers, mentors, and other community members in formal and informal social networks. These networks are supportive and educational. They honor and are inclusive of families' home languages and cultures. They also enhance families' social well-being and community life.

7. Families as Advocates and Leaders

Parents and families advocate for their children and take on leadership roles in Head Start. They participate in decision-making, policy development, and organizing activities in communities and states to improve children's safety, health, development, and learning experiences.

HOME VISITS & SOCIALIZATION INFORMATION

Home Visits:
The Early Head Start experience is conducted through weekly in-home visits with your child and family. We aim to create a warm, caring, and respectful partnership with your family. The following guidelines help to make the best and safest learning environment for you, your child, and the Home Visitor.

- The parent/caregiver will contact their Home Visitor if it is necessary to reschedule the home visit.
- The parent/caregiver will notify their Home Visitor if anyone in the home has a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting. Everyone should be symptom-free 24 hours prior to the home visit.
- The parent/caregiver will participate in the home visit activities with the child and the Home Visitor.
- Adults will keep phone calls/texts, TV, and other outside interruptions and distractions to a minimum.
- Everyone present will be respectful.
- Weapons will be locked or kept in a safe location during the home visit.
- All adults present will be free of the influence of alcohol and non-prescribed mood-altering drugs during the home visit.
- All adults will be fully and appropriately dressed.
- The parent/caregivers will limit the number of non-family members present during the home visit.
- The parent/caregiver will intervene if there is any inappropriate behavior by adults during the home visit.

Home visits may be held at another agreed-upon location if needed for safety or health reasons.

During the first home visit, you and your Home Visitor will schedule a regular day and time for home visits. Each home visit will last approximately 1½ hours. Parent involvement is essential during home visits. You are teaching your child that you value education by being punctual and prepared to participate. During each home visit, you and your Home Visitor will plan for the next home visit. At each Home Visit, your Home Visitor will discuss parenting education topics and other family-driven parenting topics. Each home visit will consist of:

1. Arrivals and Greetings
2. Handwashing & Toothbrushing
3. Follow-up and discussion of activities you and your child have worked on since the last

home visit.
4. Presentation and discussion of new materials and parent-planned activities.
5. Write comments about the home visit.
6. You and your Home Visitor will plan for the next home visit.
7. Review Family Partnership Agreement (FPA): update family goals, request information, and discuss information received.

Early Head Start attendance for Home Visits and Busy Buddies is essential to your child's future school success. **Please let your Home Visitor or the NWCA Office know** if a parent needs to cancel a home visit. Home visits canceled by the Home Visitor will be rescheduled with the family's input before or after the regularly scheduled home visit date. Home visits canceled by the parent will be made up within 7 days following the canceled visit as the home visitor's and the parent's schedule allows. If a family is absent for 2 consecutive home visits or misses 2 or more visits per month or absences are becoming a pattern, then the family will be considered chronically absent. A family that is chronically absent will work with their home visitor to complete an Attendance Support and Success Plan. If multiple attempts have been made to reengage the family and a family chooses not to be available for home visits, they will be considered a drop from the program and replaced by the next eligible child on the waiting list.

Socialization (Busy Buddy Groups):
Group socialization is a crucial component of Early Head Start. The Busy Buddy Group is held approximately twice a month. This is a time for parents to interact with their enrolled child and get to know other parents and children in Early Head Start. Busy Buddy allows you to see how your child interacts with other children. It is also an excellent chance for your child to explore and learn with others.

Parents are responsible for attending and participating. Regular attendance is expected for your child's social and emotional growth.

Attendees will respect the CONFIDENTIALITY of all families. During group activities, please refrain from taking pictures of other children using your personal phone, camera, or other device. Parents may not disclose confidential information they become aware of at Busy Buddies.

Parents may be reimbursed for mileage when transporting their child to Busy Buddies at the current government rate for one round trip to the location each time you and your child attend. When there is a Busy Buddy special event or trip that Early Head Start provides transportation for, mileage will not be reimbursed. When parents attend with their Early Head

Start child, in addition to mileage, any childcare expenses incurred during that time will be reimbursed by NWCA. Childcare is reimbursed at a maximum of $30 per day per child. Any expense over the set amounts is the responsibility of the parent. Reimbursement checks may be combined for parents until the total reimbursement amount due to the parent is $10.00 or more. The completed paperwork must be submitted monthly to be eligible for reimbursement.

EDUCATION INFORMATION

Child Development:
Early Head Start believes that you, the parent, are the most important teacher your child will ever have. You know your child better than anyone else. You know your child's strengths and needs and what interests them most. By working together with your Home Visitor, your child will be given numerous learning opportunities. Home visits and lessons are planned to benefit your child and family best.

Disabilities Services:
The Early Head Start program makes every effort to meet the needs of all enrolled children. Ten percent or more of our enrollers have specific special needs or disabilities.

Sometimes, a referral for further child assessment may be indicated. Parents, Home Visitors, and other Early Head Start staff will work together to determine whether a referral or further evaluation is needed. Early Head Start will collaborate with other agencies, healthcare providers, and families to ensure that a child's needs are met effectively. Early Head Start Staff will make every effort to attend IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) meetings with your local school system to support and advocate for Early Head Start families.

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's development, please discuss them with your Home Visitor or another Early Head Start staff member. All information given to Early Head Start is kept strictly confidential. Information from a child's file is only released with written permission from the parent/guardian.

Developmental Screening:
Each child enrolled in Early Head Start will have a developmental screening called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Either the county nursing services or the Early Head Start Staff will do this screening. Further follow-up and assessment will be completed as needed.

Assessment Tool & Curriculum:
Partners for a Healthy Baby, Frog Street Love & Learn Head Start home-based program, and Creative Curriculum are the curricula used in Early Head Start. These are research-based

programs where parents work together with their Home Visitors to plan and implement strategies. The High Scope COR (Child Observation Record) is an ongoing assessment tool used in Early Head Start to assess your child's developmental progress throughout the year.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Early Head Start's health goal is to involve your family in an ongoing healthcare system.

Medical Services:
Your child is required to have a complete physical examination, including lab work, upon enrollment in the program. Early Head Start physical exams will be completed at screening sites in each area or by your doctor. The physical exam and labs may include hemoglobin/hematocrit, lead screen, blood pressure, pulse, height, weight, immunizations, hearing and vision screening, oral exam, and a nutritional assessment. Prior written approval is needed for all services, including follow-up. You must have the proper forms accompanying your child on all referred visits. Basic expenses for out-of-area referrals may be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis.

Dental Services:
Early Head Start requires children to have an oral health status determination showing they are up to date on an age-appropriate schedule. This involves an oral examination by the home visitor starting with the eruption of the first tooth (around 6 months of age), integrated into routine well-child checks, and tracked within 90 days of program entry.

Immunizations:
Immunizations or documentation of declining immunizations must be updated or completed by the end of our program year. Health Screenings are held throughout the four counties served by NWCA Head Start.

Health Rules at Busy Buddies/Home Visits:
If your child shows signs of illness or has a contagious infection, do not bring them to Busy Buddy Group. Please refer to the "What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick" book. Contact your Home Visitor if anyone in your household is ill or has a contagious infection, and you have a scheduled home visit.

Health Education:
Your child will receive education on dental health, personal hygiene, nutrition, and safety at Busy Buddies, with follow-up visits at home. Health education for parents is provided through workshops and home visits, and a health resource listing is provided for your family.
Please review medical and dental emergency procedures posted at Busy Buddy Group

sites.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

A Mental Health Consultant is available to assist parents and Early Head Start staff with areas of concern. The Consultant is also available for on-site/video consultation at the Badger office. Consultants can train staff and parents, and observe at Busy Buddies upon request. Referrals can be made upon request. The Ages and Stages Social Emotional Questionnaire is our screening tool for each child. If you feel your family would benefit from counseling, please discuss it with your Home Visitor or call the Central Office.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ: S.E.) Screening:
As a part of the developmental screening, you will be asked to complete a social-emotional questionnaire at the Health screening or during one of your first Home Visits. Our agency, in coordination with local school districts and county nursing services, uses this questionnaire to help assess your child's social-emotional development.

Conscious Discipline:
Our program utilizes a social-emotional curriculum called Conscious Discipline. This program is centered on fostering positive interactions, acknowledging and accepting various feelings and learning styles. Conscious Discipline helps us learn how to manage strong emotions positively and constructively, thereby better assisting children and adults in achieving success in all areas.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Nutrition at Home Visits:
Throughout the year, plan to prepare enjoyable and nutritious snacks during home visits. You, your child, and your Home Visitor will work together to make healthy foods. This activity can be a valuable learning experience for your child. While preparing food, you can discuss nutrition, food preparation, the colors, shapes, and textures of different foods, or practice math skills by counting and measuring.

Nutrition at Socialization Sessions (Busy Buddy Groups):
While your child is at Busy Buddy Groups, they will receive nutritious meals and snacks tailored to the needs of infants and toddlers, and family-style eating is encouraged. The meals/snacks served will follow the USDA meal/snack planning standards and will be reviewed by the Health Manager.

Every effort is made to follow doctor-prescribed diets for children at Busy Buddies. If your child has been diagnosed with food allergies or is on a doctor-prescribed diet, be sure to let

your Home Visitor know.

Nutrition Education:
Through the Early Head Start program, a nutrition consultant is available to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have regarding nutrition. The Child Health Manager can also arrange specific presentations on nutrition topics, such as preparing nourishing but inexpensive foods, throughout the year.

PARENT, FAMILY, and COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Parent Involvement:
Early Head Start believes parents are their children's first and most important teachers. You know your child better than anyone else. By working with your Home Visitor, you can be sure your child will have many wonderful learning experiences.

Family Partnership Agreement:
Each family is encouraged to develop a Family Partnership Agreement at the beginning of the program year. Early Head Start staff will assist parents in identifying strengths, setting goals, and seeking out services to address family needs.

Family Outcomes Assessment: The Family Outcomes Assessment is a tool that enables families to identify their needs and measure their growth. Early Head Start uses this program-wide assessment tool to measure our effectiveness in helping enrolled families in community connections, family well-being, parenting skills, and being leaders, educators, and advocates for their child.

Parenting Education:
Conscious Discipline Parenting is a research-based curriculum utilized during Busy Buddy Group and Home Visits.

Child Education:
Frog Street provides a comprehensive continuum of research-based curriculum, which is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework for children from birth to age five.

Parent Meetings/Parent Committees:
These meetings may occur concurrently with EHS Busy Buddy Groups.

- Parents elect a representative and an alternate to the agency's Policy Council.
- The local teacher is responsible for the agenda with input from parents and partnership with local Head Start staff.

- The most recent Policy Council minutes are shared. The local Policy Council representative makes a report and shares local parents' concerns at Policy Council meetings as appropriate.
- Staff will seek parent input to develop and implement program policies, activities, and services that meet the needs of children and families.

Policy Council:
Policy Council consists of Head Start parents from each center site and Early Head Start parents from each county location. Meetings are held monthly to discuss program issues and to make decisions about how the program operates. Each site's parent group may elect one Representative and one Alternate Representative to attend Policy Council meetings. Becoming the Policy Council Representative for your site area requires commitment to attending monthly meetings. Meetings will be held both in person and via Zoom. Parents who are members of the Policy Council are reimbursed for childcare and mileage at the standard rates. Policy Council members also receive a monthly connectivity reimbursement of up to $50.00. A meal will be provided following in-person meetings.

Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee:
Each year, Head Start forms a Health and Mental Health Advisory Committee consisting of area healthcare professionals, Head Start parents, and Head Start staff. This Committee meets twice yearly to review all aspects of Head Start health requirements. Committee Members are reimbursed for mileage and childcare at the standard rates.

Minnesota Head Start Association Parent Affiliate Member:
The Policy Council elects the MNHSA Parent Affiliate Representative. This position is offered out-of-area travel up to 3 times yearly to attend MNHSA Meetings. Reimbursement rates are the same as Policy Council.

Other Parent Activities:
Special events, parent workshops, and other trainings are held annually on topics of interest to Head Start parents. Parents who attend workshops may be reimbursed for mileage at the federal mileage rate and childcare at the Policy Council rate.

In-Kind:
In-kind support is provided by parents and the community to support the Early Head Start program. The Federal Government grants funds to a Community Action Agency, stipulating that the local community contributes 20% of matching funds. In-kind raises these funds.

The following activities qualify as In-Kind contributions:
- Time spent doing teacher-assigned family home activities.
- Time and materials used to make things for the Busy Buddy Group.
- Time spent attending Policy Council Meetings.

You and your Home Visitor will complete an In-Kind sheet for your family each month. Please keep track of the time you spend doing Early Head Start activities with your child. Your Home Visitor will turn this form into the Early Head Start office at the end of each month.

Child Protection:
ACYF Department of Health and Human Services Transmittal Notice 77.1 requires that all Early Head Start program staff report all incidents of suspected abuse and neglect to their local child protective service agency. All NWCA Early Head Start staff are mandated reporters of any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Grievance Procedure:
If a parent or community member feels a staff member has treated them unfairly or disrespectfully, they may implement the following grievance procedure.

1. In writing, present the reason for the incident and its circumstances to the Head Start Director. The Head Start Director will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of action.
2. If Step One fails, the complaint can be sent to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of action.
3. If Step Two is unsuccessful, the complaint can be sent to the chairperson of the Agency's Board of Directors, who will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the parent or community member.

MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect
Any person may report abuse or neglect voluntarily.

If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

a. If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
b. Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services
c. Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to:

County	Social Services	Police Dept.
Roseau	(218) 463-2411	(218) 463-3129
Kittson	(218) 843-2689	(218) 843-3535
Lake of the Woods	(218) 634-2642	(218) 634-1143
Marshall	(218) 745-5124	(218) 745-5411

Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.

d. Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency or local law enforcement:

e. If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call:

i. Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report

a. Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.

b. A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

c. An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with

persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- related policies and procedures were followed;
- the policies and procedures were adequate;
- there is a need for additional staff training;
- the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

- The internal review will be completed by NWCA Head Start Director, with final responsibility with the NWCA Human Resources Coordinator. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, NWCA Executive Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the Internal Review

- The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan

- Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

Staff Training

- The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license
- Holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.
- **The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the childcare program and must be made available upon request.**

Agency Specific Procedure:

- Following a mandated report of abuse or neglect, staff will notify their supervisor of the report, document this in ChildPlus, and submit a copy of the written report to the Family Services Manager for filing. Upon receipt of notification following the report, staff will provide a copy of the notification to the Family Services Manager.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policy
Discrimination Policy

Following Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local agency that administers the program 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 is available in languages other than English.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at ttp://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or 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:

Mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax:
(202) 690-7442; or

Email:
program.intake@usda.gov.
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