Onslow County Preschool Program

Parent & Family Handbook

2024-2025

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*Preparing children for a positive school experience through a high-quality prekindergarten program, where children can learn, grow, explore and discover.*

# Vision

Excellence in Serving Families and Educating Children

# Mission

To ensure that preschool age children are “school ready” as they transition to kindergarten, thus enhancing the opportunity for a successful school career.

**Onslow County Schools Preschool Program**

**Site Locations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dixon Elementary School  (910)327-2104 | Southwest Elementary School  (910)347-0900 |
| Hunters Creek Elementary School  (910)353-4443 | Summersill Elementary School  (910)455-2673 |
| Morton Elementary School  (910)353-0930 | Thompson Early Childhood Center  (910)346-6222 |
| Queens Creek Elementary School |  |

(910)326-5115

Teacher will provide parents with his/her classroom phone number and the name of the school administrator.

**Preschool Support Staff**

(Offices located at Thompson Early Childhood Center, 440 College St. Jacksonville)

**Telephone: 455-2211 (see extension below)**

**Staff Email addresses are** FirstName.LastName@onslow.k12.nc.us

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Luisa Davis | Director of Early Childhood Initiatives & Head Start Director | 21001 |
| Katherine (Kate) Ray | Assistant Director Early Childhood Initiatives | 21002 |
| Melinda Watkins | Preschool Coordinator | 21007 |
| Najah Martin | Preschool Office Intake | 21013  455-5530 |
| Trystyn Kent-Orr | Preschool Office Intake | 21004 |
| Lindsay Kester | Receptionist | 21000  346-6222 |
| Hannah Bradshaw | NC Pre-K Coordinator/Childcare licensing | 21027 |
| Patricia (Patty) Spikes | Data Manager | 21005 |
| Lois Stevens | Exceptional Children’s Preschool Coordinator | 21034  989-2332 |
| Gwen Macias | Education Coordinator | 21025 |
| Diana Salis | Education Specialist | 21006 |
| Brandy Lammonds | Education Specialist & Head Start Disabilities Coordinator | 21026 |
| Marina Gorden | Family Service Worker | 21012 |
| Janie Marshburn | Family Specialist | 21010 |
| Madison Hoopes | Family Service Worker | 21011 |
| Kaydi Payne | Family Service Worker | 21015 |
| Hannah Pierce | Family Service Worker | 21033 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Website | [www.onslow.k12.nc.us](http://www.onslow.k12.nc.us) |
| Facebook | [https://www.facebook.com/OCSprek/](https://www.facebook.com/OCSprek/" \t "_blank) or  Onslow County Schools Early Childhood Initiatives & Head Start |

A person holding a sign next to a group of icons

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**Welcome to Preschool!**

We are pleased that you and your child will be part of our program for this school year!

We provide a positive, safe, and welcoming classroom experience where all children can learn, grow and explore.

We believe that parents are the primary teachers and nurturers of their children.

Staff will work together with you to build strong relationships that support positive child and family outcomes.

This handbook is a resource to help you to better understand our program policies and procedures. We ask that you review this handbook and please feel free to ask your child’s Teacher or Family Service Worker any questions you may have regarding your participation in our program.

Thank you for choosing Onslow County Early Childhood Initiatives. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and welcoming environment where all children thrive.

Sincerely,

Luisa Davis, Director

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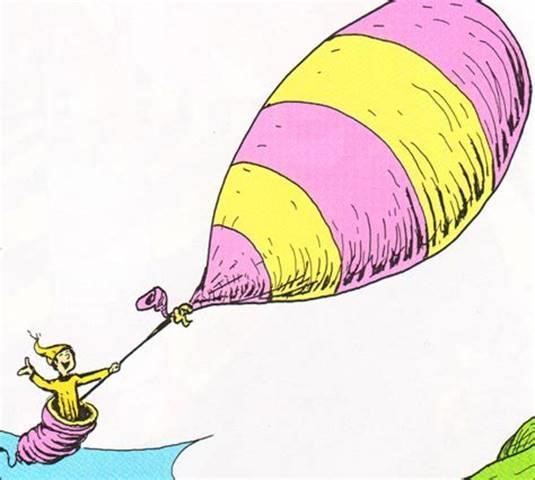
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**Important Dates to Remember & Schedule of Closings**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Reason** |
| September 3, 4, 5, 2024 | Staggered Start for Preschool Students |
| September 6, 2024 | First Day for all Preschool Students |
| September 18, 2024 | Early Release Day for Students |
| October 9, 2024 | Early Release Day for Students |
| October 14, 2024 | Teacher Workday – No School for Students |
| November 11, 2024 | Holiday – Program Closed |
| November 20, 2024 | Early Release Day for Students |
| November 27, 2024 | Teacher Workday – No School for Students |
| November 28-29, 2024 | Holiday – Program Closed |
| December 23-31, 2024 | Winter Break – Program Closed |
| January 1-3, 2025 | Holiday/Winter Break – Program Closed |
| January 20, 2025 | Holiday – Program Closed |
| January 21-22, 2025 | Teacher Workdays – No School for Students |
| February 12, 2025 | Early Release Day for Students |
| February 17, 2025 | Teacher Workday – No School for Students |
| March 12, 2025 | Early Release Day for Students |
| March 17, 2025 | Teacher Workday – No School for Students |
| April 9, 2025 | Early Release Day for Students |
| April 14-18, 2025 | Spring Break – Program Closed |
| April 21, 2025 | Teacher Workday – No School for Students |
| May 26, 2025 | Holiday – Program Closed |
| June 6, 2025 | Last Day of School |

*Oh the places we’ll go together in preschool. Child, family and staff, all with great mountains to climb.*

*Inspired by Dr. Seuss*













**Preschool Programs Offered through Onslow County Schools**

Onslow County Schools Preschool is a braided program comprised of funding through Head Start, Title I, and Exceptional Children for children ages 3 and 4 on or before August 31st. The NC Pre-K program along with the Developmental Day program supplement the funding for our braided programs through criteria specifically outlined by the State of North Carolina for child qualification. The preschool programs are designed to provide developmentally appropriate experiences, which enhance educational opportunities prior to entry into kindergarten. The purpose of the preschool program is to prepare the students for a successful school career.

These programs help improve outcomes for preschool children who reside in Onslow County Schools attendance area.

**Head Start** is a federally funded educational, health, and social program designed to work with families who are economically disadvantaged. The students served are 3 and 4 years old. There are many classrooms throughout the county.

**E.S.E.A.** **Title I** is a federally funded education program for elementary and secondary schools. The students served must be 4 years old on or before August 31. Each child is administered screening instrument(s) to determine possible educational need. Students are selected through the review of multiple selection criteria, including the developmental screening.

**NC-Pre-K** is a state-funded preschool program for students who meet the state of North Carolina guidelines for the NC Pre-K program as outlined in the selection criteria. The NC Pre-K program is administered by One Place and has sites in selected elementary schools, TECC and high-quality childcare centers. Students must be four years old on or before August 31st to be eligible for the program.

**Enrollment**

Before a child is enrolled in any preschool program, an application, birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, proof of residency in Onslow County must be on file. Prior to the child’s first day a family orientation must be completed.

# Child Custody Circumstances

To safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court custody agreements. Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

**Any changes in parent policies, procedures or requirements will be sent to families at least 30 days in advance.**

**Regulations and Standards**



# NC Childcare Programs Licensing Regulations

North Carolina Childcare Regulations govern childcare facilities and programs. These rules are the minimum requirements established to protect health and safety of North Carolina’s children and ensure that children in care and early education programs are provided with healthy growth and education experiences.

# Quality Rating

Star Rated License through North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services and the Division of Child Development.

Onslow County Schools Early Childhood Initiatives has obtained and maintained Five Star Rating in each of our sites. To learn more about the Star Rating for NC Child Care Facilities, please visit the NCDHHS website at: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Services/Licensing/Star-Rated-License>

# 

# Delays or Closures

During inclement weather it sometimes becomes necessary for a decision to be made concerning the delaying or closing of schools. When a decision is made that schools will either be delayed or closed for the day, the announcement must be relayed quickly to all students and parents. OCS is a county school system, so a decision to delay or close schools most likely will affect **all** schools throughout the district.

In order to accomplish this task efficiently and with maximum coverage, when the possibility of inclement weather is in the forecast, school officials ask all students, parents and staff to remember the following:

* **Make sure your child's school has your most up-to-date contact information including home phone, cell phone and email address!**Please let your child's school data manager know if any contact information changes during the school year.
* **A phone call making the announcement of a closing or delay will be sent as soon as any decision is made.** To ensure phone calls get through to the correct recipients, parents should make sure their child's school has the correct phone number on file.
* Monitor the Onslow County Schools district website - [https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/ocs](https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1" \t ") - information will be updated here as conditions warrant. Information will also be posted on the district's social media channels - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This will be the best way to find information in a timely manner after the initial announcement.
* Tune in to one of the local radio or TV stations in our area. As soon as the automated call goes out, delay and closure information is shared with media outlets which serve the Onslow County area.
* Notice of make-up days for students or staff will be announced as soon as they are determined.
* **The absence of any announcement means that schools will open as usual!**

Over 14,500 of the nearly 26,500 students in the Onslow County School System travel to and from school by bus. Many times road conditions on our much-traveled primary roads are quite different from those on our less frequently traveled secondary roads. When making a decision on opening, closing or delaying of schools, the safety and welfare of all students is our primary concern.

**Emergency Procedures**

In the event that a preschool site determines that there is an emergency situation, each site/classroom will follow the steps outlined in districtwide standard response protocol which are located in each classroom. The definition of an ‘emergency’ is as follows; a serious, unexpected situation requiring immediate action.

Each classroom participates in monthly drills. Children practice evacuating the building in event there is an emergency, such as:

* a fire;
* other event which requires exiting the building;
* an event that requires ‘shelter-in-place’ or lockdown drills.

During a ‘shelter in place’ or lock-down drill, children are asked to remain quietly in their classrooms until the drill is over and an all-clear has been announced.

What parents need to know in the event of an emergency:

* Parents/caregivers will be notified using the Authorization and Consent form filled out during registration. Please ensure that all phone numbers for contacts listed are kept up-to-date. Or will be notified using the Robo call system.
* Parents/caregivers may contact their child’s school/classroom using the numbers provided.
* In the event that it is not safe to remain in the building, each center has a location to evacuate to.

All staff has been trained in the use of the Standard Response Protocol and others are certified in Adult/ Pediatric First Aid and CPR.

**Building Safety Procedures**

Onslow County Schools takes the safety of our students and staff seriously. All buildings have locked doors, keycard entry is required at all times. Classroom doors are to remain locked while children are in session.

**Standards of Conduct**

All staff, consultants, and volunteers must abide by the following program standards of conduct:

1. They will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
2. They will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families or staff members.
3. No child will be left unsupervised while under their care.
4. Classroom ratios will be maintained at all times.
5. They will use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation. In addition, they will not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs.

**These standards should be followed at all times when providing services to the preschool children and families.**

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. One of our goals is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop.

Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of the Onslow County Schools Preschool Program but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters our preschool centers and classrooms.

We will not tolerate hostile and aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior, limit or restrict access to the facility, may be reported to law enforcement and to remove your child from our care.

Onslow County Schools Preschool Program has a “No Weapons” Policy. No weapons including firearms,

hunting knives, archery equipment or weapon accessories such as ammunition are allowed on property.

# Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on center’s premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of a substance is required to leave the premises immediately.

# Smoking

The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center’s premises (cigarettes, E-cigarettes, chew).

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to young children’s developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment are non-smoking areas at all times.

# Image result for no cell phone

# Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

# Social Networking: Parents and Staff

Many people use social networks for personal communication. It is not unusual to have

Facebook, Twitter or other online accounts. A policy of preschool program, however, discourages our employees from having parents/guardians of enrolled children as online “friends” because of the many boundary issues it presents. We ask that you respect our policy and not solicit our staff to become online “friends.” However, we encourage our parents and families to join us on the Onslow County Early Childhood Facebook page.

# Child Abuse & Neglect- Mandatory Reporter

In accordance with North Carolina regulations regarding child abuse and neglect, All preschool staff are Mandatory Reporters and must report cases of suspected physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect to the proper authorities. The staff is obligated by law to report any suspected abuse to child protection services with 24 hours. This may include releasing child/family information to parties involved in the investigation. The child protection agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child’s needs are met. We will cooperate fully with the investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. When appropriate, staff will inform the family, a report is being made to child protective services and will encourage the family to make a report as well.

**Reporting and Recognizing Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect**

Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect

While most of us want nothing but the best for our children, child abuse and neglect are too common. While the words abuse and neglect are often used interchangeably, each type of maltreatment is distinct. Abuse is the intentional maltreatment of a child and can be physical, sexual, or emotional in nature. Neglect, on the other hand, is the failure to give children the necessary care they need. The emotional scars of both types of maltreatment are often deep and no child deserves to be maltreated.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, or if you think a child may have died from being mistreated, you must report what you know to the [county Department of Social Services.](http://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local/index.htm) This is the law ([N.C.G.S. § 7B-301](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-301.html)). Do not be afraid to report. As long as you are acting in good faith, you cannot be held liable ([N.C.G.S. §7B-309](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-309.html)).

Recognizing Child Abuse

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect. It is important to note that any one of these things could mean anything or nothing. For example, there are many reasons a child may not want to go home on any particular day, or a child may be overly compliant when they are trying to please a favorite teacher. However, when you have a cluster of two or more of these, this should raise a red flag to at least talk to the child and/or parent, and at most call your local Child Protective Services. It is also important to remember that issues related solely to poverty are not considered child maltreatment issues.

The Child:

* Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance;
* Displays overt sexualized behavior or exhibits sexual knowledge that is inconsistent with their age;
* Has not received medical attention for a physical injury that has been brought to the parents' attention;
* Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes;
* Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen;
* Is overly compliant, an overachiever, or too responsible;
* Comes to school early, stays late, and does not want to go home; or
* Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes;
* Has bruises or marks in non-prominent, “fleshy” areas of the body (for example, inside of biceps or behind the knees);
* Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school;
* Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home from school;
* Shrinks at the approach of adults;
* Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:

* Shows little concern for the child, rarely responding to the school's requests for information, for conferences, or for home visits; denies the existence of or blames the child for) the child's problems in school or at home; asks the classroom teacher to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves; sees the child entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome;
* Demands perfection or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve;
* Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury;
* Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way;
* Is abusing alcohol, prescription drugs or illegal drugs and that abuse is having an adverse impact on the child;
* Uses harsh physical discipline with the child; or
* Has a history of abuse as a child.

Recognizing Child Neglect

The Child:

* Begs or steals food or money from classmates;
* Lacks needed medical or dental care;
* Lacks age appropriate adult supervision ;
* Lacks clothing appropriate for the weather;
* Reports family violence in the home;
* Reports use of illegal substances or excessive use of alcohol by parents or caregivers (for example, to the point the parent passes out);
* Abuses alcohol or other drugs; or
* States there is no one at home to provide care.

The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:

* Appears to be indifferent to the child;
* Seems apathetic or depressed;
* Is involved in an abusive domestic relationship;
* Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner; or
* Is abusing alcohol, prescription drugs or illegal drugs.

Twelve Alternatives to Lashing out at Your Child

* The next time everyday pressures build up to the point where you feel like lashing out -- STOP! Try any of these simple alternatives. You'll feel better... and so will your child.
* Take a deep breath... and another. Then remember you are the adult.
* Close your eyes and imagine you're hearing what your child is about to hear.
* Press your lips together and count to 10... or better yet, to 20.
* Put your child in a time-out chair (remember this rule: one time-out minute for each year of age.)
* Put yourself in a time-out chair. Think about why you are angry: is it your child, or is your child simply a convenient target for your anger?
* Phone a friend.
* If someone can watch the children, go outside and take a walk.
* Take a hot bath or splash cold water on your face.
* Hug a pillow.
* Turn on some music. Maybe even sing along.
* Pick up a pencil and write down as many helpful words as you can think of. Save the list.
* Call 1-800-4-A-CHILD

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/>

[https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/cps/about.htm#Neglect](https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/cps/about.htm" \l "Neglect)

**Pest Management Information**

We would like to let you know that Onslow County Schools uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for controlling insects, rodents, and weeds for all school facilities.  
  
The IPM approach currently in use focuses on making the school buildings and grounds an unfavorable place for pests to live and breed.  Through maintenance and cleaning, we will reduce or eliminate available food and water sources and hiding places for the pests.  We will also routinely monitor the school area to detect pest problems and prevent the pests from becoming established.  Some IPM techniques we will employ include monitoring, increased sanitation, sealing entry points, physically removing the pest, and modifying storage practices.  
  
From time to time, it may be necessary to use chemicals to control a pest problem.  Chemicals will only be used when necessary and will not be routinely applied.  When chemicals must be used, the school system will use the least toxic products when possible.  Access to treated areas will be secured against unauthorized access for the period specified on the pesticide label.  Notices will be posted at application sites and will remain there until the posted safe re-entry time is met.  
  
For your information, we have a list of pesticides and safety data sheets that may be used in the school during the school year.  This list is available online at [www.onslow.k12.nc.us](https://onslow.k12.nc.us/" \o "IPM Notification) under Auxiliary Services/Safety and Security/documents.   
  
You may request prior notification of specific pesticide applications made at the school.  Email wayne.williams@onslow.k12.nc.us with the subject line IPM Parent Notification, to be added to the notification list.  The registrants will be notified at least 72 hours before a pesticide is applied.  
  
If a chemical application must be made to control an emergency pest problem, notice will be provided as soon as possible after the application.  Exemptions to this notification include cleaners (disinfectants), pesticides formulated as baits or gels, and any EPA exempt pesticide.  If you would like to be placed on this registry, please contact Wayne Williams IPM Specialist at 910-455-2211 ext. 71518.

# Non-Discrimination

Equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Our preschool program is designed to meet the varying needs of all students and families.

# Confidentiality

Families and children enrolled in our program have the right to the protection of personal information. Parents should be the primary source of information about themselves and information sought from them should be limited to that which is essential for service.

To be in compliance with Federal Regulations, and to respect the privacy of each family, confidentiality of information is of primary importance. No volunteer or staff member of Onslow County Schools Preschool Program may use information obtained for his or her own use. Videotaping of any functions by individual families or students is not allowed at any preschool campus unless you have written permission of all families involved.

Disclosures With, and Without Parental Consent

Exceptions to the above confidentiality statement are:

* Child abuse
* Threats to harm self or others
* Abuse of disabled individuals
* A caseworker or other representative from a local or state child welfare agency, who has the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement, when such agency is legally responsible for child’s care and protection.
* Officials at a program, school, or school district in which the child seeks or intends to enroll or where the child is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is related to the child's enrollment or transfer. With prior parental/guardian notification and a copy of records to be disclosed.
* Contractors and sub recipients of the program
* Federal or state entity, in connection with an audit or evaluation of education or child development programs or for enforcement of or compliance of federal legal requirements.
* Federal or state entity, to conduct a study to improve child and family outcomes, including the improvement of quality.
* Appropriate parties in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency during the period of the emergency, or serious health and safety risk, such as serious food allergy.
* As required to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
* Child and Adult Food Care, authorized representative to conduct monitoring, evaluations and performance measures.

For questions, regarding OCS Policy, With and Without Parental Consent please contact the program director or assistant director.

**Classroom Visits**

Parents/guardians are welcomed to visit the program. If you would like to schedule a brief observation of your

child, please speak with your teacher in advance to schedule an observation time. If frequent observations or longer observations are requested, the parent should speak with school administrator to discuss their concerns and agree upon observation parameters that do not disrupt the learning environment. Observations should be a collaborative process between parents and staff that benefit the child. Teachers will always do their best to speak briefly with parents/guardians during arrival and dismissal. Since staff are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during drop off and pick up. If a discussion requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for a time to call or meet with the teacher during non-instructional times. If immediate assistance is needed, the teacher will contact family services to speak with you.

**Attendance**

Build the Habit of Good Attendance! Preschool is the ideal time to introduce children to the importance of consistent on-time attendance. Showing up on time every day is important to your child’s success and learning from preschool and beyond. Attendance in school and participation in class are an integral

part of academic achievement and the teaching/learning process. Regular attendance develops patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. (Onslow County Schools Attendance Policy)

1. All children should arrive to their classroom on time each day.
2. When your child is absent, parents/caregivers call the classroom to let the staff know why your child is absent and how long he/she is expected to be out.
3. If we do not receive a call from you about your child’s absence, we will contact you within one hour of when they are expected to be at school or make a home visit to follow-up.
4. Multiple absences without reason and documentation may result in the development of an attendance plan and may also jeopardize your child’s participation in the preschool program.
5. Family Services will review your child’s attendance. If your child’s attendance is nearing chronic absenteeism, we will work with you to develop your *Child’s Attendance Success Plan*.
6. Cumulative Absences should be documented in the following manner.

* Child is sick for 3 or more consecutive days - a written note of explanation for the absence signed by a parent/ guardian or doctor must be given to the teacher upon return.
* Admittance to the hospital – a doctor’s note is required stating how long the child is excused from school.
* Critical conditions - child is home for long periods of time because of health reasons; documentation is needed from a doctor.
* Family issues or emergency –Signed and dated written statement from the parent.

1. If your child is absent for two consecutive weeks, and we have had no contact with you to develop an attendance plan, we reserve the right to fill your child’s spot and place your child on the Wait List.



# Daily Sign In and Sign Out

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**\*\* ALL visitors/parents must sign in/out at the office upon arrival/departure. You must have your photo ID with you at all times for identification when checking a child in or out of school.**

Please bring your child to school on time. Children throve on routines and can get upset when changes occur or they feel that they are missing out on something. Children are to be picked up promptly at preschool dismissal time. If children repeatedly arrive late or are often picked up late, a conference with the parents may be requested.

All children must be signed in and signed out on the classroom ipad by the caregiver upon arriving and departing the program. The person’s initials need to be recorded, and the ipad will collect the times of drop off and pick up. The accuracy of attendance is key in providing active supervision of all children.

# Authorized, Unauthorized & Late Pick-up

Authorization and Consent Forms must be completed by each parent/guardian. Staff will only release your child to those persons listed on this form. Staff will ask for identification from each person until they have become familiar with them. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy. If you want a person to pick-up your child who is not identified on the Authorization and Consent form, you must notify us in advance, by updating the form in person. We will only release your child to authorized persons.

It is essential that parents provide at least two working emergency phone numbers and two emergency contacts with current phone numbers.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed on Authorization and Consent Form. Provisions will be made to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 45 minutes we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an emergency contact, we will call the appropriate local authorities.

# Parent, Family and Caregiver Engagement

Parents/guardians are the foundation of early learning. Family Engagement is the cornerstone of a preschool program. Parent and Family engagement in preschool is about building relationships. This happens in the home, early childhood program, school and community. It is a shared responsibility with all those who support the child’s learning. In the Onslow County Preschool programs, through the family partnership process, staff and parents build responsive and respectful relationships that support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships, and ongoing learning and development for parents and children. When parents/guardians work together, children thrive!

The Onslow County Schools Preschool Program works in partnership with parents, families and the community. We offer parents many opportunities and support for growth so they can identify their own solutions, strengths, interests, and needs. The building of respectful and trusting relationships allows parents and staff to share and learn from each other.

Positive goal-oriented relationships with families lead to positive parent-child relationships, a key predictor of success in early learning and healthy development.

# Family Services

Following placement and orientation, a Family Service Worker will be assigned as your child’s case manager. Family Services and your child’s Teacher will work as a team to assist you throughout the year through home visits, parent teacher conferences, and day-to-day contact. This person will be the liaison who ensures that you receive various services in the community necessary to provide your child a “head start” in school.

Roles of the Family Service Team:

* Organize and oversee health and nutrition services for children
* Coordinate community referrals for children and families
* Establish and maintain family records
* Monitor student attendance
* Make home visits
* Share information about available community services
* Recruit volunteers
* Conduct Parent Orientation
* Oversee Parent Committees
* Coordinate Male Involvement Activities
* Recruit families for the Head Start and other Preschool Programs
* Process Preschool Applications

# Family Involvement Opportunities

We encourage the participation of our parents and community members. We welcome those who have any amount of time or talent to share with us. Please let your child’s Teacher or Family Services know if you would like to volunteer in the program. If you know of someone who would like to donate time, service, or materials, please contact your teacher.

1. Celebration of Learning Events- These are monthly events that allow students to reflect on and share their learning and growth with the important people in their life after a unit of study.
2. Observation and/or visiting your child during the instructional day – Observing or visiting your preschool child during the instructional day means spending time in their classroom to witness their learning environment firsthand. It allows you to see how your child interacts with peers and teachers, understand the activities they engage in, and gain insight into their educational experience.
3. Guest Speaker opportunities – Share your knowledge, skills, or experiences with the children in your child’s classroom. This is an opportunity to connect with the class, enrich their learning, and show support for your child’s educational journey.
4. Volunteer Opportunities - Being a volunteer in your child's preschool class involves offering your time and assistance to support the teacher and the children in various activities and tasks. It's a way to actively engage in your child's early education, contribute to the classroom community, and foster positive relationships with teachers and other parents. Please see more details at [www.onslow.k12.nc.us/Page/8332](http://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/Page/8332) for details about the “Criminal Background Checks for School Volunteers”.

**Parent Committee Meetings, Activities and Workshops**

Parent Committees provide every parent of an enrolled child with the opportunity to assist in the development of parent activities, field trips, and classroom activities. Parent Committee meetings and Parent Engagement activities are scheduled throughout the program year.

Families will complete a survey to help determine the best days and times for the meetings. All current parents are Committee members and are encouraged to participate. If you are not able to attend the Parent Committee meetings but have ideas to share, let Family Services know. Parent workshops and trainings will also be scheduled for each site throughout the program year. A schedule of the trainings and Parent Committee Meetings will be sent home with your child.

Parent Committee Activities:

1. Plan activities and programs for preschool parents in the classroom, special events, field trips, etc.
2. Encourage parents to participate with their child in the learning environment.
3. Make recommendations to the Policy Council such as: celebrations, needs, concerns, ideas, etc.
4. As requested, participate in sub committees

# Head Start Policy Council

The HS Policy Council is comprised of current Head Start parents representing all pre-k sites and community representatives. Some former Head Start parents may be selected to serve on the Policy Council. Policy Council members are elected from the individual parent committees and must be a parent of a Head Start student.

* HS Policy Council representatives are limited to three one-year terms. Parents must be elected. No members may serve more than three years.
* Fifty one percent (51%) of the Policy Council members must be parents of currently enrolled Head Start children.
* No staff or members or their immediate families will serve on the Policy Council as voting members.

# Title I Parent Advisory Council

The Title I Parent Advisory Council is a district level forum that seeks parent input regarding the Title I program. Parents of students funded by the Title I program are encouraged to become a part of the Strategic Planning Committee at their school and participate in the Preschool Parent Committee meetings at their child’s school. School administrators can provide information about the dates, times and locations of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings.

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# Education Services

# Philosophy & Curriculum

# Children learn best by doing and play. Through active involvement within their environment, children learn to make sense of their world. They do this through interacting with materials and other people. For young children the environment is particularly important. Thoughtful arrangement for the indoor and outdoor environments will support the goals we set for children.

As part of our curriculum, we gather information about each child’s developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in the classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child.

Our classrooms have clearly defined; well-equipped interest centers that are arranged to promote independence, foster decision-making, and encourage involvement.

Onslow County Preschool Program utilizes The Creative Curriculum for Preschool as our curriculum, and Teaching Strategies GOLD as the Child Outcomes Assessment System.

All of our teaching staff receives training in Creative Curriculum and Observing and assessing children, utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold online assessment system.

We strive to prepare all children to be ready for school and experience success as lifelong learners. School Readiness goals are developed annually by review of child outcomes and parent and staff input.

The Onslow County Schools Preschool Program is committed to ensuring that each child enrolled in the program has experiences that will enrich and prepare him/her for a successful school career. Each classroom is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children. The classroom is organized to help your child explore and learn about his/her world. The schedule of the day will be 5 days a week for at least 6 ½ hours per day. No before or after school care is provided on site. Some students enrolled as Exceptional Children may attend a shorter week based upon their IEP.

Children learn best through a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences. The teacher and assistant facilitate learning experiences by offering all children in our blended program opportunities to explore, discover, compare, classify, and problem solve.

Children have access daily to the following materials:

1. Children in lab coats in a classroom

   Description automatically generatedSand/water
2. Blocks/building materials
3. Books/tapes/records
4. Art/painting/cutting/gluing
5. Housekeeping/dramatic play
6. Manipulative materials/puzzles/games
7. Gross motor/fine motor (riding toys, writing, etc.)
8. Writing/literacy materials
9. Music/movement
10. Other enrichment activities may include technology, cooking, parent classroom activities, field trips, assemblies, and family – style dining in classrooms.

Responsibilities of Education Specialists:

* Support teachers in implementing the curriculum, lesson plans, room setup, and daily schedule
* Work with family specialists to support families
* Work with preschool program staff to ensure implementation of IEP services
* Provide classroom support

# Developmental & Behavioral Screenings

Prior to your child starting preschool you were asked to sign permission to allow your child to complete these screenings. A screening is a brief procedure to identify children who may be at risk and may require further evaluation. *A screening does not determine a diagnosis*; but it may suggest the need for further evaluation.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) is the educational screening that looks for concerns in the areas of communication, motor skills, problem solving and self-help skills. The social development is also measured based on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Social-Emotional (ASQ: SE-2) parent questionnaire. Results will be shared during your home visit and/or parent conference.

with parent permission

# Inclusion

Onslow County Schools Preschool Program believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in our program. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

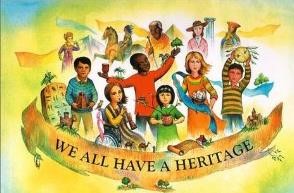
# Disabilities

The Onslow County Schools Preschool program serves children with disabilities. A child must be evaluated and meet the North Carolina Policies and Procedures for Exceptional Children to qualify for an Individual Education Program (IEP). IEP Services may include speech and language therapy, occupational therapy (fine motor) or more specialized educational services as determined by the IEP team.

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# Cultural Diversity

Every individual is rooted in their own unique culture. Culture has an influence on the beliefs and behaviors of everyone, is passed from generation to generation and is closely involved in how children learn. Our materials, equipment, and activities reflect the diversity of children and families in the program and community.



# Celebrations

We encourage an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families and community. Teaching staff welcome parent participation in celebrating special occasions in the classroom. Please discuss ideas with the teaching staff before plans are made.

Our guidelines for celebrations and holidays are:

* We believe that decisions about celebrations are best made together by parents, children and teachers.
* Activities must be age appropriate and meaningful to children.
* OCS Board Policy states in part that any foods brought into the classroom for sharing must be commercially prepared processed and NOT HOMEMADE.
* Food requested for celebrations must follow program nutritional guidelines.
* Because of possible latex allergies and choking hazards, childcare licensing prohibits balloons of any type from being brought into the classroom.
* Children and families can choose not to participate in parent-initiated celebrations and holiday activities held in the classroom.
* If materials or supplies are needed for a parent-initiated activity this should be discussed with the classroom teacher. Program approval will be obtained for purchase of materials.

# Your Child’s Schedule & Routine

The classroom has a visual schedule posted in the room. The visual schedule supports children by providing a reminder of upcoming activities. Teachers will refer to the schedule often to support children’s need for predictability of a routine and schedule. Teachers will also let children know when there is a change in the schedule.

We all need tools to help us get things done – even children! Parents have you ever thought about making a daily or weekly schedule for your child at home? You could do a schedule based on your child’s bedtime routine.

**Below is a *SAMPLE* schedule of our preschool day: Teachers will provide the specific classroom schedule to parents during the home visit.**

Arrival and sign in



**I feel more**

**secure**

**when**

**you let me**

**know what’s**

**next!**

Circle Time

Transition Song or Game for handwashing

Breakfast

Free Play (Choice Time)

Story Circle / Transition activity to line up

Outdoor Play / Gross Motor

Transition activity for handwashing

Lunch

Books / Brush Teeth / Bathroom

Quiet Time

Wake Up / Table Play

Music and Movement / Transition activity for handwashing

Good Bye

# Children’s Personal Belongings

Playing at preschool can be dirty and messy, please send your child in clothes that can get dirty as a result of outdoor play, painting, sand play, etc.

Flip-flops and sandals are not appropriate for center play and outdoor play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. We recommend all children wear closed toe shoes for ensuring their safety.

Remember we go outside every day weather permitting!

Please clearly label all items and clothing brought to school to prevent items from being lost or misplaced. The Onslow County Schools Preschool Program is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

What to Bring: At least one change of clothes, which include underwear, socks, and shoes. Please make sure the extra change of clothing is appropriate for the weather. Your child’s extra set of clothing can be left at school in your child’s cubby.

During the late fall, winter and early spring, please send your child with a coat, hat and gloves. If your child is in need of any of the items listed, please see your family service worker for information regarding resources.

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

small **s**

# Field Trips and Outings

Field trips are a great way to explore and learn more about the world around us, especially in our own community. Parents will be notified in advance of field trips and permission slips will be sent home with your child for each field trip. Parents are invited to share field trip ideas. All ideas will be considered as to appropriateness, distance, cost, classroom composition, and cultural heritage.

# Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences

Things to consider for your child’s conference:

>Share with the teacher any concerns, questions, and ideas that you would like to discuss

>Be open to hearing the teacher’s feedback about your child’s learning in class

>Be an active participant in the process

>Discuss any transitions or family circumstances that may impact your child at school

ervice Worker

**I**

# Supporting Social & Emotional Development and Mental Health Well-being for Children

The Onslow County Schools Preschool program promotes and supports an instructional, proactive approach to behavior guidance that supports the learning and practice of developmentally appropriate interactions.

Social and Emotional Promotion

To promote a program wide culture that supports social and emotional well-being, children’s mental health and family engagement, we adhere to the following:

* All children are treated with dignity and respect.
* The program utilizes an evidence-based framework, The Pyramid Model approach, for promoting social and emotional competence and addressing challenging behaviors.

## Challenging Behavior Definition

Definition of challenging behavior: Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in developmentally appropriate interactions with peers and adults. Refer to the appendix section for the Challenging Behavior and Discipline Policy for more information.

## Behavior Interventions

When a child repeatedly engages in challenging behavior for a period of time and is unresponsive to targeted supports the classroom has implemented. The Intervention Team, along with parent participation, will meet to identify immediate strategies and or services to put in place to better support the student.

## Continuation of Severe and Persistent Challenging Behavior

If the child behavior continues to be severe and persistent the team will initiate the following process. The team will meet within one week to determine what additional supports can be put in place.

* The team may conclude that the child would benefit from:
* a modified day
* different classroom environment
* child would go home when the behavior is unsafe, as determined by the intervention plan until a meeting with child’s family occurs
* another early care and education option/program, team will develop a seamless transition plan and will use the plan to implement a smooth transition.

## Suspension and Expulsion of Children

The program severely limits the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior.

* Such suspensions are only temporary in nature.
* A temporary suspension is used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modification.
* The program cannot expel a child from Head Start because of a child’s behavior.

**Discipline Policy**

The preschool program **does not allow** use of any form of corporal punishment to discipline students. Teachers utilize methods from the *Creative Curriculum, Conscious* *Discipline, NC Preschool Pyramid Model* strategies and also incorporate the *Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum* into their weekly lesson planning. Parents are also asked to carefully read and then sign the Challenging Behavior and Discipline Policy that addresses unacceptable behavior. Parents are a vital part of the behavior management of each preschool classroom and teachers keep them updated of any concerns they may have about their child’s behavior.

**Mental Health and Well Being**

The Onslow County Schools (OCS) Head Start program will provide early childhood mental health consultation services to all children who are enrolled in the program. The program uses the NCPPM Teaching Pyramid Model for Positive Behavior Support which promotes children’s overall healthy social/emotional development, prevents mental health issues in young children and meets the needs of children identified with mental health challenges.

Our program consults with a mental health consultant who will collaborate with our Education Specialists to work with teachers and help makes sure that your child is learning to: express feelings and emotions, control anger, follow the rules and routines, problem solve, make friends and have a good relationship with their teacher, parents and other important adults. We utilize a mental health consultant to ensure the mental health and social emotional needs of children are being met in the classroom. This consultant collaborates with program staff to complete routine observations in classrooms and may discuss specific behaviors and strategies observed during those observations with teachers to, again, ensure we are meeting the needs of all children. The mental health consultant may also provide staff and parent consultation, and other supports for individual needs of children and families.

**Understanding Mental Health of Young Children**

Having positive mental health and well-being is important! It makes it easier for children to:

* Understand and share feelings
* Have close relationships with family and friends
* Explore and learn
* Do well in school
* Learn new things
* Solve tough problems
* Develop patience (or not give up)
* Focus on a task
* Ask for help

When young children are worried, sad or angry, it can be hard to:

* Make friends
* Follow directions
* Express feelings or wishes
* Follow simple directions
* Pay attention in class
* Solve problems in positive ways
* Do well in school

**Supporting Mental Health and Well Being in the school setting**

As part of our program, a Mental Health Consultant may conduct classroom observations as needed. The observations focus on the environment, teacher/child relationships, and the teaching of social and emotional skills. An individual observation of a child (with parental permission) may be conducted to help determine the nature of the child’s difficulties and help staff and parents develop ways to help the child be successful in the classroom and at home. Referrals may be made to community resources by the Mental Health Consultant.

Responsibilities of Program Staff and Mental Health Consultant:

* Addresses areas of mental health concerns from staff or families; may assist families in securing the appropriate mental health services from an outside source.
* Schedules mental health classroom observations and individual child observations as recommended by teachers with parental permission.
* Assists teacher/parents in the development of behavior plans for identified students in the classroom setting and in the home upon parent request.

A group of people holding hands

Description automatically generated

# Health and Nutrition Services



## Immunizations and Health Assessments

Your child’s immunization status will be reviewed during the recruitment and registration process to ensure that your child’s vaccinations are in compliance with North Carolina State Laws.

Requirement for Immunization Records - NC General Statute 110-91 (1)

* Each child must have a record of immunization on file at the center within 30 days of enrollment.
* A current immunization record must be on file for each child.
* Each time a child receives an immunization, the record must be updated.

Requirement for Child’s Health Assessment - NC General Statute 110-91 (1)

* Each child shall have a health assessment before being admitted or within 30 days following admission to preschool.
* The assessment must be completed and signed by one of the following:
* a licensed physician
* the physician’s authorized agent who is currently approved by the North Carolina Medical Board, or comparable certifying board in any state contiguous to North Carolina.
* a certified nurse practitioner
* a public health nurse meeting the Department’s Standards for Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program.

## Dental

Head Start regulations require children have an annual dental examination within 90 days of being enrolled in the program.

Dental Home: We strongly encourage you to establish a dental home and complete a dental exam. If you do not have a family dentist, please contact our office and the family service worker will assist you in finding services for your child.

## Other Head Start Health Requirements

Children enrolled in Head Start are required to have a lead screening, blood pressure, vision screening, growth assessment, and hearing screening. If your medical provider did not complete these at your child’s well check exam, we will work with you to complete these at the school or through your health care provider.

Permission to Screen:  Prior to your child starting school you were asked to sign permission to allow your child to complete the necessary screenings if they were not completed at the child’s well child exam. If your child does not pass or cannot be tested, you will be notified in writing and receive a referral.

This permission form covers the following screenings:

* + Hearing Screening
  + Growth Assessment (height, weight, BMI)
  + Blood Pressure
  + Vision Screening

## Prescribed Medication Administration

Staff may administer a prescribed medication to a child when the parent or guardian is unable to administer the medication at home or outside of school hours and only when it is authorized by the child’s health care provider. Before any medications can be given to a child, the Medication Administration Form must be completed by the child’s physician and signed by the parent or guardian. The medications must be in the original container prescribed to the child. Over the counter non-prescription medications are not permitted unless prescribed by a physician and the signed request is brought in with the medication. **If an Over-the-counter non-prescription medication is prescribed by a physician such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen, etc. the medication must be in a new and sealed container. No opened over-the-counter medications will be permitted.**

**MEDICATION MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE SCHOOL BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN OR DESIGNATED ADULT. DO NOT SEND MEDICATION IN YOUR CHILD’S BACKPACK OR GIVE TO BUS DRIVER.**

The **Medication Administration form** (if your child needs medication during the school day) can be downloaded from the Onslow County Schools website.

Go to: [www.onslow.k12.nc.us](http://www.onslow.k12.nc.us) then click on Families, then click on Parents/Students, then click on Health Services.

Administration of Medication

1. The school nurse or classroom teaching staff may administer medication that is prescribed by a physician.
2. “Permission to Administer Medication” form must be completed and signed by parent and physician.
3. Parents may be requested to administer medication to their child at school.
4. Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in a locked container in the classroom refrigerator or in the nurse’s office. On field trips, such medication is in a locked ice chest or cooler. If medication does not require refrigeration, it is kept in a locked container in the classroom.

## Accidents and Illnesses

## The teacher and nurse have the responsibility for determining the seriousness of illness at school. The child will be observed in the classroom to decide what procedures to follow with the consent of the parent. Preschool staff will follow all Onslow County Schools guidelines for illness.

## Per the Onslow County Schools Policies and Procedures for short- and long-term communicable diseases, when a child in a classroom is found to have a communicable disease, parents will be notified, and the child will be sent home. All families in the classroom will receive a notice if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease. No exceptions are made to this policy.

If your child has an accident or is injured during the school day, the parent or guardian will be notified as soon as possible, and an ‘Accident and Injury Report’ will be sent home with the child at the end of the day.

Please remember that when children are recovering from an illness, they need lots of rest. Children who come back to school too soon after an illness do not have the stamina to keep up with the normal pace of the preschool classroom. They jeopardize their health and possibly spread the illness to others**.** If you think your child is beginning to get sick or is sick, please keep them home.

If your child is ill for 3 or more consecutive days - a written note of explanation for the absence signed by a parent /guardian or doctor must be presented to the teacher on the day returning after an absence**.**

## Exclusions

Onslow County Schools Preschool Program follows the North Carolina State Childcare Licensing Regulations. Per Caring for our Children, the following will be taken into consideration when determining a temporary exclusion:

* Does the condition prevent the child from participating comfortably in activities?
* Does the condition result in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children?
* Does the condition pose a risk of spreading a harmful illness to others?

The Onslow County Schools Preschool program reserves the right to require a note from the child’s physician in order for the excluded child to return to school.

**Any time your child is unable to participate fully in school activities, he or she should remain at home in a familiar and comfortable environment.**

**We suggest the following:**

* Please keep your child home if he/she needs a special diet (i.e. no food, just liquids)
* Please keep your child home if he/she is not able to go on with educational routine (i.e. medicine that causes drowsiness or inability to participate in outside activities).
* Often children may ask to come to school even though they are ill; please keep them at home if they are sick.
* If your child becomes ill while at school and you are called, please cooperate by picking him/her up promptly.
* Be sure that your phone number and your emergency contact are kept up-to

**Healthy Habits**

A person washing their hands with soap

Description automatically generatedHand washing

* Children wash their hands upon arrival.
* Children are expected to wash hands after toileting.
* Children are encouraged to wash hands after coughing or sneezing.
* Children will wash hands before and after eating.
* Children will wash hands after outside play.
* Children will wash hands before and after sand and water play.
* All classroom visitors must wash their hands upon entering the classroom.

# Toileting

We understand that every child develops at their own pace, including when it comes to mastering toilet training. Our facilities are equipped to accommodate non-toilet trained children. Our staff members are trained and experienced in handling these situations with care and patience.

Tooth Brushing

All children in the preschool program brush their teeth daily. Your child will be using toothpaste when brushing teeth. Toothbrushes will be replaced as necessary.

Onslow County Preschool Tooth Brushing Procedures

1. Toothbrushes are provided for each child. Sharing toothbrushes is not permitted, and children are taught not to allow others to use their toothbrushes.
2. Toothpaste is provided for children.
3. Staff places a dab of toothpaste on individual paper towel squares for each child.  
   Each child selects his/her toothbrush from toothbrush holder and places toothpaste on brush, discarding paper towel.
4. Staff supervises children as they brush teeth.
5. Child brushes teeth and rinses toothbrush in cold water, blotting excess water with paper towel, which is then discarded.
6. Child returns toothbrush to its proper slot.
7. Staff ensures that toothbrushes and toothbrush holder are kept clean.
8. Toothbrushes are to be labeled with each child’s name or another identifying symbol.
9. The toothbrush slot should also be labeled so the toothbrush is returned to the same slot following each use.

**Nutrition**

Meals in the preschool classroom are a learning experience for children. Each day children will receive a USDA approved breakfast and lunch. Cost of breakfast and lunch is dependent upon family income. Children will also receive a snack daily.

If your child has special food requirements, please notify your teacher or your family service worker.

**If your child has any type of food allergy or food restrictions that has been documented by a doctor, a diet order form must be completed by the doctor for a special diet to be put into place. A copy of the documentation must be given to the teacher.**

All meals are served family-style in the classroom. The teachers, the children and all family members and guests sit down and enjoy meals together. You are welcome to join your child at mealtime. Please let the child’s teacher know as early in the day as possible.

The Onslow County Schools Preschool Program does not allow food from home to be brought into the classroom environment.

For more information, please visit the OCS Food & Nutrition Services website at:

<http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/index.php?sid=1501179229405>

# Transportation

HAND-TO HAND CHILD SAFETY POLICY and TRANSPORTATION POLICIES FOR PARENTS in appendices

The Onslow County Schools Preschool Program offers free transportation on the Onslow County Schools transportation system for eligible preschool students. Preschoolers must receive hand-to-hand service. Children must follow all Onslow County Schools rules as explained by the school bus driver. Bus routes and stops are determined by the preschool transportation staff. Discipline issues that occur while a student is riding a bus will be handled by the school transportation staff and school administration.

Any changes in drop off/pick up locations may take up to 7-10 days before changes are made if approved by transportation office. Bus stops are set by the child transportation office to ensure the safest most efficient route for students using the student’s home address. Transportation may be able to transport to or from a licensed childcare facility within the same school district lines. Transportation services are not guaranteed and at times we have a waitlist for bus transportation.

**Hand to Hand Safety for Bus Riders**

A parent or an officially designated adult (at least 18 years of age) **must** accompany each student to the assigned bus stop and wait with the child until the bus arrives. The bus will not be able to go back and pick up your child if he/she is not ready when the bus arrives. You will be responsible for transporting your child to the center. (Designated adult must be at the bus stop 10-15 minutes before and after scheduled pick-up.) Each child is received at the school by a designated school employee. At the end of the school day, preschool children are placed on the school bus by a school employee and returned to the bus stop **where a parent or officially designated adult (at least 18 years of age) with a valid photo ID must receive them.** Children riding regular Onslow County School buses are to be seated at the front of the bus, so they can be seen and heard by the bus driver. **As per NC Statute 14-132.2, no parent/guardian or other persons are allowed to board the bus at any time without permission.**

**If there is no designated adult at the bus stop the child will be returned to the school.**

1. The first failure to have a designated adult meet the child at the bus stop will result in a call to emergency contacts and written notice of 1st incident. The child will be returned to school and if **no** designated adult can be located, designated authorities may be called to intervene.
2. The second failure of an adult to meet a school bus will result in a formal contact (phone call) by School staff and 2nd incident report.
3. The third failure of an adult to meet school bus and any incidents thereafter may result in loss of bus privileges up to 3 days per incident.

**Hand to Hand Safety for Adult Drop Off**

A parent or an officially designated adult who will be providing transportation for a child to and from school **must** accompany the child to the preschool classroom or designated drop off location and sign the child in for the day with a designated school employee. At the end of the school day, the parent/ designated adult of the preschool child will pick up the child from the classroom in a timely manner (with a photo ID).

1. The first failure to have a designated adult pick up the child in a timely manner will result in a call to emergency contacts.
2. The second failure will result in a conference with classroom teacher and family service worker.
3. Repeat instances will result in referral to designated authorities for further action.

**Pedestrian Safety**

Here are some facts you should know:

* Preschool children are quick and often unaware of danger.
* Each year, many children are injured or killed when they suddenly dart into the path of a car.
* Most preschoolers are injured near their home or on their own street.
* Most crashes involving children happen between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
* Most crashes involving children occur in fair and warm weather.
* Twice as many preschool boys are injured than preschool girls.

This is How You Can Prevent These Tragedies:

* Supervise children at all times.
* Children should not be allowed to cross the street alone.
* Teach them who can help them cross the street safely.

Teach by explaining:

* Explain to your child the safe way you cross a street.  Say: “When I cross a street, I always stop at the curb. I look for cars. I look left for any traffic coming and then I look right for traffic coming that way.  Then I look left again. When it is clear, I cross the street and keep looking left and right.”

Teach by example. When you cross a street with your child, always:

* Stop at the curb.
* Look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT for traffic in all directions.
* Cross when it is clear.
* Keep looking for cars as you cross.

Encourage your child. As you both safely cross the street together, point out your child’s safety behaviors. Use safe language and specific safety words. Practice what you teach at all times.

# Grievance / Complaint Procedure

The grievance procedure is a problem-solving mechanism in which every attempt is made to resolve issues at the lowest level of authority, with the least possible amount of program disturbance.

A grievance is a written complaint alleging that Program Policies and Procedures (if applicable), and/or North Carolina Child Care Licensing Regulations were:

1. Not followed; or
2. Administered in a discriminatory (unequal) fashion; or
3. Were administered in an arbitrary and capricious (unfair) fashion.

To resolve parent grievances concerning staff, the following steps are followed:

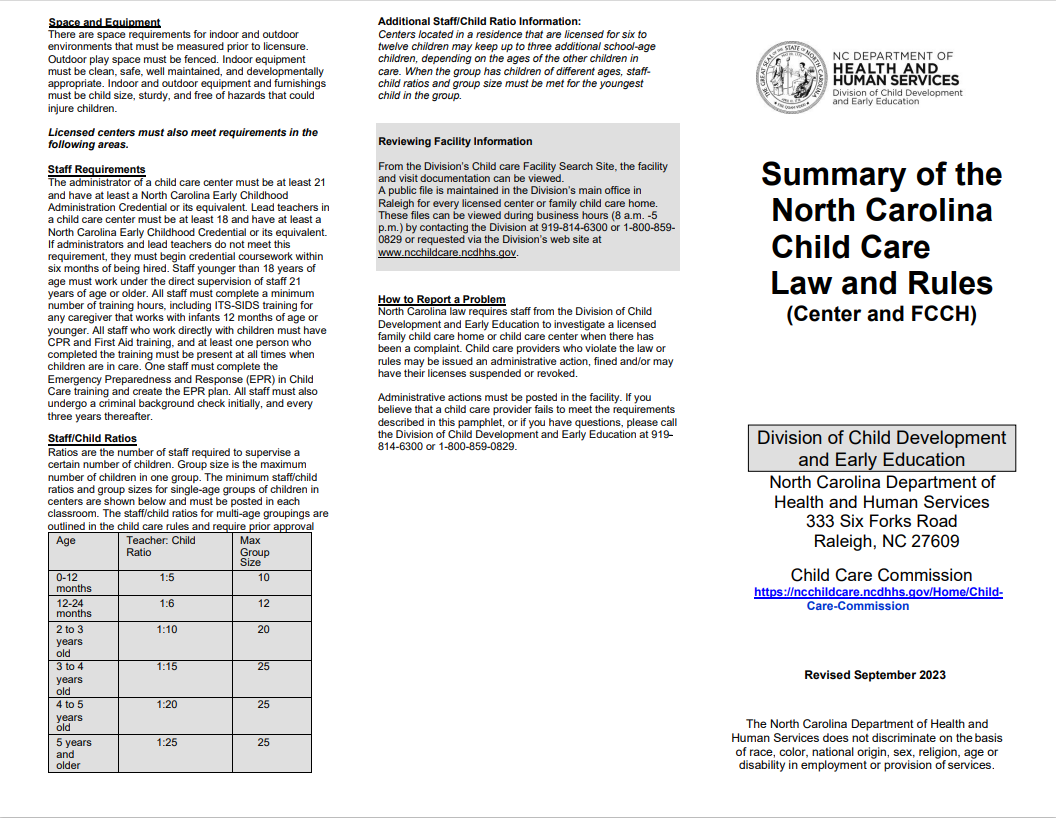
1. The parent should immediately contact the staff person that the disagreement or complaint is with and attempt to resolve the issue.
2. If the issues are not resolved, the parent and the staff person should contact the site based School Administrator. At this time, the grievance should be documented in writing, dated and signed by the parent.
3. The site-based School Administrator will discuss the issue with the parent and the staff person.
4. If the issue is not resolved, the site-based School Administrator shall refer the issue to the Preschool Program Director or Assistant Director.
5. If the issue is still in question, the Preschool Program Director shall refer the issue to the Executive Director.
6. If no solution is reached and the student is Head Start, the Executive Director should bring the matter before the Policy Council.
7. If the Policy Council is unable to resolve the matter, or the child is a Title I or NCPK student, the issue shall be referred to the Onslow County Schools’ Deputy Superintendent.

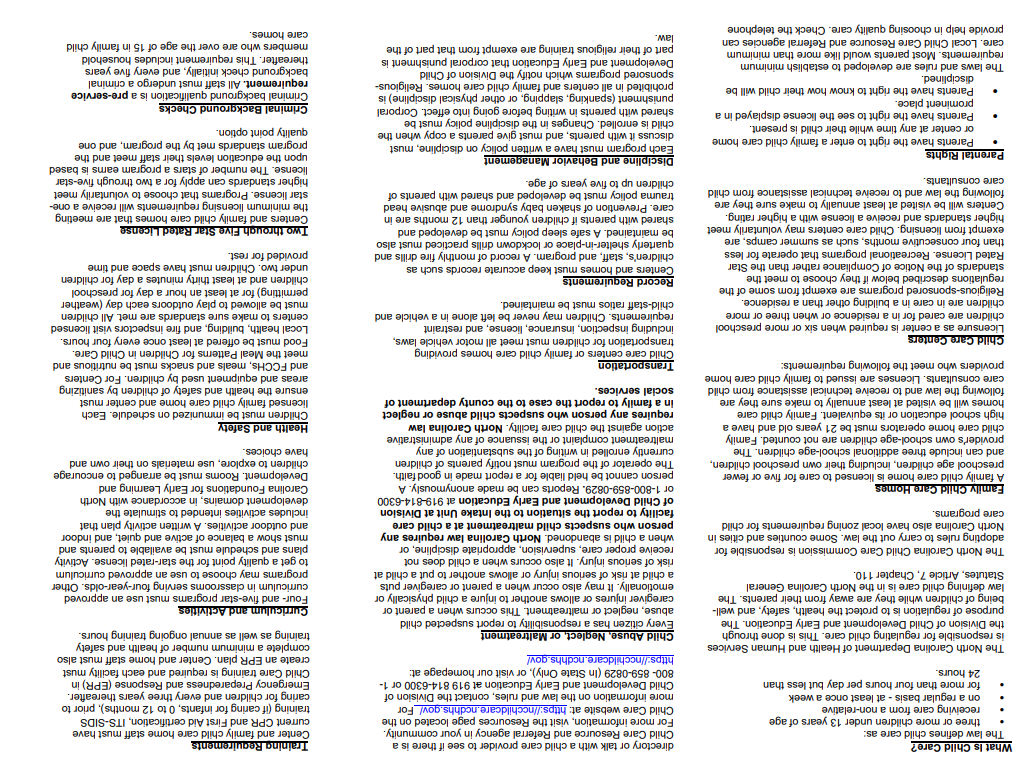
For parent concerns regarding **classroom procedures**, the process for discussion is the same as listed above, except the Family Service Worker assigned to the class should be advised of the problem and offer suggestions in collaboration with the Education Specialist for resolution before the site-based School Administrator is contacted.

**If an impasse is reached between Onslow County Schools and Onslow County Schools Head Start Policy Council, both parties will enter into binding mediation or arbitration to resolve the impasse.**

**Appendix**

(signed parent acknowledgements are kept in the child’s file)

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**Onslow County Schools Preschool**

**SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME & ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA POLICY**

Onslow County Schools Preschool believes that prevention, recognition, response to, and reporting of suspected shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is necessary to keep children safe, to protecting their healthy development, and to educate families. SBS/AHT is a form of physical abuse caused by an infant or small child being violently shaken and/or trauma to the head has occurred. Onslow County Schools Preschool has developed this policy in compliance with North Carolina Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .0608. This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their families, operators, early educators, substitute providers, and uncompensated provider.

Onslow County Schools will prohibit any staff member from shaking or jerking a child; pushing them into walls, doors, or furniture; and/or tossing a child into the air or into a chair, wheelchair, etc. All children will be observed for any sign of head trauma caused by SBS/AHT including:

* Irritability
* High pitched crying
* Difficulty staying awake/lethargy
* Loss of consciousness
* Difficulty breathing
* Inability to lift the head
* Seizures
* Lack of appetite
* Vomiting
* Poor feeding/sucking
* No smiling or vocalization
* Inability of the eyes to track
* Decreased muscle tone
* Bruises (which may be found on the upper arms, rib cate or head

If SBS/AHT is suspected staff will contact the school nurse and inform the director/principal. 911 will be called if there is a suspected case of SBS/AHT and emergency response staff will care for the child as needed. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted and informed of the action taken by the Early Childhood Center.

Instances of suspected child maltreatment in childcare are reported to the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). In the case of suspected child maltreatment in the home, Onslow County Department of Social Services will be notified.

Onslow County Schools Preschool will ensure that all staff who provide care in the Early Childhood Program will review this policy at time of hire and annually. A signed staff acknowledgement of the SBS/AHT policy along with the sign in sheet for staff training will be maintained in the preschool office.

Onslow County Schools will ensure that the policy is reviewed with all preschool parents/guardians on or before enrollment. Parents/guardians will sign acknowledgement that they have been given and explained the policy and a copy of the acknowledgement will be kept in the child’s file.

Parent web resources

* The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org/English/safety‐prevention/athome/Pages/Abusive‐Head‐Trauma‐Shaken‐Baby‐Syndrome.aspx
* The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: http://dontshake.org/family‐resources
* The Period of Purple Crying: http://purplecrying.info/

**Onslow County Schools Preschool**

**CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

**Supporting Positive Behaviors**

Teaching and practicing appropriate student behavior is a very important component of the preschool experience. Appropriate student behavior is expected in order to provide a school climate conducive to effective teaching and learning. Praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement will be used as the primary methods of classroom management. Children are always supervised.

We reason, set limits and model appropriate behavior. We listen to children, provide appropriate consequences and structure our environment to support positive behaviors. We respect children’s families, culture and ethnicity. Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Each child at school has a right to:

* Learn in a safe and friendly place
* Be treated with respect
* Receive the help and support of caring adults

No form of corporal punishment will be accepted in the Onslow County Schools Preschool Program. Discipline is not related to eating, resting, sleeping or outdoor play. However, a brief time to self-regulate in calm down area may be used as a calming technique when developmentally appropriate.

**Challenging Behaviors**

The following are examples of unacceptable student behavior in the preschool program:

* Physical Abuse to peers and/or adults
* Verbal Abuse to peers and/or adults
* Jeopardizing the safety of other children
* Destruction of school property

If these unacceptable behaviors are exhibited, classroom staff will communicate with parent/guardian at the end of the day to discuss situation. When a child becomes verbally and physically aggressive, staff intervene immediately to protect all the children. The usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. On-going behavior concerns will be addressed by program staff through a series of interventions and strategies to teach appropriate behaviors. Staff will communicate and encourage parent involvement throughout this process.

**Suspension and Expulsion**

Teaching and practicing appropriate student behavior is a very important component of the Preschool experience. Appropriate student behavior is required in order to provide a school climate that is safe for your child and conducive to effective teaching and learning. If a child’s behavior is a serious safety threat, the program will consult with teachers, family members and if needed mental health consultant to determine if temporary suspension or modified schedule is needed in order for the program to put supports in place to ensure child safety. The program will not expel a child due to behavior.

**Onslow County Schools Preschool**

**HAND-TO-HAND CHILD SAFETY POLICY**

**Bus riders**

Preschoolers **riding any Onslow County Schools bus** must receive **hand-to-hand** service. A parent or officially designated adult **must** accompany each student to the assigned bus stop and wait with the child until the school bus arrives. The child is transported to the school. Each child is received at the school by a designated school employee. At the end of the school day, preschool children are placed on the school bus by a school employee and returned to the bus stop **where a parent or officially designated adult must receive them (with valid picture ID). If no designated adult at the bus stop, child will be returned to the school. Designated adult must be at the bus stop 10-15 minutes before and after scheduled pick-up until bus arrives.** Children riding regular Onslow County School buses are to be seated at the front of the bus so they can be seen and heard by the driver. Children riding preschool buses are seated in a designated spot by the bus monitor. **Children riding any Onslow County Schools bus must abide by all bus rules and safety procedures. Per NC Statute 14-132.2 no parent/guardian or other persons are allowed to board the bus at any time without permission.**

1. The first failure to have a designated adult meet the child at the bus stop will result in the child being returned to the school and a call to parent/guardian and/or emergency contacts and written notice of 1st incident. If **no** designated adult can be located the designated authorities may be called to intervene.
2. The second failure of a designated adult to meet the child at the bus stop will result in a formal contact (phone call) by school staff and 2nd incident report.
3. The third failure of a designated adult to meet the child at the bus stop and any incidents thereafter may result in loss of bus privileges up to 3 days per incident.

**Students transported by parents or other adults.**

Onslow County Schools Preschool students must receive **hand-to-hand** service. A parent or an officially designated adult **must** accompany each student to the preschool classroom and sign the child in for the day. A designated school employee receives each child at the school. At the end of the school day, the parent/designated adult of the preschool child must pick up the child from the classroom in a timely manner **(with picture ID).**

1. The first failure to have a designated adult pick up the child will result in a call to parent/guardian and/or emergency contacts.
2. The second failure will result in a conference with classroom teacher and family specialist.
3. Repeated instances will result in a referral to the designated authorities for further action.

**Parent/guardian signature indicates that they have read the Hand-to-Hand Child Safety Policy and understand the consequences of my (or the designated adult’s) failure to deliver to and pick up my child from the classroom or assigned school bus stop.**

**Onslow County Schools Preschool**

**TRANSPORATION POLICIES FOR PARENTS**

The following procedures have been reviewed with me prior to my child being transported on a bus route:

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| --- |
| □ When I leave my child at the bus stop they will be with a responsible adult.  □ Understand that children cannot transport medication in backpacks, lunch bags, coat pockets, etc.  □ Preschool children must sit in the front row(s) of the bus if school age children are riding also.  □ Preschool children may not sit with school age children except for siblings.  □ I have provided emergency contact information for my child. If I do not provide emergency information my child will not be transported until it is received.  □ When the bus arrives at the school, the driver will not allow the preschool children to exit the bus unless the designated center employee is available to receive them.    □ When the bus arrives at the child’s drop off site the driver will not allow the preschool children to exit the bus unless the designated responsible adult, with valid photo ID, is there to receive them.  □ If no one is at the drop off site to receive the child, the driver will return the child to the school and deliver the child to the principal or designee.  □ Preschool children will never be left on the bus without an adult present.  □ The driver will not transport more than 15 preschool children if the age of the youngest child is three, and no additional adults are present. If the age of the youngest child is four, the driver will not transport more than 20 preschool children, and no additional adults are present.  □ I will inform center staff of any special behavioral, emotional or physical needs of my child (ren). |

**Parent Orientation Checklist**

**Program Information**

\_\_\_Sites & Staff

\_\_\_Important Dates to Remember

\_\_\_What are our Preschool Programs?

**Program and Facility Information**

\_\_\_NC Childcare Regulations

\_\_\_Delays & Closures

\_\_\_Emergency Procedures

\_\_\_Standard of Conduct

\_\_\_Smoking/Prohibited Substances

\_\_\_Child Abuse & Neglect- Mandated Reporter

**Student Information Management**

\_\_\_Information Updates & Withdrawal Process

\_\_\_Non-Discrimination & Confidentiality

**Need to Know Information**

\_\_\_Classroom Visits

\_\_\_Attendance &Daily Sign In and Sign Out

\_\_\_Authorized, Unauthorized & Late Pick-Up

**Parent, Family, and Caregiver Engagement**

\_\_\_Family Services & Family Involvement Opportunities

\_\_\_Parent Committee Meetings, Activities and Workshops

\_\_\_Head Start Policy Council and Title I Parent Advisory Council

**Education Services**

\_\_\_Philosophy and Curriculum

\_\_\_Developmental & Behavioral Screenings

\_\_\_Inclusion & Disabilities

\_\_\_Children’s Personal Belongings

\_\_\_Supporting Social & Emotional Development and Mental Health Well Being

**Health and Nutrition Services**

\_\_\_Immunizations & Health Assessment

\_\_\_Prescribed Medication Administration

\_\_\_Healthy Habits & Nutrition

**Transportation**

\_\_\_Hand to Hand Procedures

\_\_\_Pedestrian Safety

**Policies & Acknowledgement**

\_\_\_I have received the School Readiness Goals. *(***p. 26***)*

\_\_\_I understand my child will be using toothpaste during tooth brushing. *(***p. 34***)*

\_\_\_I have received the summary of NC Childcare Law for Child Care Centers. *(***p. 38***)*

\_\_\_I have received the Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome & Abusive Head Trauma Policy.(**p. 40***)*

\_\_\_I have received the Challenging Behavior and Discipline Policy. **(p. 41)**

\_\_\_I have received the Hand-to-Hand Safety Policy. *(***p. 42***)*

\_\_\_I have received the Transportation Polices for Parents. *(***p. 43***)*

\_\_\_I have received the OCS Preschool Parent & Family Handbook