

Parent and Child  
Together  
(PACT) for  
West Central Illinois  
  
Center-Based  
Parent Handbook  
  
2022-2023

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**Our Program Philosophy/Values.....**

**PACT BELIEVES.....**

Parents are their children's first and most important teacher.

Parents care about their children and will put forth strong efforts to improve their child's well being.

Parents can and do learn new and better ways of interacting with their children given sufficient information and encouragement.

Resources for health and human services in West Central Illinois are limited and must be delivered without duplication to produce the most effective results.

Involvement of parents and the community in decision-making increases the commitment to the program while enhancing the quality of decision-making.

School Readiness begins with an individualized approach to children's health and safety.

**The mission of Parent and Child Together (PACT) for West Central Illinois is to provide a high quality comprehensive program of education, health, and social services to children and their families, developing life-long learners.**

The PACT program works because we believe that. . . .

**Parents are their child's first and most influential teachers. It is hoped that by working together, parents and staff will be better able to help children make the most of school and life experiences.**

How does PACT do this?

1. **Parent Engagement** through Family Events, Advisory Committees, Parent Committees, Policy Council, and through parent initiated activities, including parents' ideas and interest in their child's development and learning. Although parent participation is not mandatory, we believe it is the single most important factor in determining how much benefit your child will receive from our program.
2. **Education** is designed to meet each child's needs through individualized learning experiences. The curriculum includes developmental screening, ongoing assessment, goal setting, individualized activities, and parent involvement. The pre-school education program is delivered in an informal, child-centered setting, emphasizing learning through play.
3. **Health** emphasizes early recognition of health problems as well as preventive health care. Physical and dental exams, vision and hearing testing, and mental health and nutrition activities are all emphasized in this component.
4. **Social Services** are provided to the families of Head Start children through referrals to appropriate community agencies with support services being provided by PACT staff as needed. Staff assist families to achieve educational goals as well as individual family goals.
5. **Special Services:** At least 10% of PACT's total enrollment is reserved for children with special needs. Provisions are made based on the child's needs and the families' wishes.
6. **Transition/Services** assists parents in becoming their child's advocate as they transition into Early Head Start, from the home or other child care setting, from Early Head Start into Head Start or other setting, and from Head Start to elementary school.

**School Readiness Statement:**

Parent and Child Together (PACT) believes that relationships with families, schools and communities are the foundation for school readiness. Developing those relationships will assist us in creating safe and nurturing experiences which support young children to develop their individual interests, talents and goals to become successful lifelong learners.

**Approaches to Learning**

Children will develop the ability to stay focused, interested and engaged in experiences.

**Social and Emotional Development**

Children will develop social relationships and self-regulation.

**Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development**

Children will understand and maintain safe and healthy practices. Children will achieve control of large and small muscles for movement, balance, self-care and exploration.

**Language and Literacy**

Children will develop the ability to use and understand English and/or home language.

**Cognition**

Children will use logic and reasoning skills to understand math concepts, scientific exploration and their history, culture and environment.

**The children will progress in meeting expectations of the objectives:**

Objectives	Objectives	Objectives	Objectives	Objectives
1b Follows limits and expectations	1a. Manages feelings	4. Demonstrates traveling skills	9a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary	13. Uses classification skills
11a Attends and engages	2a. Forms relationships with adults	7a. Uses fingers and hands	10a. Engages in conversations	20a. Counts
11d Shows curiosity and motivation	2c. Interacts with peers		15a. Notices and discriminates rhyme	20b. Quantifies
			16a. Identifies and names letters	21b. Understanding shapes
			18a. Interacts during reading experiences, book conversations, and text reflections	
			19a. Writes name	

School Readiness Statement:

Parent and Child Together (PACT) believes that relationships with families, schools and communities are the foundation for school readiness. Developing those relationships will assist us in creating safe and nurturing experiences which support young children to develop their individual interests, talents and goals to become successful lifelong learners.

**Family Well Being**

Families will understand and maintain safe and healthy practices, and meet basic economic needs.

**Positive Parent Child Relationships**

Families will understand the elements of positive relationships and have the ability to identify and address the challenges of parenting.

**Families as Life Long Educators Family Engagement in Transitions**

Families will see themselves as their child's first and most important teacher.

**Families as Learners**

Families will identify their strengths and address their needs to support their parenting, career and life goals.

**Family Connections to Peers and Community**

Families will engage with social and service networks to achieve personal growth and enhance community life.

**Families as Advocates and Leaders**

Families will develop and utilize decision making and leadership skills within program, community and state to support children's well being.

**Family Objectives**

Families complete and return weekly goal chart.

Families ensure their child has good attendance.

Families read to their child daily.

**Family Objectives**

Families attend 25% of socializations.

## **MY RIGHTS AS A PACT PARENT**

1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and the operation of the program.
2. To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for me and my family.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom.
4. To choose whether or not I participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start.
6. To always be treated with respect and dignity.
7. To expect guidance for my child from the teachers and staff, which will help his/her total individual development.
8. To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
9. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skill in areas of possible employment.
10. To be informed of community resources concerned with health, education & improvement of family life.

## **MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PACT PARENT**

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
2. To accept the program as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives.
3. To take part as an observer, a volunteer, or a paid employee, and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program.
4. To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parents, and to encourage their full participation.
5. To welcome Teachers and Staff into my home to discuss ways in which Parents can help their children's development at home in relation to school experiences.
6. To work with the Teacher, Staff, and other Parents in a cooperative way.
7. To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
8. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism, and to share in evaluating it.
9. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education, and recreation.
11. To teach my child to show proper respect and correct language to use in the classroom.

## **PARENT COMPLAINTS**

PACT Policy Council has established the following procedures to govern the hearing and resolving of parent complaints regarding the PACT Program.

- Step 1: Parent complaints should be remitted to the Teacher currently working with the family and at the Center level. If the complaint is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, parent proceeds to Step 2.
- Step 2: Parent should submit complaint by contacting the Executive Director. Parents should receive a response within a week. If complaint is not resolved to parent's satisfaction, complaint proceeds to Step 3.
- Step 3: Parent complaint (dated and in writing) will be remitted to Policy Council for consideration and resolution. Parent will be notified as to when the committee will consider the complaint and given sufficient opportunity to be present. Complaint will include written documentation of steps taken by staff to resolve complaint prior to Step 3.

## **HOW PARENTS CAN PARTICIPATE IN PACT FOR WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS**

Statistics have shown that children who have experienced the Head Start Program have a greater opportunity for lifelong success. It is also known that parental engagement increases the chance for success even more. We offer many avenues for Parent Engagement:

- ✿ Be actively involved in Home Visits and planning goals and activities for children
- ✿ Achieve skills in decision making, group processes, and leadership
- ✿ Join Parent Committees, Policy Council and School Readiness Team
- ✿ Volunteer in the classroom
- ✿ Apply for a job with PACT
- ✿ Work together with other parents on community problems
- ✿ Do volunteer work at the PACT office or Center Based site
- ✿ Attend Family Events
- ✿ Make materials for teaching the children

### **PARENT COMMITTEES**

Parent committees are made up of representatives from groups of currently enrolled parents from each program option. Responsibilities of the parent committee include:

- Planning and carrying out program activities & Family Events
- Communication with the Policy Council representative at the committee meetings
- Advise staff in implementing policies/activities.
- Attending planned activities & encouraging other families to participate

### **POLICY COUNCIL**

The Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the PACT program. Policy Council is made up of parents that are elected to represent each Head Start parent group. Any major decisions made by management staff at PACT are subject to input from this group of parents and often the Policy Council group must approve those decisions before they can be implemented.

Parents who are elected to Policy Council must attend meetings once a month in Mt. Sterling, or join by conference call. PACT will reimburse parents for mileage and babysitting costs at a rate determined by PACT policies.

Being a Policy Council representative can be a great experience. Members have the opportunity to attend conferences. They learn how a Board or Council operates. The parents on the Council have time to share information and ideas with other parents. All parents have an opportunity to hear Policy Council information from the Policy Council representative at Family Events.

### **SCHOOL READINESS TEAM**

The School Readiness Team members are selected from the eight county service areas served by PACT. The School Readiness Team is responsible for reviewing child outcomes, the annual self-assessment education findings, the federal review team education findings, etc. The School Readiness Team will advise and recommend program changes to the education coordinators. All Policy Council Members are invited to join these meetings. If any parents are interested in joining the School Readiness Team please contact Elizabeth Adler, Center Based Education Coordinator at [eadler@pactheadstart.com](mailto:eadler@pactheadstart.com) or Millie Young, Home Based Education Coordinator at [myoung@pactheadstart.com](mailto:myoung@pactheadstart.com) .

## **HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The committee meets once each year to evaluate services, identify and plan for screening of community health problems, and help plan and advise in areas of difficulty. All Policy Council Members are invited to join these meetings.

## **CENTER BASED INKIND CONTRIBUTIONS:**

The PACT program operates through the support of federal and state funds. In addition, PACT must match certain funds by obtaining inkind contributions from parents and members of the community to show their support of the program. Inkind contributions are services, time, mileage, supplies, etc., donated by parents and the community.

PACT must match 20% of the Grant with INKIND. We cannot meet that match without parents contributing weekly. The time you spend in face to face intentional teaching with your child is INKIND for PACT. Parents are encouraged to use the Weekly Goal Chart/Inkind Record to document time spent teaching their child during the week. Please complete these weekly and return to your child's Teacher.

Parents can contribute Inkind Hours through a variety of other means.

**Program Funding:** The Head Start Program is funded by a **Federal** grant from the Department of Health and Human Services and inkind contributions from families, civic organizations, and other community resources.

## **ABSENCES AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE FOR CENTER BASED CLASSROOMS**

It is important for your child's development as well as essential to the overall operation of the program that your child attends school regularly and on time. Children are encouraged to miss no more than 10% of class days throughout the year.

**Parents must call the Teacher when the child is absent.** If your child has to miss a class, please notify us as soon as possible by calling your child's center.

Reasons for missed classes are recorded. **Anytime a child is absent and a parent has not contacted the program, PACT staff are required to contact the parents.** This communication will be made via phone call or a text message sent using the ChildPlus computer system.

PACT's attendance policy and Head Start standards require that staff follow up with families when children miss class days, regardless of reason.

## **CERTIFIED COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE**

**Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent or guardian must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child. PACT is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30-day time frame.**

## **CHILD PICTURE POLICY**

Parents/families who take pictures of their children at PACT activities may not post any pictures that include other children on any social site such as Face Book, My Space, etc., May not post them anywhere on the internet or send them via email to anyone else. It is very important to respect the safety and privacy of all families in the program. Anyone who violates this policy will not be allowed to take pictures at PACT activities in the future.

## **CELL PHONE POLICY**

All personal cell phones must be set on vibrate while in PACT facilities or during PACT activities/work hours and adults will refrain from using them when with children. This policy includes cell phones belonging to staff, volunteers, substitutes and parents.

## **SECURITY SYSTEM**

PACT centers are equipped with a security system that requires each person to enter a 4 digit pin and scan a security card in order to gain entry into the center. Each family is offered 2 cards at the beginning of the year and asked to return these cards at the end of the year. Only the person assigned the security card is authorized to use that card and pin. Any person without a pin and security card will have to be buzzed in by staff who monitor each person's entry through the use of security cameras.

## **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE POLICY**

Video surveillance is implemented in PACT classrooms, at entrances to the centers, and on the buses to provide a safe and secure environment for children, staff and parents.

Video surveillance cameras are not used in areas where children and staff would have an expectation of privacy, such as the restrooms.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICIES:**

Children must be escorted into the classroom by an adult and see that he/she is under the supervision of his/her Teacher before they leave the premises. The parent or guardian must tell the staff member that the child is present and sign the child in on the iPad. No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.

PACT must have written permission in order to release a child to someone other than a parent or guardian. The children are released only to adults (18 and older) authorized on the release form. **WE WILL NOT RELEASE YOUR CHILD TO SOMEONE WE'VE NEVER MET WITHOUT A PHOTO ID.**

## **CHILD CARE SERVICES-BEFORE AND AFTER CARE**

At centers where Early Head Start or Full Day Head Start services are operated, PACT provides before and after school child care for parents who may be working or in school outside of the regular hours of operation. There is a weekly charge for this service. Families can choose to complete a DHS Subsidized Child Care Assistance Application or pay for services privately.

Camp Point Center-services are offered from 7:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. for EHS families.

Macomb Center-services are offered from 7:00 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. for the Full Day HS classroom (CB8) and EHS classrooms.

Pittsfield Center-services are offered from 7:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. for the Full Day HS Classroom (CB2) and EHS classrooms.

## **LATE PICK-UP PROCEDURE**

When a parent or guardian is late picking up his or her child from the classroom, the child will remain at the center. The Teacher or Site Supervisor will use the child's emergency numbers listed on the *Emergency Care* form to contact the names listed on the *Release of Children* form. If the parent or authorized persons cannot be reached, the child will be made as comfortable as possible. The late pick-up concerns will not be discussed with the child or in front of the child.

Staff will make every attempt to reach the parent, guardian, or authorized persons until the last staff is scheduled to leave. Attempts will be made every 15 minutes to contact the parents, guardian or authorized persons listed on the *Release of Children* form. Staff will contact the legal authorities when the parent, guardian, or authorized persons cannot be located or contacted and it is time for the last staff to leave (4:30-6:00 pm). The closing staff or site supervisor will supervise the child until the parent or outside authorities arrive.

## **INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN**

PACT carries general liability and student risk insurance for students during program operation times.

## **FIREARMS/WEAPONS POLICY**

PACT employees and contractual workers, while in pay status and/or on PACT property or at PACT sponsored activities, are prohibited from introducing, possessing, using, buying, or selling unauthorized weapons, firearms, ammunitions, explosives, or items deemed by PACT management to be dangerous.

## **PARENT/VISITOR POLICY**

PACT parents and visitors, while on PACT property or at PACT sponsored activities, are prohibited from possessing unauthorized firearms or other weapons. Unauthorized means any weapon, even if the owner has a legal state permit to carry the weapon. The following exception applies:

- a. A firearm in the possession of a law enforcement officer on duty who is authorized to possess the firearm by the employing law enforcement agency.
- b. PACT requests officers who are visiting classrooms for the purpose of safety education to refrain from bringing their weapons into the buildings.

## **SOLICITATION POLICY**

Parents are asked not to solicit funds, supplies, or anything of value from local businesses and/or the community for use by participants of the program. Questions regarding solicitation should be directed to Shanna Edison, PACT Executive Director.

## **FUND RAISING**

Parents and staff are not allowed to fund raise for PACT Head Start.

## **GIFTS**

Employees of PACT may not receive any gifts, money, or other gratuities from persons receiving benefits or services except under the following circumstances:

1. The gift is from an enrolled family and of nominal value.
2. The gift must be reported to the Supervisor.

## **PET POLICY**

### **Animals in the Classroom-DCFS**

Pets or **visiting animals** must have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

## **HEAD START PHILOSOPHY REGARDING GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

The focus of Parent and Child Together (PACT) for Western Central Illinois is on meeting the needs of children and families in ways that reflect the principles of child and family development. This focus is based on a belief that both the early childhood environment and the staff must provide and reinforce limits and realistic expectations that are consistent, clear and positively defined. The philosophy for guidance and discipline in the agency is based on the belief that children develop self- or inner-control by being given opportunities to learn, understand and follow simple rules.

Children are most secure when they know what is expected of them and when the expectations take into account each child's needs and strengths. Just as children need the security of being loved, they also need secure boundaries and limits that are geared toward the development of self-respect, healthy interpersonal relationships, skills in problem solving and ultimately the ability to make wise decisions for themselves.

The ultimate goal of PACT's Guidance and Discipline Policy is to promote basic human values, such as respect,

trust, honesty and caring for others. Every effort is made to provide the child with the type of learning environment which leads to development of inner controls and positive self-discipline.

When challenging behavior occurs, the child will be disciplined appropriately, in a positive manner, to ensure the safety of others. If an unruly child endangers others, the adult will make accommodations for the child away from the group while the child works to regain their composure. Teachers will document challenging behaviors to determine if there are any patterns or daily triggers. In case of severe behavior, the child may be temporarily withdrawn from class until a Family Support Plan meeting can be held.

**NOTE: The following behaviors are prohibited:**

- Corporal punishment- includes hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear.
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, outdoor play, or use of the bathroom.
- Abusive or profane language.
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information shared with PACT staff is confidential. A signed release from parents must be obtained before sharing or discussing information with other agencies.

PACT has entered into a written agreement with the Illinois Head Start Association and University of Illinois, Center for Prevention Research and Development, to gather and summarize child outcomes and family outcomes data for Head Start programs in our state. After the data is matched to child, family, and teacher, it is scrubbed of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and then gathered and analyzed. No PII is reported.

**SMOKING POLICY**

**Smoking is prohibited on property owned, leased, or utilized by Parent and Child Together (PACT) for West Central IL. This includes both indoor and outdoor premises, including parking areas. PACT staff or parents who smoke must do so off of PACT leased/owned property and out of children's view.**

**Smoking on Home Visits**

PACT encourages an open dialogue between the parent and staff member regarding the use of tobacco on home visits. PACT does encourage parents to refrain from smoking on home visits, however PACT does not feel that it can mandate that parents not be allowed to smoke in their own homes if they so desire. PACT staff will provide parent education on the effects of secondhand smoke on young children.

**DROP IN POLICY (OPEN DOOR POLICY)**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to drop in at any time to observe their child participating in program activities. Parents are welcome to come everyday. Upon entering the premises, please report to the site supervisor's office to pick up a name badge.

**WEATHER CLOSINGS**

If the Pittsfield School District, Beardstown School District, Camp Point Central School District, Carthage School District, or Macomb School District cancels school, the **transportation** for part-day Head Start classes in that area will also be canceled. Classrooms will remain open. Parents will need to transport their children to and from the center if they want to attend class that day. Parents should listen to local radio stations to hear the public school closings.

**HS/EHS IN-SERVICE TRAINING SCHEDULE**

All classrooms will be closed to allow all staff to attend monthly staff meetings.

September 23  
January 27

October 21  
February 17

November 18  
March 17

December 16  
April 28

May 19

**HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

The following Holidays are observed by the PACT Program and there will be no classes or home visits on these days:

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| New Year's Day                              | Independence Day    |
| Martin Luther King’s Birthday               | Labor Day           |
| President’s Day                             | Columbus Day        |
| Spring Break (Good Friday and Monday after) | Thanksgiving Day    |
| Memorial Day                                | Thanksgiving Friday |
| Juneteenth                                  | Christmas Eve       |
|   | Christmas Day       |

Holidays which fall on Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays which fall on Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

WINTER BREAK: From December 19, 2022 – January 2, 2023, is considered Winter Break and the PACT Program will not be in operation.

**LEAD IN WATER TESTING INFORMATION**

All centers constructed on or before January 1, 2000, are required to test all drinking water sources: kitchen and bathroom faucets, water fountains and bubblers, handwashing sinks in infant and toddler rooms. Testing is required to be conducted by an IEPA approved laboratory.

For any test results of 2.01 ppb or above a mitigation plan should be made available. The test results are posted for your viewing, in the center, next to the center’s DCFS License.

**The below chart is a summary of Lead in Drinking Water Testing done at all PACT Centers**

CENTER	YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
BEARDSTOWN	1980	<b>10/15/18 TESTING</b> 2A-MEN’S BATHROOM-4.73 3A-HOME BASED OFFICE SINK-3.63 3B-HOME BASED OFFICE SINK-2.65 <b>11/6/18 RETEST</b> ALL LEAD CONCENTRATIONS OF SOURCES TESTED ARE LESS THAN 2 PPB.
CAMP POINT	2002	N/A- BUILT AFTER 2000
MACOMB	1977	ALL LEAD CONCENTRATIONS OF SOURCES TESTED ARE LESS THAN 2 PPB.
PITTSFIELD	1978	ALL LEAD CONCENTRATIONS OF SOURCES TESTED ARE LESS THAN 2 PPB.

**BEARDSTOWN CENTER MITIGATION PLAN**

The Beardstown center has a mitigation plan due to the testing results being higher than the 2.01PPB during the

first lead testing on 10/15/18. The sinks that tested out of range during the first testing were the men's bathroom in hallway and two sinks in the home-based office room. A second testing was completed on 11/6/18, and the levels were below the measurable threshold of 2PPB. None of the sinks that tested out of range were/are used for food preparation, tooth brushing, or filling jugs for drinking water.

### **PROGRAM TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is provided on a daily basis to children attending the Center Based part day/extended day programs. Children enrolled in Full-Day classrooms do not receive transportation services unless the families express a need, if the pick-up point is on the scheduled route, and there is room on the bus.

The Transportation Coordinator must approve requests for Full Day Transportation in writing before the Child can be added to the route. Children enrolled in EHS Center Based do not receive bus transportation.

In order for us to run the bus in a timely manner, changes to your child's pick-up and drop-off points will be limited. If you need to change the location of your child's pick-up or drop-off point you must receive approval from the Transportation Coordinator or Director prior to the change taking place. PACT prefers the request to be done in writing with parent's signature 1 week prior when possible. Please talk to the Site Supervisor and your child's bus driver once approval of changes are received. If your child rides the bus, please review the bus rules on the back of the Pedestrian Safety handout you received on the intake visit from your Family Advocate. If your child is sick or not riding the bus please call your child's teacher and tell them why your child is absent.

\*If changes in your family situation occur (i.e. moving, change of baby-sitter, etc.), after the route has been established, it may not be possible for the bus to continue transporting your child.

\*Buses may not be able to pick up a child at their door if there is a safety risk or time factor. The Site Supervisor and bus driver will work with the parent to make safe arrangements to establish a pick-up point.

### **HEAD START TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES**

All transportation for program activities must be conducted according to the following guidelines: Please have your child ready 5-10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Pick-up time will be approximately the same time each day. When possible, parents will be notified of changes. The driver will wait one minute after arriving at the pick-up point.

1. All riders, including parents, children, the bus driver, and the bus monitor are required to wear seat belts or approved child restraint system while being transported on the bus.
2. Parents, or another adult, should accompany each child **TO** and **FROM** the bus. This prevents accidents while boarding and unboarding. Encourage your child to always walk, not run and to hold onto the hand rail when getting on or off the bus. When exiting the bus move away from the bus, towards the house, never stop to pick up something that has blown under the bus or on the ground in front of or behind the bus.
3. If your child must cross the street to get from the bus to your home, you must meet your child at the bus door and accompany him/her across the street.
4. **Eating and drinking on the bus is not allowed. Do not send food with your child.**
5. Pets are not allowed on the bus unless previous permission has been given by the Director.
6. When returning home, your child may only be released to a parent or guardian, or another adult designated in writing by the parent on the *Release of Children form*. Persons not known by the driver must identify themselves with picture identification prior to the child's release to them.
7. The driver may not leave the bus unattended at any time while passengers are on board.
8. Because the driver has the safety of your child uppermost in his/her mind, please avoid any unnecessary conversation with the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
9. Use inside voices and no talking at railroad crossings.
10. All medications need to be given to the bus driver or monitor. The driver will place it in a box out of reach of children.

### **HEAD START CENTER BASED PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The Creative Curriculum 6<sup>th</sup> Edition is the curriculum used in Head Start rooms. The comprehensive curriculum applies theory and research to everyday practices, giving our teachers a road map for teaching.

### **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

DIAL-4, which stands for Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, is an individually administered screening tool. It is designed to identify young children in need of further diagnostic assessment.

The DIAL-4 will be administered to preschool children with parent/guardian permission. The DIAL-4 will allow us to make one of **two statements** about each child we screen: The child has potential developmental problems or the child appears to be developmentally OK for his or her age.

### **EARLY HEAD START INFANT/ TODDLER CURRICULUM**

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddler, and Twos, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition is a research-based curriculum used in our Early Head Start classrooms. The Creative Curriculum helps teachers to be intentional about the experiences they offer infants, toddlers, and twos while still having the flexibility to respond to the changing interests and abilities of young children.

### **INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND TWO YEAR OLDS DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING**

#### **ASQ-3 – Ages and Stages Questionnaire**

The Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3): A Child–Monitoring System, Third Edition is the screening tool used with children enrolled in the Early Head Start program. The ASQ-3 screens children systematically over time.

### **ONGOING ASSESSMENT - Early Head Start & Head Start**

*Teaching Strategies GOLD™* is an authentic, observational assessment system for children from Birth through Kindergarten. It is designed to help teachers to know children well- what they know and can do, and their strengths, needs, and interests. With this information, teachers can guide children’s learning by planning engaging experiences that are responsive to individual and group needs.

### **WHAT IS MyTeachingStrategies® FAMILY?**

MyTeachingStrategies® Family is an online family portal and mobile app that gives families another connection to their child’s classroom. Through MyTeachingStrategies® Family, teachers can share documentation, weekly plans, reports, activities, and more. Your child’s teacher will discuss this with you during the first Education Home Visit at the beginning of the year. Teachers will be asking for your email address to send an invite to you to use MyTeachingStrategies Family. You can also use this App to communicate with your child’s teacher for any reason, such as attendance, illness, etc.

Siblings can be in the classroom under the following special circumstances:

- a. The parent understands our insurance covers only the enrolled child
- b. During arrival, departure, and introductions
- c. There is a special activity planned to include everyone

## **CLASSROOM RULES – PRESCHOOL AND EARLY HEAD START**

PACT has developed a universally accepted set of rules for behavior expected of the children in classroom settings. The Teacher has some flexibility in the interpretation of these rules but they are generally the same in any classroom. In order to implement these rules for young children and be age appropriate, these rules are role modeled by the teachers.

### **The Program-Wide Rules are:**

- We take care of our room and materials
- We keep our hands and feet to ourselves
- We are nice to everyone
- We keep each other safe and healthy

## **DIAPERS FOR EARLY HEAD START**

Early Head Start classrooms will provide diapers, pull-ups, and wipes for your child. PACT will purchase one brand of diapers, pull-ups, and wipes.

## **NAPPING**

DCFS requires that all children 6 years and under rest daily. It is not required that they sleep during the quiet time, but it is necessary that they rest quietly for at least 45 minutes in order not to disturb others who need to sleep.

## **HEAD START – 3-5 RESTING**

Your child will have his own cot and sheet to lie on. Parents may bring a thin child sized blanket for their child to use at naptime.

## **EHS – 0-3 NAPPING AND SLEEPING**

To minimize the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, children in cribs will be placed on their backs when put down to sleep. Soft bedding/blankets and toys are not permitted in cribs. When the infant cannot rest or sleep on his or her back due to a disability or illness, PACT will ask for written instructions, signed by a physician, detailing an alternative safe sleep position or special sleeping arrangements for the infant.

## **PROCEDURE FOR PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### **Cubbies- HS and EHS**

Your child will have a “cubby” in which to keep his/her things in. This includes a shelf for going home papers and a hook for your child’s outerwear. Please check your child’s “cubby” each day for going home papers.

## **TOYS FROM HOME- HS AND EHS**

Other than security items, we ask that you leave your child’s toys at home. We have toys at the center and would not want your child’s personal items to be lost. We do not permit toy guns or toy weapons of any type into the center. If there is a book or a CD that your child would like to share, please feel free to discuss this with the Teacher. We are not responsible for lost or broken toys.

## **HOW TO DRESS- HS AND EHS**

Children should dress in comfortable and washable play clothes which allow for self-dressing. We prefer a child to wear tennis shoes with socks or other soft-soled shoes suitable for running and climbing. Boots, jelly shoes, flip flops, and dress shoes with slick soles are extremely dangerous and not recommended.

Your child will spend time exploring outdoors daily. Please make sure your child is dressed for outdoor play every day.

If your child needs to stay especially clean for a special event, please send extra clothes and the teacher will see that your child is ready when picked up. We do not want to restrict a child from activities because of clothing.

### **CHANGE OF CLOTHES- HS AND EHS**

Please bring a change of clothes for your child for both summer and winter. For children who are not completely toilet trained, send two complete changes of clothes. All clothing should be marked with the child's name. These clothes will be kept in your child's cubby.

### **FIELD TRIPS-** for Preschool

Field trips are scheduled by your child's teacher and parents are encouraged to participate.

Your child will not be able to go on a field trip without a signed Field Trip Permission Form. The Field Trip Permission Forms are backpacked home. Please check your child's backpack daily.

### **HOLIDAYS/CELEBRATION EVENTS**

When celebrating Holidays or special events, PACT staff will limit the activities to a one-day celebration. Guidelines will be followed so that holidays and celebrations do not overtake the importance of the *Creative Curriculum*. PACT will strive to validate everyone and not exclude anyone. No one holiday will be portrayed as more important than any other. If parents wish to send items to school for celebrations, they must be **non-food items** (pencils, stickers, crayons).

### **DISABILITIES SERVICES**

PACT tries to ensure that children who have special needs receive the full benefit of all components offered. The Disabilities/Mental Health Services Coordinator is available to help locate resources, make referrals for evaluations, and access professionals. The Disabilities/Mental Health Coordinator can also help facilitate communication between families and providers, and can attend meetings related to your child's special needs. We are also here to help you learn to advocate for yourself.

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mental Health is a state of well-being. It is the ability to meet the ordinary demands of every-day life, and it is the ability to cope with normal stresses which life presents. This is true for both children and adults.

This could include sadness, frustration, children's behavioral problems, substance abuse, family relationships, and many other conditions which make life less enjoyable.

PACT has a Mental Health Services Consultant observe every classroom and socialization at least once through the year to observe all of the children and their interactions with staff and other children. The Consultant will be watching for signs of behavior which is not typical for the age of the child. If our consultant notices anything of concern, it will be discussed with your teacher. Our Consultant is also available during a family crisis. A parent may contact her Teacher or Family Advocate, and they will help you arrange a phone or personal consultation.

For children who require a Behavioral Plan to help him /her to be more productive in the classroom, the consultant may attend and the parent is offered private discussion with the consultant after the meeting if they wish. Our consultants also present a workshop at every center which involves parents in discussion of what is typical for children's behavior and emotional state.

Parents should feel free to contact staff at the centers, in the field, or at the central office if they have a concern or issue. As with all components of PACT, parents can be certain that any information discussed with staff or our consultant will remain confidential.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

The PACT Program believes that in order for a family to receive the most benefit from an educational program, the family's basic needs must first be met. It is unrealistic to expect a parent to be able to focus on their child if they are concerned about food, clothing, shelter, etc. PACT will provide social services within the scope of its knowledge, resources and expertise. Where needs exist that are beyond that scope, families will be referred to appropriate available agencies.

All information shared with staff by families is confidential and will not be released to other agencies without signed permission from the parent.

## HEALTH

### *School Readiness Begins with Health!*

### NUTRITION

All meals will meet the CACFP/USDA Guidelines.

Because of nutrition, safety of foods being served, and a variety of regulations, **PACT prohibits parents from providing any food items** at PACT sponsored activities, on or off-site.

### HEALTH SERVICES

All enrolled children are required to be medically screened following an age appropriate schedule utilized by the EPSDT program of the Illinois Medicaid Program and by recommendation of your child's health care provider.

Due to DCFS regulations, children will be excluded from attending class if physical exam, current immunizations, TB test or Doctor sign-off, and blood lead level test are not on file at enrollment.

### PROCEDURES FOR MEDICATIONS

If your child must take a prescribed medication during class time, a medication form must be completed. You will need to see your teacher for this form and bring the medication to the classroom teacher. Non-prescribed medications (including topical ointments) must have a signed statement from the physician along with the medication form.