

Heritage Head Start News

September, 2020



Welcome Heritage Head Start families!

What an interesting year this has been! First of all, we hope this finds you safe and healthy. Thank you so much for joining us this year 😊. We're extremely appreciative of your positivity, flexibility and resilience during these trying times.

This first newsletter will focus on the policies and procedures that you can expect this fall as your child starts (or returns to) school. We will also have in person orientation on the first few days of class (in small groups, outside). We will share a video link with families that contains more information than this newsletter can provide, for those who would prefer learning virtually to an in person orientation. Finally, families who are unable to attend an in person orientation, or view the video, will be invited to have a 1:1 session over phone or on a video call. You will also be given a family handbook that explains our program as it operates during typical times.

Meanwhile, here are some highlights regarding our program, as we start this year.

Arriving at School Safely

The health and safety of your child and our entire community are paramount. Here is what to expect when you drop your child off at school.

- Children will line up outside at separate building entrances by classroom to avoid physical proximity to other groups of children and families.
- We ask that children and families wear masks and line up six feet apart while waiting.
- Staff will take children's temperatures using a no-contact thermometer and ask parents a series of health screening questions before children are allowed to enter the building. Adults will remain outside.

***“And suddenly,
you just know
it’s time to start
something new,
and trust the
magic of
beginnings.”***





In the Classroom/Returning Home

Heritage Head Start families and teachers work together to ensure each child's school readiness. We see every child as a capable, intelligent and resourceful learner.

This year children will participate in class two days a week and/or have options for remote learning such as hands on materials, virtual class meetings (Zoom), and virtual videos and activities through a platform called SeeSaw.

There are changes in the classroom routine as we start this year. To keep everyone safe, group size will be smaller, adults will wear masks, and children will always be encouraged to wear masks. We will share lessons on toothbrushing, but at this time will not brush in the classroom. Meals will be individually plated and covered rather than being served "family style." Kids will be spending more time outside, so please dress for the weather! We also ask that children not bring anything from home to school- not even backpacks, for the time being.

As always, we will practice handwashing many many times during the day. Teachers will be sanitizing and disinfecting the classroom and materials throughout the day and will do a deep clean every Friday.

When it is time to pick kids up, we ask that parents wait outside. The teachers will bring your child to you. Class begins at 8:30 and ends at 2:30. Please kindly drop off and pick up on time.

Family Engagement, Activities, and Leadership

At Heritage Head Start we believe that you, as a parent, are your child's first and best teacher. We will partner with you to share information and learn about how to best support your child in being successful in school. Here are some of the ways we will work together this year:

In addition to developing and supporting learning goals for children, families and staff meet to build relationships, develop plans, and support goals that benefit the whole family. Teachers will invite you to check in regularly via phone or video call to discuss your child's progress. Conferences and goal setting visits will occur quarterly and be held via phone or video call. Family support staff will invite you to check in regularly via phone or video call to discuss and support family goals.

Families have opportunity through the Parent Committee and Policy Council to gain leadership and get to know other families. The Parent Committee is you and all Heritage parents! Building community, learning together and planning activities is what happens here. This year, meetings and activities will be virtual (maybe through Zoom), at least to start with. They are a work in progress, and we need your ideas! Help us brainstorm some fun and educational activities! Policy Council is a group of parent representatives from all PSESD's Head Start programs in King and Pierce counties. Policy Council representatives work together with administrators to improve our program. Sound interesting? It is! Here is more information:

<https://www.earlylearningwa.org/policy-council-and-governance/policy-council>

PSESD/Heritage Head Start Policies A to Z

Attendance- Head Start is a school readiness program. Please bring your child to school on their class days unless they are sick. Please work with your child at home on distance learning days. If your child is unable to participate in class or at home, please call, text, or email and let us know.

Child abuse and neglect - All staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS) or law enforcement. A report is made when an injury is noticed, or if an adult's behavior is harming the child. We work with CPS and families to help keep children safe.

Communication/Complaints- You have the right to make a complaint if you are unhappy with something that is happening to you or your child in our program. We will get an interpreter if you need one. If your concern is about a staff person, talk with them first to try to fix the problem. If talking directly doesn't work, write down your concern and send it to the center manager.

Confidentiality- Your records are private. Only you and staff will see your child's records.

Custody Issues/Visitation/Restraining Orders- Please share legal documents that are relevant to your safety or parenting plan with Head Start staff. We need these documents to act on a current legal order. Please keep your Emergency Consent form up to date.

Diversity and Inclusivity-We plan activities so that all families can join in, in order to honor all families' values and beliefs. We do not celebrate birthdays or religious holidays in the classroom. We learn from children as they share celebrating special occasions at home.

Early arrivals, late arrivals, and late departures- Classes start at 8:30 and end at 2:30. Please drop off and pick up your child on time.

Emergency preparedness- Heritage Head Start has plans in place for emergencies and disasters. We regularly practice emergency drills with children in the classroom.

Food handling and preparation- All food consumed at Head Start must be prepared and served by Head Start staff. Please do not bring food to the center.

Health services- Children must be up to date on immunizations before attending class. Head Start also asks families to provide regular exam reports from medical and dental providers. If your child has medication or a special health need, we will help you make a plan for that at school.

Safe arrival- We want your child to be safe. Please ensure that they stay with you while walking and waiting to get into the classroom. Please talk to us if you need to update your Emergency Consent form to change numbers or add pick up people.

HHS is a **Tobacco/Drug-Free Environment**

