



**Plattsmouth Community Schools
Head Start
Conestoga Site**

2023-2024

PARENT HANDBOOK

Plattsmouth Early Childhood Program Mission

To create a foundation for success through creative, interactive, and intentional experiences that build safe and positive relationships, develop independent problem-solvers, and foster each child's learning potential while displaying empathy, tolerance, and appreciation of differences.

Plattsmouth Early Childhood Program Vision

Students who attend the Cass County/Plattsmouth Early Childhood program will have effective social skills that allow them to accept others, be cooperative, and appropriately accept individual needs and perspectives. Students will be able to self-regulate and manage emotions by using coping strategies. Our students will be able to recognize problems as well as identify and persistently work towards solutions. They will be creative, flexible, and critical thinkers who inquire about the world around them. Students will be independent and dedicated to ongoing learning and recognize the importance of doing things to the best of their ability.

Plattsmouth Early Childhood Program Beliefs

- Each child has the ability to enthusiastically learn and apply knowledge across a variety of new situations to achieve success.
- Promoting independence through developmentally appropriate, structured, safe, and nurturing environments based on children's interests is essential for learning.
- Children learn by and gain independence by exploring with hands on learning activities that inspire curiosity.
- The collaborative efforts of students' home, family, school, and community are essential for success.
- Approaches to learning should include balanced comprehensive services focusing on the whole child.
- Balancing child-directed and teacher-directed instruction, that includes all domains of learning is important for student learning.
- Children have a variety of languages in which to express ideas and need open-ended materials to express their languages.
- Children are *capable* of accommodating and accepting individual needs and perspectives while using social skills to solve problems and self-regulate.
- Providing structured opportunities and environments that allow children to make discoveries, solve problems, and challenge creative thinking is essential to an effective early childhood learning experience.
- Intentional, aligned, and systematic learning opportunities provide an effective foundation for children.
- Monitoring of progress and differentiating instruction is important for developing individual students to their full potential.
- It is important for children to develop secure, safe, and trusting relationships through positive interactions.

Welcome

Welcome to our early childhood program! We hope that this handbook assists you in the policies and procedures that you need to follow in order to meet the requirements of Head Start and to provide your child with a complete early childhood experience. The PECC/Head Start education program offers many opportunities for children to develop socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development. Our program provides an organized series of experiences that are designed to meet the individual needs of the children and families that we serve.

The Head Start program is unique from any other preschool or childcare setting. Head Start is a comprehensive child development program that serves children ages 3-5 and their families. It is child-focused and family centered. Head Start also provides a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, medical, dental, mental health, nutrition, parent involvement, and disabilities. Head Start programs are required to follow a set of performance standards. The Head Start Performance Standards are designed ensure that the Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully, that the Head Start philosophy continues to thrive, and that all grantees or delegate agencies maintain the highest possible quality in the provision of Head Start Services. The Plattsmouth Community School District is our grantee agency.

Plattsmouth Board of Education Policies

Please note that the Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center and Head Start are part of the Plattsmouth Community School District (PCSD) and, therefore, subject to all Plattsmouth Community School District policies as approved by the PCSD Board of Education. These policies are available on the PCSD website at www.pcsd.org under the Board of Education link under the About PCS tab and in the Policies file on the left side of the page.

Residence and Eligibility for Early Childhood Programs

Children are eligible for the Head Start Program if their family resides in Cass County. Children who are eligible for special education services must be served by the school district in which they reside. Children with special education services may receive services outside their district **only** with the permission of their resident school district. It is the responsibility of the family to report any change of residence to the PECC office immediately.

Preschool Program Description and Contact Information

Head Start - Conestoga Center
104 East High Street, Murray, NE 68409
402-235-2750

Juli Beck, Early Childhood Director
902 Main Street, Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-296-5250; Extension #2619

The Preschool Program will provide the children with developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum practices and assessments in a play-oriented learning environment, which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials. Family literacy is a part of the program which involves parents and children in interactive literacy activities; training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children; and parent literacy and age-appropriate educational activities to prepare the child for success in transitioning into school and life experiences.

Early Childhood Staff

All the Early Childhood teachers hold Nebraska teaching licenses (four year degree program) for Early Childhood Education and/or Early Childhood Special Education. Additional para-educators will be present in each classroom to ensure a ratio of at least one adult for every ten children with a maximum group size of 20. Other support staff may include a Family Support Advocate. Health and Nutrition services are monitored by a school nurse.

Curriculum, Daily Routine, and Assessment Section

Curriculum (Head Start Performance Standard 1302.32(a))

The Creative Curriculum® is a comprehensive curriculum for 3-to-5-year-old children which addresses the four areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. It is project-based and designed to foster the development of the whole child through teacher-led small and large group activities. The curriculum provides information on child development, working with families, and organizing the classroom around 11 interest areas. Child assessments are an ongoing part of the curriculum, and an online program provides record-keeping tools to assist teachers with the maintenance and organization of child portfolios, individualized planning, and report production.

Elements of the Daily Routine

Classrooms follow a predictable sequence of events known as the daily routine. This provides a structure within which children can make choices and follow their interests, as well as be introduced to both academic and social skills through direct instruction. While each classroom decides on the routine that works best for its setting, schedule, and population, the following segments are always included during the program day:

- **Small group time:** Small group time allows each teacher to meet with a small group of children working on a planned lesson. The teacher introduces the experience to extend learning, build on previously shared skills, solve problems and/or assess individuals. Although the adult chooses and introduces the materials, he or she may encourage the children to experiment with the materials in a variety of ways.
- **Large group time:** Large group time builds a sense of community. The children and adults come together for movement and music activities, storytelling, and other shared experiences. Children may have opportunities to make choices and play the role of leader or be engaged with direct instruction that is aligned with preschool targets. At large-group time, all the adults and children in the group get together to introduce academic or social skills through direct instruction. By going over the calendar or daily message, listening, telling, and re-enacting stories, singing songs, doing finger plays, dancing, playing musical instruments, exercising, playing games or re-enacting special events, each child participates in the large group, sharing ideas and learning from the ideas of others.
- **Transition times:** Transition times are orderly and predictable movement from one activity to another throughout the course of their school day. These routines provide opportunities for the child to develop self-regulation and social skills or reinforce pre-academic skills.
- **Plan time:** Children indicate what they plan (choose, want) to do during center/play/work time in a small group. Planning typically focuses on what children plan to do *first* during work time. Adults try to understand each child's plan and often try to help children extend their plans by encouraging discussion of the area in which they intend to work, the materials they plan to use, and the friends they will involve.
- **Center/play/work time:** Center/play/work time allows children to interact with materials in a variety of interest areas. Children implement their initial plans and it is common for young children to engage in many different activities over the course of one work time. Center/play/work time is the longest single time segment in the daily routine, typically lasting around 60 minutes. Adults neither lead work time activities nor sit back and watch them. Instead, they observe children to see how they perceive information, interact with peers, and solve problems – and they look for opportunities to enter into the children's activities to encourage children's thinking, extend their play, and help them wrestle with problem-solving situations. The children participate in a clean-up routine at the end of the work time.
- **Review time:** All children should be involved in the recall process, which can occur in a small group or large group setting. Recall can also take place individually with children during work time and clean up. A variety of recall methods should be incorporated including speaking, writing, or drawing to enhance the experience. For example, children might be encouraged to talk about the children they played with, what they built or pretended to be, or the problems they encountered.
- **Meal time:** Meals and snacks allow children to enjoy eating healthy food in a supportive social setting. The main goals are to create a shared and secure sense of community within the program and enhance language development. Meal times also offer the opportunity to work on a variety of developmental skills such as taking turns, maintaining a conversation, interacting with others appropriately and using utensils.

- **Large motor time:** Children and adults are involved in vigorous and often noisy play outside including opportunities to run, climb, roll, jump, yell, and sing with energy. Teachers should provide a balance of teaching new skills and encouraging child choice from a variety of interest areas such as dramatic play, blocks, science, writing, and art activities. During extreme weather or other unsafe conditions, teachers find an alternative indoor location for large motor activities. Children develop coordination, balance, spatial awareness and strength through gross motor activities. Outside time also provides time for coordinating both hands to manipulate large objects, continuing to develop body flexibility and coordination, and learning to use indoor and outdoor gross motor equipment safely and appropriately.
- **Quiet time:** Quiet time provides an opportunity for children to take a break from the activities of the day. Quiet time usually occurs after lunch and lasts for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Assessment (Head Start Performance Standard 1302.33(a))

The Plattsmouth Early Childhood/Head Start staff assesses children’s development with comprehensive observations rather than narrow tests, using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment. Observing a broad range of behaviors over several weeks or months gives us a more accurate picture of children’s true capabilities than tests administered in one-time sessions. Teachers and paraeducators record daily anecdotes describing what children do and say. Three times a year, teachers review these anecdotes and rate each child at the most accurate level he or she has demonstrated on the GOLD Developmental Continuum for 38 specific goals and objectives items in nine areas of development: social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science/technology, social studies, and the arts. Children’s GOLD scores help teachers design individualized learning opportunities tailored to their level of development. The Continuum follows ages birth-5 so that teachers can build on the student’s current stage of development throughout their time in preschool. The GOLD is also used to explain children’s progress to parents during conferences.

Program quality is assessed to ensure that young children participate in a high quality preschool program that contributes to positive cognitive, social, and health outcomes. The Plattsmouth Early Childhood Program staff utilize the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to provide information regarding classroom and program practices and quality. The CLASS is an observation tool administered by trained and reliable observers. The measure is completed at least yearly in all classrooms and program results are posted on the PECC website and shared with the Policy Council/advisory committee and Board of Education.

School Readiness

The Plattsmouth Early Childhood Program has established school readiness goals which are the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals. The school readiness goals are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five (HSELOF, 2015) and the Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska’s Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards.

The school readiness committee which consists of a parent representative from Policy Council/parent committee, members of the leadership team, and teacher representatives meets at least three times a year to review data and update goals. The school readiness data is shared with Policy Council/parent committee and the Board of Education at least three times a year. The information is also on the PECC website and in the Annual Report which is also posted on the PECC website.

Classroom Experiences

The following are standards that occur in each preschool classroom:

- There will be established interest areas:
 - The classrooms will have clearly defined, well-equipped interest areas. Areas will be set aside for books, computer, table toys, dramatic play, block building, sensory or science, literacy building, pre-writing, and large motor development. Shelves are labeled with a picture of the item so that students can find items and put them away independently.
- There is a daily “picture” schedule that is interactive in each classroom.
- There is a scheduled time in each day for outdoor play (when weather is appropriate) and large motor development.

- Head Start component areas of Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Dental Health and Safety are integrated in the daily activities.
- Children participate in learning experiences that are held in both large and small groups.
- Children have an individualized curriculum.
- Transitions are planned. Transition times can be used to teach new concepts, to practice skills, and to enhance creativity.
- Children will spend about one-third of their day in “free choice” or “center/play/work time.” This can be provided indoors or outdoors if the weather is permitting. During this time children are given opportunities to choose activities that interest them. Children make choices and select activities on their own.
- Children are given opportunities on a daily basis for self-help skills (e.g., washing hands, feeding themselves, dressing themselves, etc.).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)

One of the most important facets in the organization and operation of a preschool classroom is classroom management. Early childhood supports social and emotional growth by encouraging development which enhances each child’s strengths by: (a) building trust; (b) fostering independence; (c) encouraging self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations; (d) encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others; and (e) supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child’s health and well-being.



Plattsmouth Early Childhood Program Expectations/Rules Matrix

	Large Group	Center Time	Hallway	Small Group	Outdoor Playground	Outdoor Classroom	Indoor Playground	Meals	Naptime
Be Safe	Calm Body	Calm Body	Walking Feet	Stay in Your Spot	Hands & Feet to Self	Hands & Feet to Self	Hands & Feet to Self	Stay in your spot	Stay on Your Cot
		Walking Feet	Calm Body	Keep Your Body Calm & Safe	Keep Your Body Safe	Keep Your Body Safe	Keep Your Body Safe	Hands, Feet & Objects to Self	
		Hands & Feet to Self							
Be Responsible	Ears are Listening	Clean Up Our Classroom	Ears are Listening	Ears are Listening	Take Care of Our Playground	Take Care of Our Outdoor Classroom	Clean Up Our Indoor Playground	Clean Up Your Space	Clean Up Your Naptime Things
Be Respectful	Eyes Watching the Teacher	Use Kind Words	Eyes Watching the Teacher	Eyes Watching the Teacher	Use Kind Words	Use Kind Words	Use Kind Words	Follow Directions	Voices Off
	Follow Directions		Whisper Voices	Follow Directions			Inside Voices	Quiet Voices	

Suspension/Expulsion

Head Start Program Performance Standards

§ 1302.17 Suspension and expulsion

(a) *Limitations on suspension.*

(1) A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.

(2) A temporary suspension must be 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 modifications.

(3) Before a program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, a program must engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources – such as

behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

(4) If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, a program must help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:

(i) Continuing to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;

(ii) Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed;

(iii) Providing services that include home visits; and,

(iv) Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.

(b) *Prohibition on expulsion.*

(1) A program cannot expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior.

(2) When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, a program must explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. §705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child's teacher, and:

(i) If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), the program must consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or,

(ii) If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the program must collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.

(3) If, after a program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a program, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program must work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

Child Find

If you have or know a young child from birth to 5 years of age and you have concerns about his/her development, please call the Conestoga Public Schools at 402-235-2341.

Developmental concerns may include:

Low birth weight
Multiple births
Hearing loss
Slow to walk or crawl

High medical needs
Feeding concerns
Blindness or vision impairment
Identified disabilities
Behavioral or emotional problem

Prematurity
Difficulty speaking
Physical disability
Developmental delay

Early Development Network: Free early childhood intervention support is available across Nebraska. Call toll free: 1-888-806-6287.

Family Involvement Section

“A school will never be truly excellent unless it involves the parents”

**All families are unique and will be treated with respect and dignity.
Strict confidentiality will be maintained to ensure the privacy of each family.**

Parent Events/Involvement & Parent Committees

Parents are the most valuable members of the program! Monthly parent events/parent committees offer a great opportunity to be involved with your child's program. Attending parent events is an expectation of the Plattsmouth preschool program. Meetings are initially organized by the Family Support Advocate (FSA) with input from the parents and will be scheduled monthly. These meetings are designed to be educational as well as provide opportunities for social interaction. Parents will also be given an opportunity to advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families. Parents involved with the parent events/parent committee will elect a representative/liaison to the Policy Council to ensure ongoing communication between the two groups.

Family Activities

Parents/guardians and staff will plan family activity opportunities throughout the year. These activities will be fun and educational. If you are able to come and join in even once in a while, we welcome you. Always check your child's backpack for updates, newsletters and calendars for upcoming events. Plan to join us as your schedules allow.

Policy Council

Policy Council is a group of parents/guardians who are directly involved with the decision making process of the preschool program's planning and administration. Elections are held each year by secret ballot (one ballot per family) to obtain representation from each classroom. Parents who have agreed to serve as representatives submit their names to be included in this election process. Training for members is provided throughout the school year. Meetings are held once a month at a time most convenient to the majority of the members. The Policy Council is a federal requirement for all Head Start programs and the membership must consist of 51% parents/guardians who currently have enrolled children in the Head Start program. Parents of children enrolled in the tuition program are considered community representatives on the Policy Council.

Family Support Advocates (FSAs)

The Family Support Advocate staff will provide families with opportunities for ongoing communication to and from the school. This staff can provide current available resources for referrals or needs your family may have. All families have many strengths and the FSA staff will assist all families enrolled in the Head Start Program to develop family goals that capitalize on the family strengths. The FSA staff will be available to families daily at the center and on as-needed basis. Strict confidentiality is maintained with respect to family information. Please feel free to contact the center with requests or questions you may have at 402-235-2750.

Parent/Teacher Home Visits & Conferences

There are scheduled visits between parents/guardians and Head Start staff each year. Two of these will be conducted in the home and two will be at the preschool center. These conferences provide an opportunity for parents and the teacher to exchange helpful information about children and their development. Parents will be notified when conferences are to be scheduled. You may contact the teacher to schedule additional conferences at any time. Your participation in conferences is strongly encouraged as these visits allow each parent or guardian to have input into their child's education!

Parents/Guardians Visiting or Volunteering in the Classroom

Your help is always welcome in the classroom. If you can spend the day in the classroom or only an hour or two, please join us! Volunteering in the classroom is not only helpful to the staff, but is greatly beneficial for your child and you. We keep a record for each family and appreciate at least eight hours of volunteering a month. For every hour you spend helping our program, Head Start receives in-kind dollars. When you plan to visit or volunteer, please contact the classroom teacher a day in advance if possible, as schedules and out-of-class opportunities may

alter the day's schedule. It is helpful also to determine the breakfast and lunch count for the day. Parents are encouraged to volunteer throughout the preschool day.

Before volunteering to assist in the classroom, parents need to complete a request for background check, if you want to be able to work with other students (BOE Policy #1015). An example of this would be a person (to include parents) that visits or assists at school or class functions several times per semester or provides assistance to the teacher or other staff in the presence of children. No background check is required when a parent is only interacting with their own child or visiting the classroom for a short period.

Other Visitors or Volunteers

Other family members are always welcome to visit or volunteer in your child's classroom as long as it does not cause a disruption for your child or the other children. All visitors/volunteers must have permission from the child's parents/guardians in order to visit/volunteer in the classroom. Parents/guardians are able to indicate on the emergency card that a family member or family friend is able to visit/volunteer in their child's classroom. If a family member or friend is approved to visit/volunteer on the emergency card, parents/guardians may complete a change of status form to add them or may call the center prior to them visiting/volunteering to add them to the emergency card.

If a family member/friend arrives at the center to visit or volunteer in your child's classroom and they are not on the emergency card and you have not called to give permission, the classroom staff will attempt to call you to gain permission. If neither parent/guardian can be reached, the family member/friend will not be allowed to visit/volunteer on that day.

Before volunteering to assist in the classroom, family members/friends need to complete a request for background check, if they want to be able to work with other students (BOE Policy #1015). An example of this would be a person that visits or assists at school or class functions several times per semester or provides assistance to the teacher or other staff in the presence of children. No background check is required when a family member/friend is only interacting with the one child or visiting the classroom for a short period.

School Social Worker

A school social worker is available to assist parents and staff with areas of concern. No appointment is necessary and a schedule of general meeting times will be distributed to parents/caregivers in the monthly newsletters. The school social worker is also available to assist parents and staff to understand mental health and to access mental health interventions, as needed. Information about local mental health resources are also available from Family Support Advocates, the school social worker, and other teaching staff.

Classroom Placement Procedures

Classroom placement decisions for the Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center (PECC) are based on a number of factors. Information such as child strengths, language development, social/emotional development, behavioral needs, special education service accessibility, gender, age, and class size are all considered when creating classroom assignments. We strive for a balance of all these factors in each classroom.

Due to the many factors that must be considered when forming child assignments for a classroom, we ask that parents not make specific teacher requests. The demands associated with balancing classroom assignments make it impossible to honor all parental requests. If a parent has a special circumstance which necessitates providing information about their child and his or her learning, they may do so. Only written input provided directly by the parent and addressed to the Early Childhood/Head Start Director will be given consideration. The written input must be received prior to July 15th prior to the start of the school year to be considered. Please note that the written input will be discarded if requests such as the following are made:

- Requesting or un-requesting a teacher by name
- Requesting that specific children be placed in the same class (parents of multiples [twins, triplets, etc.] may submit requests to have their children in the same classroom or split into different classrooms)
- Requesting an experienced teacher or a first year teacher (all teachers associated with our program are highly qualified)

Parents and children will be notified about classroom assignments during registration in late July or early August. The final decision on all child classroom assignments rests with the Early Childhood/Head Start Director.

Thank you for your understanding regarding this process. If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please feel free to contact the Early Childhood/Head Start Director at the Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center.

Parent and Staff Responsibilities

The following are responsibilities for staff and parents/guardians involved in the **Head Start Preschool** program. If you have questions regarding this information, please ask a staff member.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- bringing your child to preschool each day on time and picking up your child on time each day
- participating in parent events, parent/teacher conferences, and visits in your home by the classroom teacher and staff
- participating in the family involvement/support program which requires, at least, two contacts in your home by the **Head Start Preschool** staff and family goal setting
- ensuring that your child completes required immunizations and physical, dental, and vision examinations
- providing copies of your child's immunization records, medical examinations and birth certificate in a timely manner
- reviewing the **Head Start Preschool** Parent Handbook

Head Start Preschool Staff Responsibilities:

- welcoming you and your child into the **Head Start Preschool** program
- being available to parents/guardians to answer questions and to listen to concerns/comments
- understanding and following policies/procedures that address non-attendance
- following policies/procedures when a child is not picked up from preschool in a timely manner
- working with parents/guardians to plan developmentally appropriate activities that will interest and challenge your child
- providing parents with information regarding your child's development throughout the preschool year
- encouraging parent/guardian involvement in the preschool

Verification of Information

Parents/guardians are asked to provide information about their families and their child throughout the application and enrollment process. Head Start staff members rely on this information to determine eligibility for Head Start, which is a federally sponsored program. Staff members meet with parents/guardians to verify information such as income, age of child, foster care participant, etc. Parents are required to provide accurate information and sign the application to certify that the information they have provided is true and accurate. If any provided information is found to be false, participation in Head Start program may be terminated and the parent/guardian may be subject to legal action.

General Information Section

Appropriate Dress

Please send your child to school in comfortable, washable clothes and shoes that are appropriate for the changing weather. Due to safety concerns, all children must wear shoes with a back strap such as a strapped sandal or tennis shoe (no flip-flops). Children will go outside daily unless the "feels like" temperature is below 10 degrees, so please remember to send warm clothes on chilly days including hats, coats, and mittens/gloves. All children need to have an extra change of clothes in case an accident happens. If parents have not furnished this for the school, they may be called to bring clothes if an accident occurs.

Arrival Time

Conestoga Head Start preschool classes will start at 8:15 AM. Please do not arrive with children before 8:00 AM as the staff members need time to prepare for the day. Consideration of this planning and communication time is appreciated! Children will be considered tardy beginning at 8:15 AM.

Parents must bring children to the classroom. It is expected that a responsible adult will accompany a child to their classroom upon daily arrival at preschool. Children are NOT to be dropped off at any building door and allowed to enter the building alone.

Parent parking on or in the area of the bus load/unload area is discouraged. Safety of the children is our primary concern so if you are parked in this area when the bus is loading or unloading children, you **will not be allowed** to move your vehicle until the bus departs or all children have safely been removed from the bus. If your child receives bus service, a staff member will escort your child into the classroom.

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is required for participation in the Head Start Preschool program. It is vital that the child attends in order to receive the most value from the program. **We ask that you or a family member call into the center to inform the staff as to any concerns that are preventing your child from attending school at 402-235-2750.**

Procedure for Absences:

1. After ten absences, the teacher or family support advocate (FSA) will discuss the situation with the parents(s). Efforts will be made to remedy the problem by determining specific conditions contributing to the attendance problem and developing a plan to address controllable conditions that may assist in alleviating the problem.
2. If absences continue after the initial meeting, the teacher or family support advocate (FSA) will set up a meeting with the parents(s) to develop an attendance contract.

A child will be considered tardy if they arrive after class begins at 8:15 AM. It is also important that children be picked up on time at the end of the school day. If a child is consistently picked up more than 10 minutes after the class dismissal time of 3:30 PM, the procedure for absences will be implemented.

Leaving School:

Children who must leave preschool for any reason during the session must have their parents check them out before leaving. Please notify the child's teacher in advance of the need to leave early. If your child will be returning to school that same day, they must be signed into the classroom before 12 pm. After 12 pm, please plan to keep your child home for the day.

Arriving at School Late:

If there is a need, parents may drop their child off at preschool anytime up to 12 pm. After 12 pm, if your child has not yet been to preschool, please plan to keep your child home.

Follow Up for Daily Absences:

When your child is absent, please plan to notify the teacher/FSA. If we do not receive a call from you or are unable to connect per phone contact, we will call the contacts you have provided on your emergency contact sheet in order to determine the well-being of the child. Following three (3) consecutive days of absence with no notice, our staff will initiate appropriate family support procedures to ensure the well-being of the children. This may include a home visit. The Preschool Program will strive to keep a close working relationship with families and support them during family crisis situations. Our intent is to maintain your child's enrollment in the preschool program however, if all potential options have been exhausted, it may be necessary to terminate your child's enrollment. You will always be notified of this possibility prior to release from the program. We request that you come into the Central Office to sign the appropriate Release of Records form in order to take copies of your child's file from the center.

Birth Certificate

State law requires that a certified copy of a child's birth certificate be used when enrolling a new child in school. If your child is registering with Head Start for the first time, you may obtain this document from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state in which your child was born. Assistance in obtaining birth certificates may be obtained from Health Records Management, P.O. Box 95065, Lincoln, NE 68509-5065. There is a fee per certificate.

Please note: The document parents receive from the hospital looks like a birth certificate, but it is not a certified copy. A certified copy has the raised seal of the state of Nebraska on it and is signed by the director of vital statistics.

If a birth certificate is unavailable, other reliable proof of a student's identity may be used. These documents could include naturalization or immigration documents showing date of birth or official hospital birth records, a passport, or a translation of a birth certificate from another country. The documents must be accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate.

Bus Transportation

Parents or guardians must have a signed transportation form to allow the transporting of children. These transportation forms are kept on file and any transportation changes need to be noted on a new transportation form. Please allow approximately one week for the change to become effective and for the bus staff to change the route to accommodate the change.

Riding the bus is a privilege and safety is the main concern. Children and family must support the safety rules of the driver and the school system. Failure to do so may result in the loss of transportation privileges.

Bus transportation adheres to a daily schedule so promptness is a must. Drivers have been instructed to adhere to this schedule and they are not allowed to wait at a pick up sight for children who are late as this will cause the remainder of the pick ups/drop offs to be late. On the other hand, please be aware that weather and other reasons may cause delays with the bus schedule. Please be patient -- watching and ready. Times may vary slightly daily.

When waiting to be picked up, stay a safe distance from the side of the road or curb. When the bus arrives, stay clear until it has come to a complete stop.

Please be visible for the driver or para when they bring your child back to the drop off point. **Your child will not be dropped off if a designated adult is not waiting. If the designated adult is not waiting, your child will be brought back to the center for a designated adult to pick him or her up.** Please be waiting for your child(ren).

All children and adults are expected to follow the regulations of riding on the school transportation system. If there is a problem, the teacher will contact the parents in order to work out a solution.

Any changes in service or schedule must be called into the main school office at 402-235-2992 or 402-227-2992 by 7:00 AM. Also, if a child will not be attending school that day, please call 402-235-2750 and report the absence to the child's classroom.

Call the center if someone other than the pre-designated adult will be dropping off or picking up your child. This message will be relayed to the teacher, driver and para. Also, send a note stating permission of such, signed and dated, with the driver or para. A phone call is always necessary.

If you would like to pick your child up instead of him or her being transported, please call the center at 402-235-2750 and let the teacher know in advance so they are not put on the bus.

In general, call for all transportation changes. Changes must be cleared with the Head Start office. A new transportation form must be filled out with all changes. Call if any transportation procedures are unclear.

All safety restraint laws are followed for children and adults (child safety seats are used when needed.) **The safety and welfare of the children is our main concern. Please feel free to call and report any concerns that you may have.**

Celebrations

Rationale for Celebrations Policy:

Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center (PECC) staff members' honor and support classroom celebrations. We also respect the diversity of families and value inclusion. Because of this, it is our intention to plan activities for children and families in a way that allows all children and/or families to participate, without any conflict with family beliefs, traditions, financial status or values. All Head Start/PECC activities related to celebrations and holidays, whether they are at the classroom or school level, must be consistent with the policy outlined below.

Celebrations Policy: (approved by Policy Council on 3/24/15)

Classroom Celebrations:

- We have many celebrations in preschool that are generally focused around changing seasons. We also celebrate our friends and families on an individual basis (e.g., Star of the Week, Family Events, etc.). We encourage teachers, parents, and children to celebrate learning every day. In order to be respectful of everyone's beliefs and financial status, we save religious and commercial holidays, as well as birthday celebrations, for families to celebrate on their own.
- The program will build positive self-esteem in children through a wide variety of learning experiences, which can include their families' interests and hobbies.
- Classroom practices will include experiences and materials representing the everyday lives of all children in the classroom. These practices will be child-centered, age-appropriate, meaningful, and reflect the concepts of "similarities and differences" in a manner that respects all family cultures and values.
- **Observations and celebrations of commercialized or religious holidays, holiday symbols, birthdays, Mother's Day, or Father's Day will not occur.** Parents are not allowed to bring treats, cards, and other items that center around holidays (e.g., Valentine cards, Halloween treats, Christmas cookies, etc.). Also, classroom themes, decorations, projects, and programs will not be centered on holidays. Teachers and other adults in the classroom, however, will positively acknowledge spontaneous comments from children or parents about holiday observances and family or community celebrations without comparing material possessions of different students. For example, if a child states, "It is my birthday today!", the teacher will respond in a way that affirms the child's self-esteem, such as, "Well, I hope you have a fun day then!"

Family Involvement:

- The celebrations policy will be discussed with parent/guardians during registration/orientation/initial home visit. Information regarding this policy will also be provided throughout the year as needed.
- Families, extended families and the community are welcome to share interests and hobbies. All sharing sessions will be organized and coordinated in partnership with the staff to ensure congruence with this policy. Any materials needed for a sharing activity will be provided by Head Start.
- We delight in the accomplishment of children completing preschool and transitioning to kindergarten. Staff may plan end of the year preschool activities to acknowledge the children moving to kindergarten, however, no formal graduation ceremony will be planned. Parents are encouraged to be involved in any end of the preschool activities that may be planned (e.g., picnics, classroom celebrations, singing programs, etc.).

No food or treats may be brought in from the outside.

Children/families are asked not to hand out birthday celebration or other party invitations at school.

Change of Information/Status

Change of information such as phone numbers, addresses, emergency numbers and transportation information should be given to the Family Support Advocate (FSA) or to the classroom teacher in writing and signed by the parent or guardian at least 48 hours prior to the change if possible.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

When any Head Start Preschool staff member or volunteer has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child(ren) being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would result in abuse or neglect, he/she shall report such incident or cause a report to be made as soon as possible to the proper law enforcement agency or to Health and Human Services (Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 28-710; 28-711, PCSD Policy 5402). Anyone participating in good faith in these procedures shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal. Law providing privileged communication shall not apply in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline phone number for a report: **1-800-652-1999**

Closings/Early Release/Inclement Weather

Conestoga Head Start follows the decision of the Conestoga Public School District regarding weather related cancellations. If the Conestoga Public School has a late start, we will hold Head Start classes that day.

It is difficult to measure the severity of the weather in all sections of our service area, so the final decision rests with the parents on whether to send their child(ren) to preschool during adverse weather conditions or to keep their child at home. Please contact the Conestoga Head Start program if you decide not to send your child(ren) to preschool when preschool is in session. In the event of severe weather at the time you are picking up your child(ren), please note that staff **will not release** any children during severe weather warnings.

TV and radio stations will carry school closing messages as soon as any decision is made regarding school cancellation or dismissal early due to weather conditions and/or other emergencies. Announcements will be made over radio stations KFAB 1110AM, WOW 590AM, 94.1FM, and 89.7FM, and TV channels 7, 6, 3, and 42. In case of civil, national, or natural disruptions, every effort will be made to give announcements to the welfare of the students during the school day. Under such conditions parents may come to school to get their child(ren) if they so desire and if it is safe to do so.

Provision will be made by your school authorities to take care of the school children when storms occur during the school day that are of such intensity that it makes bus transportation hazardous. Your cooperation in helping keep telephone lines free during such emergencies will be appreciated.

The preschool office is unable to honor requests to personally call each parent when preschool is let out early. It is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements to ensure the safety of your child should school be dismissed early. If you are unavailable, then it is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements with another adult to ensure the safety of your child should school be dismissed early.

Complaint/Concern Procedure

When parents have a concern or complaint about the early childhood program, the following protocol should be followed:

1. Schedule a conference/meeting with the staff person most immediately or directly involved in the matter.
 - No matter the concern, address it with the person most directly involved first
 - It is appropriate to call for an appointment or to set up a time to meet with the staff person
 - When calling or setting up an appointment, it is courteous to let the person know the general nature of the concern
2. Address the concern to the Building/Program Administrator if the matter is not resolved at Step One.
 - Supervisory personnel will rarely have ready access to the information they need to be of immediate assistance and working through the issue will likely require additional time
3. Address the concern to the Superintendent if the matter is not resolved at Step Two.

- When you believe you have taken the concern to the next level but still haven't achieved a satisfactory outcome, the Superintendent is the next person to involve
 - Keep in mind that a meeting with the Superintendent will likely require some advance planning
 - There is a specific complaint form to be used when a person has a complaint related to discrimination, harassment or retaliation on such bases in regard to employment or the programs and activities of the school district.
 - Refer to Board Policy 1200, 4003 and/or 5401 for the particulars of the complaint and grievance process.
 - The complaint form can be accessed on the PCSD website by choosing "About PCS" then scrolling down and selecting Board of Education. On the left side of the page chose the "Policies" tab, then select "1000 Community Relations." Select Policy 1200A for access to the form. Or use the following link: <https://www.pcsd.org/Page/20>
4. Address the concern to the Board of Education if the matter is not resolved at Step Three.
- School Board members are elected to represent the interests of all parents and district residents and are available to hear the points of view of their constituents, however school board members do not have direct authority over day to day school operations and all authority is the result of official actions by a majority of the Board at meetings open to the public
 - Board members may be able to request that the Board review the specific policies that relate to the situation or propose new policies for the Board's consideration
 - Contact a Board member when a policy is being enforced that you believe results in bad consequences, when you believe a policy isn't being enforced, or when policies or procedures are not enforced fairly for all
 - The Plattsmouth School Board of Education is the governing body for the Cass County Head Start program

Custody Agreements/Court Orders

All preschool parents/guardians will be requested to complete required paperwork that specifically identifies who is allowed to pick up your child from preschool. Amendments to this list can be made in written form by the primary adult during the school year. **The primary adult is not able to unilaterally exclude the other parent from picking up the child unless there is a court order in place to exclude that parent from having contact with the child.** A copy of the court order must be provided to Conestoga Head Start program. Please visit with your Family Support Advocate (FSA) if you have specific questions or concerns.

Note: Law enforcement can only prevent a parent from removing a child if there is a court order prohibiting the parent from having contact with the child.

If one parent has been given primary legal custody, **information about the child will not be released without the primary custodial parent's permission.** If parents have a joint custody agreement, information about the child will be released to both parents.

Dismissal

Dismissal time is between 3:15-3:30 pm, unless otherwise notified by your child's teacher. When picking children up at the end of the day, please enter the building and go to the child's classroom. Teachers will not allow children to leave until an authorized individual has come to the room to pick the child up. Children that receive bus service will be escorted to the bus by a staff member. No child will be allowed to leave the facility unattended.

Staff members are only allowed to release children to those individuals specified on the emergency contact form and others added by the parent through a change of status form. If a staff member does not recognize the person picking up the child, he or she will request a photo ID in order to confirm their identity and make sure they are listed on the child's pick up list. If a situation arises when a parent needs to have someone pick up their child who is not on the approved list, please contact the main office to give permission over the phone for that day. Please come to the office the next day to complete the change of status form if you wish to add the person to the child's pick up list for future pick ups. If someone arrives at the center to pick up the child who is not on the approved list, staff will need to call the parent or someone on the emergency contact list to get verbal permission to release

the child. If verbal permission cannot be obtained, staff will keep the child at the center and ask that someone from the approved list pick up the child. Law enforcement may be called if the child is left at the center for some time past dismissal time.

Whenever a child is not picked up by the center's closing hour (3:30 pm for the school day) and if parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached by phone, staff may call Child Protective Services or law enforcement. **Late pick ups will result in a \$5.00 late fee** and the fee increases by \$5.00 for each 15 minutes the child remains at school past the pick up time. For instance: Sign out between 3:30-3:45 pm is a \$5.00 charge, sign out between 3:45-4:00 pm is a \$10.00 charge. Payment must be received within a week of the occurrence for the child to continue in the preschool program. Continual late pick up or late pick up without notification may result in termination of the child from the preschool program.

If you need to pick up your child before dismissal time, please send a note or call ahead to the Conestoga Head Start program at **402-235-2750** so a message can be relayed to your child's teacher.

Intoxicated/Under the Influence of Drugs Pick Up Procedure:

A situation may arise when a parent/guardian or other caregiver picking up a child appears intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. If a staff member questions the safety of the child's transportation home due to apparent suspected intoxication of the pick-up person, the following steps will be followed. The staff member will:

1. Talk to the pick-up person and ask how s/he got to the center. The main concern is whether the person drove and if s/he intends to drive the child home.
2. If the pick-up person has driven and intends to drive home, the staff member will tell the pick-up person that they are concerned about the safety of the caregiver and the child.
3. Make an offer to call one of the other designated pick-up persons on the child's list. If this does not work, the staff member will suggest calling a taxi or a friend or family member. If the pick up person is not the parent, the staff member will attempt to call the parent to let him/her know of the concern for the child's safety and to check if the parent is available to come and pick up the child.
4. If the pick-up person refuses or becomes confrontational, the staff member will calmly let them know that they will be calling law enforcement to report the incident. Ask if the pick-up person would stay to talk to the officer about the situation.

Early Childhood/Preschool Supplies

Parents of preschoolers will **not** need to provide classroom preschool supplies. A backpack is helpful for a child to carry classroom notes and classroom activities home, as well as notes from home back to the preschool.

Children are not permitted to bring any toys, food items, gum, money, books, etc. on the buses or into the center. Food items, including gum, may cause choking while in transport and might cause the child not to eat meals prepared at the center. **Children will be required to finish any food or drink item brought from outside the center prior to entering the classroom.** Toys, books, etc. might cause friction among the children and/or get lost or claimed by someone else other than the owner. If an IEP or 504 team recommends that a child needs a special toy or other item as part of their services, the recommendation will be adhered to.

Extra Set of Preschooler's Clothing

It is advisable that your preschool child brings an extra set of clothing to place in his/her cubby in case the child needs a change of clothing during the preschool day. Your preschooler's jackets, overshoes, mittens, etc., should be marked for easy identification. This helps eliminate loss and confusion. A parent can check in with staff if their child has lost an item.

Non-Discrimination on Basis of Race/Sex

It is a policy of the Plattsmouth Community Schools not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race, color, religion, marital status or national or ethnic origin in its educational programs, activities or employment policies. Inquiries regarding compliance with this policy may be directed to the Superintendent of Plattsmouth Community Schools, or to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Educational Welfare, Washington, D.C.

Non-Discrimination in Food Service Program

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Parent Resource Library

There is a parent resource library located at Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center (PECC). Parents are able to check out resource materials and children's books and they can access pamphlets and brochures that address a number of issues such as toilet training, child discipline, etc. Check with personnel in the main office for assistance.

Pets

Students and/or parents should not bring animals into the school or classroom unless prior approval has been given by the classroom teacher. If approval has been given, the animal should be on a leash, in a cage, or in some kind of container. Allergies of staff and students should be considered before any visit by an animal.

Publication of Child Pictures and Products

From time to time your child may have occasion to be photographed for the newspaper, television, the Head Start/PECC Facebook page, or PCSD Internet web pages. The news media will occasionally do stories on events occurring in school programs, presentations, and other newsworthy happenings. Teachers may post pictures of classroom activities and field trips on PCSD Internet web pages.

Since pictures of your child are personally identifiable information, you have the opportunity to request that your child's picture not be used for the above purposes. **If you do not wish to have your child's picture or work available to the media or displayed on the Internet, please contact the main office at 402-296-5250.** If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you agree to have your child's picture or work available to the media, on the Head Start/PECC Facebook page, or on the Internet should such an occasion arise.

Respect and Courtesy

Any employee and/or other staff at Conestoga Public Schools and/or Head Start program has authority and jurisdiction anytime during school or at any school function and deserves respect.

Siblings

During a parent or guardian's volunteer time at the Conestoga Head Start program, siblings or younger children who are not enrolled are not allowed on field trips or in classrooms during regular school hours.

Smoke Free Environment

All of the Head Start program's buildings and grounds are smoke, e-cigs. and tobacco-free. When attending school events, please abide by the policy.

Student Record Data

The Conestoga Head Start program is in compliance with HIPPA and FERPA guidelines. The HIPPA and FERPA policies are on file in the Plattsmouth Elementary School office.

The Head Start program collects and maintains records on each student in order to facilitate the instruction, guidance and educational progress of the student. The records contain information about the student and his/her education and may include but are not limited to the following types of records: identification data, attendance date, health and immunization records, records of achievement, family background data, assessment, educational plans, classroom observations and external agency reports. All books, papers, documents, reports, and records kept by the District may be retained as electronic records (BOE Policy #3560).

The records of each student are generally located in the building that he or she is attending. The persons responsible for maintenance of student records for each school building are the Supervising Teachers and the Health/Nutrition Manager.

The following persons, agencies and organizations may have restricted access to student records without proper written consent of the parent/guardian. Any other access to student records shall be only upon written consent or upon court order or legally issued subpoena.

1. School officials and teachers with legitimate educational interest
2. Representatives of state and local government when auditing and evaluating federal educational programs
3. Government officials to whom information is to be reported under state law
4. Organizations that process and evaluate standardized tests
5. Accrediting or organizations for accrediting purposes
6. Parents of dependent children, regardless of child's age
7. In connection with an emergency

Student records are reviewed when a student moves from the Preschool Program to the Elementary School and/or when a student transfers out of the District.

A procedure to be followed in exercising any of the rights under school policies or rules may be obtained from the Head Start Director.

Those records not of a permanent nature are destroyed upon graduation or within three years of discontinued attendance in the district. Parents of students under the age of 18 may exercise the opportunity to review educational records of the student; to obtain copies of the records; to write a response to material in the records; to challenge the content of the record on the grounds of inappropriateness, inaccuracy, or an invasion of privacy; and to have the records explained.

The administrator of the program may release the following types of information to the public as he/she sees fit, keeping in mind the privacy of the student and the student's family: participation in officially recognized activities, dates of attendance, and awards received.

Any parent objecting to the public release of such information must sign a written form at the time of enrollment with the Cass County Head Start Preschool Program stating that the public does not have release of such information.

Telephone Calls

Parents are welcome to call the school office at any time. During class time, the family support advocate (FSA) or a paraeducator may be able to take a message to relay to the classroom or parents can leave a voice mail for the classroom staff. If it is an emergency and you cannot get the early childhood staff, call the Head Start main office at 402-296-5250.

Transition

The Conestoga Head Start program assists families as they transition into and out of the various programs. Activities are planned throughout the year to assist families and children with these transitions.

Video Surveillance

The Plattsmouth Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on School District and Head Start property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all staff, children, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of the Plattsmouth Community School District.

Notice is hereby given that video surveillance may occur on District property (including Head Start property). In the event a video surveillance recording captures a child or other building user violating school policies, rules, or local, state, or federal laws, the video surveillance recording may be used in appropriate disciplinary proceedings and may be provided to law enforcement agencies.

Weapons Policy

If a weapon is brought to preschool, it will be confiscated and may not be returned to the child or parent. If appropriate, the police/sheriff department and child protective services will be notified. Weapons are defined as any object that may be used to intimidate or inflict bodily harm whether it is a real weapon or a replica of such. These shall include, but are not limited to the following items: knives, guns, lead pipes, chains, razors, ice pick, slingshot, scissors, swords, pocket knives, explosives (including fireworks), brass knuckles, etc.

Health Section

Health Examinations

The Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center/Head Start Program requires annual dental and physical exams and up-to-date immunizations before school begins (BOE Policy #5001). Each child is required to have a lead and hemoglobin blood level result on file, completed on or after the age of two. Each child is also required to have a health history and nutrition assessment on file (to be completed with staff at the beginning of the school year).

Follow up is required, if deemed necessary by the physician or dentist. For example, if cavities were detected, parents will need to submit paperwork from the dentist saying that the cavities were taken care of.

Health services at the early childhood center include the monitoring of height/weight (at least three times a year), vision screen (if not completed during physical), and hearing screen (if not completed during physical).

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have immunization requirements for children entering school. In Nebraska, children can't attend classes in public or private school until the school has written proof of their immunization status. Each school in Nebraska is required to keep the immunization history of the students enrolled on file. Parents or guardians must present one of the following documents to the school to verify immunization status:

- An immunization record showing that the child is protected by age-appropriate immunizations.
- A statement signed by a physician that the required immunization would be injurious to the student or members of the student's family or household.
- An affidavit signed by a legally authorized representative stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is a member.

A student can be provisionally enrolled in school if he or she has started the immunizations series and continues the necessary immunizations as rapidly as is medically possible. If the student doesn't continue with the immunization schedule, he or she will be sent home.

Emergency Cards

An emergency card must be kept on file for every child enrolled in the Early Childhood Program. Please update this card on a regular basis, including the list of family/friends who are approved to pick up your child or visit/volunteer in the classroom. Check with classroom staff to complete a change of status card to update your information.

Emergency Disaster Plan

Head Start/PECC staff have emergency disaster plans in place for situations such as fires, tornadoes, intruders, evacuation, etc. Parents will be notified of the evacuation site at the beginning of each school year and are asked to access that site in the event of an emergency. If dismissal must take place from the evacuation site, please be sure to have your identification (e.g., driver's license) with you when you pick up your child.

Parents are notified of the off-campus evacuation site at the beginning of each school year and are asked to access that site in the event of an emergency. If dismissal must take place from the evacuation site, please be sure to have your identification (e.g., driver's license) with you when you pick up your child.

In the event of a tornado warning, children will be safely evacuated to the designated area within the school building. In order to keep all children and staff safe, children will not be released from school until the tornado warning has expired. Parents will not be able to access the building during the tornado warning and no one will be available to answer the telephone since all staff members will be a safe location with the children.

Illness While At School

The following symptoms, if displayed by children during school, will require temporary exclusion from participation in the program at the discretion of the nurse:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or above
- Rash (if accompanied by a fever)
- Live head lice (nits do not require exclusion)
- Severe abdominal pain
- Severe or harsh cough; with thick green discharge from the nose
- Rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Two or more episodes of diarrhea
- One or more episodes of vomiting (not associated with meal time)
- Red eyes with discharge
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin (requires immediate care)
- Impetigo, ringworm (if not able to cover)

Health Expectations for Parents

- For families in the program, it is the parent's responsibility to pick up the child within one hour of being notified that the child is ill. Per health regulations, the child may not return to school until the child has been symptom-free, without the aid of medication, for 24 hours. If diagnosed with a contagious illness (e.g., strep throat, pink eye, etc.), the child can return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- If a child becomes ill during school hours, appropriate staff will be called. If the decision is made to send the child home, the parent will be notified to pick up the child.
- If the child is brought to the school and staff observes symptoms of illness, appropriate staff may determine that the child cannot be accepted into the classroom.

CRITERIA FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS, INJURY, OR SURGERY:

- Sutures or cast—a note from the child's physician is needed before returning to school regarding any restrictions of activities.
- A note from the child's physician should also accompany the child following surgery with any restriction of activities.
- If a child is out with chicken pox, a note is not needed from the doctor as long as all pox are dry (7-10 days.)

Medication

Appropriate paperwork needs to be on file for medications to be administered during school hours. See the Health and Nutrition Manager for these forms.

- Medication must be brought in the original prescription container with date, child's name, name of medicine, amount of medicine/time to be given.
- Medication must be brought in by the parents and given to the Health and Nutrition Manager or teacher. **DO NOT SEND IN CHILD'S BACKPACK.**
- If your child rides the bus, medication must be given to the bus aide or driver for safe keeping while the child is transported. The bus aide will give the medication to the appropriate person upon arrival.
- Over-the-counter medications are not given at the Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center (i.e. Tylenol, Benadryl, Motrin, cough drops)

Nutritional Services

Every child in our program receives breakfast and lunch. These meals are served family style with children and staff eating together in a relaxed atmosphere. Breakfast includes milk, juice or fruit, and grain. Lunch includes milk, meat or meat alternative, fruit, vegetable, and grain. A variety of foods are provided which broaden the child's food experience. **Food is not used as a punishment or reward and children are encouraged to eat, but never forced to eat.** Menus are created based on federal guidelines for this age group.

Safety

Head Start/PECC is committed to providing physical environments conducive to learning. Space and materials will be appropriate for the developmental needs of all children enrolled in the program. Classrooms will provide at least 35 square feet of usable space per child and the outdoor playground will provide at least 75 square feet of usable space per child. The center environment will be free from toxins such as cigarette smoke, pesticides, and other air/soil/water contaminants. Potentially hazardous items such as cleaning supplies, medications, etc. are stored in locked areas. Electrical outlets are covered with safety plugs and extension cords are not used in areas utilized by children. The outdoor space will be fenced to prevent any child from leaving the premises.

Indoor and outdoor areas are checked by staff members, prior to use, for the following: area is free from debris, litter, and any hazards; there are no missing components to any pieces of equipment or furniture items; the area is fully enclosed (outdoor play area); and the area is generally free from hazards that could potentially pose a danger to the children's health, safety or well-being. The playground and classrooms are inspected at least monthly to ensure they meet safety standards. An annual safety inspection of the center is completed to ensure that emergency lighting, ventilation, heat, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, and other systems are consistent with the health, safety, and developmental needs of the children.

Special Dietary Needs

A physician's statement for any child requiring a prescribed therapeutic diet or having a good allergy or intolerance must be on file. Classroom staff and nutrition services staff are notified of any special dietary need.

LOCATIONS AND TIMES OF AREA IMMUNIZATION CLINICS

SARPY/CASS COUNTY IMMUNIZATION CLINIC (P. (402) 593-3222 F. (402) 593-3034)

Free clinic – Donations Accepted

Eligible* children 0-18 years of age

*An eligible child is enrolled in Medicaid, uninsured, underinsured (has health insurance, but vaccines are not covered), or an American Indian/Alaskan Native.

Request an appointment online!

Please visit: <https://www.chihealth.com/en/location-search/midlands/immunization-clinic/immunization-clinic-appt.html>

PAPILLION – Midlands Medical Building One Phone – (402) 593-3222

First Thursday of the month from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Second and Fourth Thursdays from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

11109 South 84th Street, 5th Floor Suite 5800, Papillion, NE 68046

AREA HEALTH CARE SERVICES:

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services: www.accessnebraska.ne.gov

Provides medical insurance benefits to residents of Cass County who are income eligible or have Medicaid

Cass Family Medicine

Provides sliding scale payment options for those uninsured or underinsured

122 S 6th Street

Plattsmouth, NE 68048

(402) 296-2345

WIC Clinic

Herold Hall (next to St. Luke's Episcopal Church)

3rd Street & Avenue A

Plattsmouth, NE 68048

(402) 335-2988 or 877-691-8381

First and Third Mondays By Appointment Only

(8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

Sarpy/Cass Health Department

701 Olson Drive, Suite 101

Papillion, NE 68046

(402) 339-4334

Toll Free: 800-645-0134

Fax: (402) 339-4235

After hours health emergencies: (402) 506-1553

Sarpycasshealthdepartment.org

AREA HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Dentistry

Louisville Family Dental
229 Main Street
Louisville, NE 68037
402-234-3000

Weeping Water Dental
105 West Eldora
Weeping Water, NE 68463
402-267-2325

McKnight Family Dental
2302 W 8th Ave Suite 2
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-296-2818

Capehart Family Dentistry
2110 Towne Centre Dr
Bellevue, NE 68123
402-885-8990

Main Street Family Dental and Orthodontics
619 Main St
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-296-2188

OneWorld Dental
*sliding scale options available
Omaha
4920 S. 30th Street, 3rd Floor
Omaha, NE 68107
402-932-7204

Bellevue
2207 Georgia Ave
Bellevue, NE 68005
402-502-8855

Optometry - Eye Clinic

Dr. John Bateman
Dr. Andrea Carda
2380 W 8th Ave, Suite 4
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-296-2200

Physicians/Pediatricians

Methodist Physician's Clinic
203 Main St
Louisville, NE 68037
402-234-2500

Children's Physicians
1938 E Highway 34
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-955-7150

UNMC Physicians
1938 E Highway 34
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-296-6009

Cass Family Medicine/OneWorld
Plattsmouth
122 South 6th St
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
402-296-2345

Weeping Water Medical Clinic
204 North Randolph St
Weeping Water, NE 68463
402-267-5330

Applicable Board of Education Policies/Procedures

All Board of Education policies can be accessed at the following link, <https://www.pcsd.org/Page/19> , or they can be found by going to the Plattsmouth Community Schools website (www.pcsd.org) and clicking on *About PCS*, scroll down and select *Board of Education* and then *Policies*. All of the most current policy updates can be found online.

POLICIES

1000 Community Relations

- 1120 Tobacco Policy
- 1200 Anti-discrimination

2000 Administration

3000 Business Operations

4000 Personnel

5000 Students

- 5104 Drug and Substance Use and Prevention
- 5202 Student Records
- 5306 Safe Pupil Transportation
- 5401 Anti-discrimination & Harassment Policy
- 5410 Students with Disabilities
- 5417 Homeless Students Policy
- 5421 Student Privacy Protection

6000 Instruction

- 6286 Return to Learn From Cancer
- 6370 Multicultural Education
- 6500 Free and Reduced Price Meals

7000 New Construction

8000 Internal Board Policies

9000 By-laws of the Board