

# HALE EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

## **Family Handbook 2025-2026**

**Phone: (860) 742-4550  
1776 Main Street, Coventry, CT 06238**





# Table of Content

Mission Statement.....1  
Philosophy .....1  
Equal Opportunity Statement.....1  
Anti-Bias Statement.....1

## HEEC Staff

Staff Credentials .....2  
Professional Development .....3  
Confidentiality .....3

## HEEC Programs

Age Eligibility.....4  
Kindergarten Age Requirement .....4  
Enrollment .....5  
Registration Forms.....6  
Medications During School .....6  
After Care .....6  
Program Funding .....6  
Family Tuition Fees .....7  
Tuition Assistance.....7  
Arrival and Departure and Attendance Procedures .....8  
Updating Information .....11

## Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Classroom Curriculum.....12  
Assessments .....12  
    Preschool Screen.....13  
Child Study Team .....13  
Special Education Services.....14  
B-3 Referrals.....14

## Health and Medical

Health Assessment Record Policy .....14  
Illnesses, Communicable, Infectious Disease.....16  
Plan for Identifying Special Health Care Needs.....16  
Emergency Health Care .....16  
Injury Prevention Plan .....17  
Illness Guidelines.....17  
Immunization Requirements for Flu.....18  
Toilet Training.....18  
Hand Washing Policy .....19  
Nap/Rest .....19  
Behavior and Discipline.....19

**Parent Communication and Involvement**

HEEC Parent Group.....21  
Welcoming Children and Families .....21  
Family Teacher Conferences .....22  
Transition to Kindergarten.....22

**Program Evaluation and Improvement**

Accreditation.....23  
Program Evaluations.....23  
The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) .....23  
Family Surveys .....24  
The Local Governance Program (LGP).....24

**Safety and Security**

Emergencies.....24  
Evacuation .....24  
Fire Drill Procedure .....25  
Lock Down Procedure .....25  
Building Security .....25

**School Activities and Community Service**

Family Involvement and Visitations.....26  
Volunteers .....26  
Celebrations .....26  
Community Resources and Events .....27  
Local Governance Partners .....27  
Other Services.....27

**Family Rights and What Does Your Child Need?**

Family Rights.....27  
What Does Your Child Need? .....28  
Nutrition and Food Safety.....29  
Child Abuse and Neglect .....30

Attachment A: Storage and Administration of Medication .....31

*Families requiring translation to interpret this information should contact the office staff for assistance 860-742-4550*

## **Mission Statement**

The Hale Early Education Center exists to provide a strong foundation for children as they begin their formal educational journey toward becoming lifelong, self-directed and self-fulfilled learners. We strive to provide each child with developmentally appropriate activities and experiences within a warm, caring and positive environment, and to meet the needs of the families in our school community. We believe that by cultivating children's curiosity, excitement for learning, and respect for themselves and others, we will foster confident, independent thinkers.

## **Philosophy**

A child's early years are a time of tremendous learning and growth. At the Hale Early Education Center, we believe that all children are capable learners. The success of every child is important to us. Our goal is to provide high quality instruction for 3–5-year-olds in a supportive environment that fosters development in all domains (cognition, social-emotional development, physical development and health, language and literacy, creative arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) are the basis for the HEEC curriculum. HEEC also provides support and services to families recognizing the critical need to partner with families to ensure that all students learn and grow as students and citizens.

## **Equal Opportunity Statement**

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources.

Dr. Beth Giller is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## **Anti-Bias Statement**

Consistent with Coventry Board of Education policy, HEEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability or handicap, veteran status, or sexual orientation. HEEC staff understand that at an early age children can absorb our society's biases of gender, age, color, language, and physical characteristics. We believe that the anti-bias curriculum that we embrace supports children as they explore, celebrate, and understand differences. Our program will;

- not conduct religious observances, such as prayer, grace, confession, church attendance, or religious instruction.
- accommodate the practice of a child's personal religious beliefs where the practice is required during program hours.
- not require children or their families to participate in faith-based or church-sponsored activities or services.
- not discriminate in hiring based on religious affiliation or lack thereof.

Our approach acknowledges that children and adults can be empowered to stand up for their rights and the rights of others and to recognize and question social injustice. We challenge the children and ourselves to:

- explore issues of fairness as seen from a child’s perspective;
- see conflict as a challenge in problem-solving;
- be open to differing perspectives, ideas, attitudes and behaviors; and
- monitor our words and actions for unconscious bias or prejudice; recognize and demonstrate respect for diversity among people.

## HEEC Staff

POSITION	NAME
<b>Preschool and Early Childhood Education Coordinator</b>	Dr. Lois Hasty
<b>Administrative Assistant/Secretary</b>	Liz Murphy
<b>Classroom Teachers (dual certified regular/special education)</b>	Cherise Buckley
	Alicia Le Borious
	Amanda Mayer
	Leah Hopkins
	Tina Savluk
	Stacey Bachelder
	Nikki Damiano
<b>Special Education Teacher</b>	Stacy Lagasse
<b>Para Educators</b>	Jenna Benard
	Matthew Maynes
	Giselle Ortiz-Ruis
	Jennifer Scott
	Kelsie LaHouse
	Alex Salinsky
	Benjamin Clate
	Tonya Ohlund
	Cassie Parsell
	Patience Turner
	Marisa Topliff
	Julie Klimkiewicz
	Amanda Hawkins
<b>Speech Pathologist</b>	Dawn Murphy
<b>Occupational Therapists</b>	Tirza Roda
<b>Physical Therapist</b>	Sue Moriarty

## **Staff Credentials**

HEEC teachers hold Master's Degrees and are certified by the state of Connecticut. Para Educators hold Certificates of Developmental Associates and/or continuing education in early childhood or related subjects.

The majority of staff members on-site hold current certificates in pediatric CPR and first aid. The Early Start program requires teaching staff to have at least a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), Associate's degree, or Bachelor's degree, with twelve early childhood credits during all hours of operation.

## **Professional Development**

Staff are involved in all Coventry Public Schools' professional development activities.

The Early Start Grant also requires staff to have a professional development plan that includes all required training for the program.

Professional development must include but not be limited to the following:

- A. Literacy skills development.
- B. Racial/ethnic diversity, including how to respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of each family in communications, classroom curriculum, and family activities.
- C. Annual training in serving children with disabilities.
- D. Annual participation in at least two workshops in child development, curriculum, or other early childhood topics.
- E. Annual participation in at least two workshops on health-related issues, e.g., well child care, special diets, allergies, and feeding needs of the children in the program.
- F. Administrators of the Early Start program must have annual training in best business practices, supervision of early childhood programs, and topics directly related to early childhood practices.
- G. Program staff meet annually with district Kindergarten staff.
- H. The Early Start program must use a professional development form to document the training of each staff member.

## **Confidentiality**

HEEC and the Local Governance Partners (LGP) confidentiality policy ensures the security of all children and staff information. HEEC LGP members are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to service. Information contained in child and staff records is privileged and confidential. All information regarding Early Start assistance and requests for outside services are kept confidential. Unauthorized removal of records or unauthorized divulgence of families', children, staff, or program's confidential information is strictly prohibited.

Violation of these rules is considered serious and may result in the discharge of staff, board or LGP members without prior warning. Staff must observe professional ethics at all times and never discuss children, families, or staff elsewhere. Employees and volunteers are required to refrain from discussing individual children with parents/guardians in hallways or in the community. If you, as a parent/guardian, would like to request information about their child, please contact the certified classroom teacher. Non-certified staff will refer your questions to your child's teacher.

Observations made in the classroom and all information discussed at staff meetings/trainings are to be kept in strict confidence. No use of a child’s name is permitted in any journals or papers related to staff work.

## HEEC Programs

The Hale Early Education Center offers preschool for children aged (3) three, (4) four, and (5) years old. We have a variety of programs to meet the needs of children and families:

Program	Days	Times
5 Day – Part-Day AM or PM	Monday through Friday	8:30–11:00 or 12:00–2:30
5 Day – School Day	Monday through Friday	8:30-2:30
Additional Programs		
Lunch Bunch (for part-time programs)	Monday through Friday	11:00-12:00
Before Care	Monday through Friday	Opens at 7:00 a.m.
After Care	Monday through Friday	*After Care closes at 4:00 p.m.

*\*Subject to change If child is absent on scheduled day, there will still be an incurred charge.*

## Age Eligibility

Children are eligible to enter HEEC under the following age guidelines:

- Turning ages 3 or 4 on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year
- Turning age 5 after September 1 of the school year

## Kindergarten Age Requirement

During the 2023 Connecticut legislative session, the age to begin kindergarten was raised. Effective July 1, 2024, in order to enroll in kindergarten, children must turn 5 years old on or before September 1 of the school year. Additionally, the following guidelines were set:

- A child who is not five years old on or before September 1 of the school year may seek early admittance to Kindergarten under the following conditions:
  - Written request by the child’s parent or guardian is submitted to the CGS school principal, and
  - After the principal and an appropriate certified staff member conduct an assessment of the child to ensure that admitting the child to kindergarten is developmentally appropriate.

If your child is eligible for kindergarten and was born before September 1 and you would like them to remain at HEEC another year, a meeting must be held between the parent, teacher, and Dr. Hasty.

## Enrollment

HEEC enrollment is on-line at the following website:

<https://www.coventrypublicschools.org/schools/heec/preschool-registration>

HEEC has a rolling admission process and usually opens the next school year's registration in early October of the current school year.

A non-refundable \$50 registration fee is required at the time of the initial registration. The registration fee holds your spot in the program. If we do not receive your registration fee at the time of registration, your name will be put on a waitlist until the fee is paid. Once we receive your registration fee, your child will be placed back into a class slot pending availability of your first choice for slots.

Registration fees can be made by check (made payable to HEEC) or cash. Credit cards are not accepted.

If at the time of registration, a family requests tuition assistance, the registration fee of \$50 will be waived. If the family does not qualify for assistance (as determined by the qualification meeting with the Tuition Assistance Coordinator) the \$50 fee will be added to the first invoice.

**The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) updated their fee schedule in the beginning of 2024. An example of qualifying assistance is now:**

- Family of 1-3 earning less than \$83,906
- Family of 4 earning less than \$99,888
- Family of 5 earning less than \$115,869

If you request assistance and do not meet the guidelines, every effort will be made to put your child in a full pay spot depending upon availability. If you are unsure if you meet the guidelines, please email our tuition assistance liaison, Mary Sposito at [msposito@coventryct.org](mailto:msposito@coventryct.org).

All families requesting tuition assistance will receive an email requesting them to provide:

- HEEC Program Tuition Assistance Family Form
- Copy of the previous year's tax return for all working members of the family

HEEC will make every effort to accommodate program requests during enrollment. However, we will not accept requests for a specific teacher at any time during the process. Once all the classrooms are established, families who request program changes will be subject to a waiting list. The preschool recognizes that extenuating circumstances in a family might necessitate withdrawing a child from school. If withdrawing your child from HEEC, please contact the HEEC office as soon as possible.

## Registration Forms

Prior to the first day of school, any child who is attending the program for the first time must have the District Pre-Registration completed which involves two steps. (Note: this does not need to be completed for a child who is returning to HEEC for a second or third year);

1. Creating a PowerSchool account, uploading residency forms, Birth Certificate and Health Assessment Form. ***Health Forms must be uploaded or dropped off as part of this process.*** This process starts in March. An email will go out to all of our families when the PowerSchool system is open.
2. Completing an annual PowerSchool update. This is slightly different than the initial PowerSchool District registration. This update includes confirming your contacts once again and signing off on permissions/agreements. An email from the District will be sent to you in August when PowerSchool is open for updates.

## Medications During School

Any medicines that are to be given at school must be brought in by the parent/guardian prior to the first day of school (or before the day when the medication is to be given at school if meds are prescribed during the school year) along with a Medication Authorization Form from your Doctor's office.

## \*After Care

After Care is available to a limited number of students. The program runs Monday through Friday from 2:30-4:00. Families can pick as little as one day a week to all five. Changes to the program (adding or dropping) can only occur on a monthly basis. Once established, the schedule must remain consistent for staffing purposes.

After Care is staffed solely by paraeducators. Adult-to-child ratio (1:10) are maintained. Additional supervision is not available All families must sign a Behavior Procedure and Expectations for After Care Policy. HEEC also has the right to discontinue the After Care program to students who do not comply with the Policy.

After Care closes at 4:00pm. If you are late picking up, two staff members are required to stay with your child. A fee of \$10/per child will accrue for every 5 minutes past 4:00 that your child(ren) remains in After Care (or 3:30 if you have selected that pick-up option).

If a parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached and your child is still in After Care after one hour, the police will be called.

*\*Ending time will vary on a year-to-year basis depending on staff availability.*

## Program Funding

The preschool is funded through the following sources:

1. Family tuition fees
2. Early Start CT
3. A Smart Start Grant
4. The Coventry School System ~ Special Education Funding only

## **Family Tuition Fees**

For all Preschool families, tuition will be paid on a monthly basis. The invoices are emailed out prior to the upcoming month and are due in full on the date indicated on the invoice. The first tuition installment will be due in the summer, prior to the start of the school. No partial payments will be accepted. Full monthly fees must be paid prior to the start of the next month. Tuition for the year may be paid in full at any time during the school year.

- Payments can be cash, check, money order or credit card that can be paid on-line. Tuition checks are to be made payable to HEEC and may be mailed to Coventry Public Schools, Attn: Business Office, 1700 Main Street or dropped off at HEEC. As parents/guardians last names may be different from their child's, please be sure to include your child's name on the check or money order.
- Cash must be dropped off in a sealed envelope, clearly marked with the child's name.
- Check or cash must be the exact amount (e.g., an invoice amount for \$438.73 must be exact. A payment of \$440 would be returned).
- Bounced checks must be paid in cash (including a \$20 bank fee) as soon as the family is notified.
- A family who bounces more than two checks in a year must pay with cash or credit card after the second bounced check.

Discontinuation of programs (Part Day, School Day, Before Care, After Care, Lunch Bunch) can only be made on a monthly basis. Additions of programs (Before, After Care, Lunch Bunch) can be added but must be paid in full for the current billing month before attending the program.

Fees for extended care outside of regular program hours (e.g., early release days, for professional development days, or report card conferences), will be charged and paid separately from tuition payments.

Fees are not refundable due to:

- sick days
- absences
- vacations outside of the school scheduled vacations

When the Coventry Public Schools cancel school due to snow, or any event and K-12 are remote, HEEC will have a snow day, which will be made up at the end of the year. HEEC does not credit tuition for weather-related late openings or early release days, unexpected late openings or early release, calendar year scheduled ½ days for conferences, or ½ days staff development.

A 10 percent discount is given to siblings that are in the preschool at the same time; however, if you are receiving tuition assistance the discount does not apply. The discount does not apply to Before or After Care.

A 10 percent discount is given to employees of the Coventry Board of Education (School Day or Part-Day programs only); however, if you are receiving tuition assistance the discount does not apply.

## **Tuition Assistance**

Through the town of Coventry's Early Start CT and Smart Start Grant, HEEC receives funding which provides children a high quality preschool program for a reduced tuition rate.

Through the Early Start grant, HEEC has an allotted number of part-day slots. These slots are available to families who meet the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Fee Scale. The Early Start and Smart Start grants both have school day slots available for those families meeting the income guidelines. If you meet those qualifications, you are eligible to receive some level of financial assistance that is determined by the Tuition Assistance Coordinator. Children enrolled in the tuition assistance slots must be residents of Coventry; however, a limited number of slots can go to non-Coventry residents if they are open.

## **Early Start Fee Requirements**

The following are the guidelines for the Early Start Fees;

1. HEEC uses the current OEC sliding fee scale to determine fees. The family fee for the Early Start program will not be higher than the fee determined by the Care4Kids program.
2. HEEC does not accept Care4Kids Funding.
3. HEEC will not charge fees to families who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance and who have no earned income.
4. HEEC will charge fees to families who receive TANF cash assistance and who have earned income.
5. Families who are not on TANF cash assistance and who may or may not have earned income, but cannot afford the determined family contribution, may be granted a total or partial scholarship. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the LGP.
6. All fees received by HEEC from families shall be used to support the Early Start program.
7. Families who believe that they might qualify for the sliding scale will be contacted to schedule a family intake appointment by the Tuition Assistance Coordinator to determine eligibility. Families must provide documentation showing the last 4 weeks of income (or an IRS tax form) for all family members in the household and proof of residency (mortgage statement, utility bill). Fee calculation is reviewed with parent/guardian and includes parent/guardian signature, and they will receive a copy of the fee calculation form.
8. Families who qualify for the sliding scale will be given a copy of the Financial Form, which will indicate family contribution. A copy of this form will go to the provider for fee collection purposes. All other income-related information will be kept confidential.
9. Re-evaluation of fees occurs once a year.
10. The LGP will review the program budget for appropriateness of expenditures as part of the consideration of proposals for funding. The Program will make every attempt to keep administrative costs to a minimum. Detailed justifications for administrative costs must be provided to the LGP. Administrative costs should not exceed up to 10% of the total program budget.

## **Arrival, Departure and Attendance Procedures**

### **Arrival**

Families are responsible for dropping off and picking up their child at the designated times of our morning and afternoon programs.

The following are the procedures for drop off and pick up:

- All School day classes and the part-day AM class begin at 8:30am. Please drop your child off between 8:20-8:30 a.m. Part Day PM class begins at 12:00pm. Please drop your child off between 11:55 and 12:00 p.m.
- Staff will greet children at the main door as they arrive.
- Pick up will follow the same procedure. Parents/guardians will remain outside, and your child will be dismissed to you. You will be provided a card in the color of your child's classroom with their first name and last initial. Cards should be presented upon pick up.
  - If someone else besides the parent/guardian (e.g., grandparent, aunt) is picking up your child, their name must be in your PowerSchool contact list, and they must show their license upon pick up.
  - If special court ordered arrangements are in place, please provide HEEC a copy and those arrangements will be followed.
  - No child will be released to any adult appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

Before Care students are dropped off between the hours of 7:00-8:30AM. After Care students are picked up between the hours of 3:00-4:00PM. *\*subject to change*

The following guidelines are to be followed by parents/guardians to help make arrival and departure run smoothly:

- We encourage parents/guardians to maintain a consistent pattern of adults who drop off and pick up.
- Parents/Guardians should hold their child's hand or have him/her in your sight at all times in the parking lot.
- Unless parents/guardians have the proper permit, please refrain from using the handicapped parking spots.
- Parents/Guardians should not park along the curb – that is reserved for vans/buses.
- To maintain healthy air quality, do not leave your car idling during drop-off and pick-up. State regulation 22a-174-18(b)(3) states that a mobile source shall not operate for more than 3 consecutive minutes when such mobile source is not in motion except if the vehicle is operating for one of the conditions exempted in the regulation.

### **DROP-OFF**

We would like to thank parents/guardians for ensuring their children are in school on time. For all our classrooms, instruction time begins almost immediately after the children put their backpacks away in cubbies. There are activities on the tables so that the children are engaged right from the start of the day. While we understand that on certain occasions lateness cannot be helped, we ask that persistent lateness is avoided, as this can be unsettling to the child and disruptive to the class.

- All school-day children need to be in their classroom no later than 8:40am. We start signing children in at 8:20am.
- Part-day children need to be in the classroom by 8:30am for the morning class and by 12:00pm for the afternoon class. We start signing children in at 8:20am for the morning class and at 11:50am for the afternoon class.

If you are going to be late dropping off your child for school (or absent for the day) please call the office at 860-742-4550 or email Liz (lmurphy@coventryct.org) and we will know to have someone available in the lobby.

Early drop-off can also create issues. Unless your child is scheduled to attend Before Care, please do not drop off your child prior to 8:20am and 11:50pm, as staff may not be available prior to those times.

### **Pick Up and Late Pick Up**

Please arrive promptly at pick up time. The staff have meetings, planning time and other after-school duties that start directly after pick-up. When you are late, two staff members must stay with your child which makes them late for their other duties. Late pick-up is also stressful for the child.

Part Day AM - 10:50-11:00am

Part Day PM and School Day – Classes arrive in the lobby close to 2:20pm, and we start dismissing at that time. Please plan on being in line to pick up your child no later than 2:30.

### **LATE PICK UP FEES**

If a parent/guardian is late picking up their child, an emergency contact will be called. The child will also be placed in our After Care program. A \$10 fee per child will accrue for every 10 minutes past the designated pick-up time that the child remains in After Care. We understand that sometimes you can run late due to traffic or unforeseen circumstances. If you know you will arrive later than 11:00am for the morning class or 2:30pm for the afternoon and school day classes, please call the office at 860-742-4550 to let us know.

If a parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached and your child is not picked up after one hour, the police will be called.

### **After Care Families**

Please remember that pick up for After Care is no later than 4:00. Late pickups necessitate overages in staff payroll which have become a major problem for the center. Persistent late pickups may result in removal from the program.

If a parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached and your child is not picked up after one hour, the police will be called.

### **Attendance**

If your child will be absent due to illness or any other reason, or late to school, please call the HEEC office at 860-742-4550. By the third consecutive day of the child's absence, the teacher or nurse consultant will make a phone call to the family and inquire about the child's situation. If a child is absent after two weeks following such an inquiry, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian asking for an explanation for the child's absence.

If the child is part of our Early Start or Smart Start program, the provider will notify the Early Start and Smart Start Liaison of any attendance concerns. If there is no response after one week, the liaison may remove the child's name from the program. When a child is absent and the family has no contact with the

Liaison, they will document the efforts to contact the family, and will withdraw the child after a two-week period. An absence beyond two weeks will require the approval of the Early Start and Smart Start Liaison.

Our lunch counts are due to the CNHMS cafeteria by 9:00AM each morning. Teachers send in counts based off of the returned lunch menus. Please notify the HEEC office (860-742-4550) prior to 9:00AM if your child will be absent. This will enable us to remove your child from the lunch count and prevent you from being charged. No call = lunch ordered = charge.

## **Weather Related Delays and Early Releases and Scheduled Early Releases**

HEEC *Weather* Related Delays (1, 2 hour or 3 hour delay)

- **1 Hour Delay:** 8:00 am Before Care Opens, 9:30am Part Day AM, 9:30 am School Day Program Begins, 11:00 am Lunch Bunch, 12:00 pm PM Part Day Program as regularly scheduled
- **2 Hour Delay:** No AM Part Day Program, 9:00 am Before Care Opens, 10:30 am School Day Program Begins, 11:00 am Lunch Bunch, 12:00 pm PM Part Day Program as regularly scheduled
- **3 Hour Delay:** No AM Part Day Program, 10:00 am Before Care Opens, 11:30 am School Day Program Begins, No Lunch Bunch, 12:00 pm PM Part Day Program as regularly scheduled

HEEC *Weather* Related Early Release

- HEEC closes at 10:30AM

HEEC Scheduled Early Release

- 8:30-10:00 AM Program
- 10:30-12:00 PM Program
- 8:30-12:00 School Day Program
- No Lunch Bunch or After Care on Early Release Days

Keeping you informed is a top priority at Coventry Public Schools. The School Messenger Notification System is used to send a telephone, email or text message to you providing important information about school emergencies. School Messenger is being used to notify you of school emergencies, closings, delayed openings, and early releases. In the event of an emergency at school, you can have peace of mind knowing that you will be informed as soon as possible.

## **Transportation**

### Special Education Transportation

- Children with special needs who have been identified as needing transportation under their IEP will be transported by special education vans through the Coventry Public Schools.
- Para educators will be assigned to get children off the van at drop off and put on the van at pick up.
- Para educator will escort each child to the classroom after placing child's belongings in his/her cubby and washing hands.

## **Updating Information**

All forms must be updated each September via PowerSchool. However, please also inform the staff if there are any changes during the course of the school year to the following information: phone numbers, address, emergency contacts, health status, or change in family income.

Please be sure to notify the staff if a family event has occurred that may affect your child's behavior.

## **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

### **Classroom Curriculum**

Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards (CT ELDS). Teachers use a themed-based monthly curriculum document to guide instruction. Teachers meet weekly to collaboratively identify specific weekly targets and plan learning experiences.

The CT ELDS articulate standards in eight developmental domains:

1. Social and Emotional Development, 2. Physical Health and Development, 3. Language and Literacy, 4. Creative Arts, 5. Mathematics, 6. Science, 7. Cognition and 8. Social Studies

### **Assessments**

- Preschool Screen
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (completed by parent/guardian)
- Teacher Observation Data
- Child Work Samples
- ESGI (Educational Software for Guiding Instruction) assessments
- Family Information
- Sparkler

HEEC staff uses the following procedure:

- At the beginning of the school year, family projects, such as a family page for a classroom book and a *Parents as Partners* questionnaire are sent home. The purpose of these projects/forms is to allow families to share important information about their child and home environment.
- At the initial family conference held in October, families are given an opportunity to share information about their child and/or family dynamics. Also, the teachers share the initial observations used to assess children's growth.
- In November, HEEC holds a town-wide preschool screen. HEEC students participate in hearing and our local Lions Club of Coventry provide the visual screenings.
- A standards-based report card is distributed to families three times over the course of the school year. Information is shared with families during conferences and as needed throughout the year.
- At family conferences or at any other time throughout the school year, by contacting the school, families have the opportunity to raise questions or concerns about how the assessment methods will meet their child's needs.

Educators are trained to conduct all the child assessments utilized in the program through a variety of means including staff meetings and professional development provided by EastConn and the program administrator.

HEEC staff members have access to children's assessments records for the following reasons:

- To observe and monitor each child's progress related to curricular goals and performance standards.

- To support curriculum development and planning
- To share information with receiving institutions to support effective transitions to Kindergarten programs (unless otherwise instructed by family)
- To share with Child Study Team if needed for child's positive outcomes

The HEEC staff maintains confidentiality for all assessments conducted during your child's educational program. The following procedure is used for confidentiality:

- Screening and assessment results are accessed by HEEC staff; itinerant personnel (PT, OT); HEEC contracted consultants; State Department of Health & Education; NAEYC
- The child's file containing the child's profile and assessment information is kept in the HEEC office in a locked file cabinet.
- An individual child record is not allowed to be taken out of the HEEC facility.

Family(ies)/Guardian(s) have the right to access their child's file at any time upon request.

For Early Start students, the Coventry's LGP provides for the oversight, coordination and support for the measurement of child progress in the following ways:

1. Family Survey Reports are shared with the Council once a year
2. NAEYC yearly evaluations are shared with the Council once a year
3. The Early Start yearly evaluation is shared with the Council once a year

### **Preschool Screen**

HEEC utilizes the statewide Sparkler App as a universal screening tool for all children residing in Coventry, ages 0-5. This free mobile app is available in English and Spanish (accessible on your smartphone or tablet). In addition to screening results related to social-emotional, cognitive, motor and communication, families receive:

- Periodic developmental screenings tools (ASQ-3 and ASQ:Social-Emotional-2) to check in on their child's development
- Fun, educational activities parents/guardians and children can play together off-screen to promote learning
- Connection with professionals - HEEC or 211 Child Development (which is part of the United Way).

If concerns are noted and a child requires additional assessments:

- The Brigance Screening is the standardized measure used. The Brigance provides an overview of development in the areas of motor, speech and language, and cognitive skills
- HEEC staff reviews results.
- Families are notified if results indicate a need for further evaluation

### **Child Study Team/Scientific Research-Based Intervention**

HEEC has established a process for supporting young children utilizing universal best practices in early childhood education. This 3-tiered intervention allows child study teams (CST) to collaboratively problem solve, brainstorm intervention strategies, target specific skills and collect data. Movement through the tier system is determined by the team.

The CST meeting initiates the support process after a teacher requests assistance from program staff

including the Preschool and Early Childhood Education Coordinator, special education teacher, and speech and language pathologist.

### Tier 1

The CST determines the need to move into Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI). Tier 1 in the SRBI process ensures that all children are receiving developmentally appropriate programming and universal best practices are implemented.

### Tier 2

Tier 2 is utilized if the universal strategies determined in Tier 1 are not sufficient to meet the needs of specific students. Families are notified and data is collected via informal observation/screenings. Additional support staff are included as needed (occupational therapy, physical therapy). Individualized target skills are determined. Progress monitoring occurs every 4-6 weeks.

### Tier 3

After extended strategizing, implementation and data collection, a team decision will be made with regards to the necessity of a referral to special education. At that point, permission may be obtained that allows the team to evaluate the child's current developmental levels.

## **Special Education Services**

Tier 3 supports may include a referral to special education. A PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meeting is scheduled to discuss the referral and determine the need for formal evaluation. Evaluation results would assist in determining eligibility for special education services.

Special education services may include special education teacher support, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and social skills support. HEEC is a fully integrated program and strives to provide all children with best practices in early childhood education. Teachers work together as a collaborative team to implement individualized goals and objectives from the students IEP (Individualized Education Plan) as well as differentiate instruction as needed. Family goals, desires and concerns provide direction as the PPT moves forward in decision-making and goal setting.

## **B-3 Referrals**

Some children who receive services through the Birth-3 system will continue to be eligible for services through the Coventry Public Schools on or before their third birthday.

If a child coming in through B-3 is determined to need a program at HEEC, it is a PPT team decision regarding placement. The Pupil Planning Team will determine if a child is eligible for services, and if so, what program meets the child's needs.

## **Health and Medical**

### **Health Assessment Record Policy**

In compliance with the Coventry Board of Education, an Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (ED 191) form must be submitted and kept on file at the preschool. This health form must indicate that your child has had a physical exam within the past 12 months, that she/he is in good health, and that she/he meets current vaccination requirements. The health form must be signed by a physician. By law, your child

will not be allowed to attend school without a current health form on file, and no exceptions can be made. Health forms may be mailed to 1776 Main Street, Coventry, CT 06238 or hand delivered to the preschool office.

If your child has (a) any serious medical conditions, (b) serious allergies (to food, medication, or insect stings), or (c) any other physical or medical restrictions, you will need to provide an *Authorization for the Administration of Medication School, Child Care and Youth Camp Personnel* form. This form must be signed by your physician stating the problem as well as any special procedures that must be followed in the classroom. The form is available in the school office.

## **Procedure**

Health Forms are provided to new and existing families/guardians of students in the registration package.

- Families/guardians are required to submit the completed Health Form (front & back) prior to the student's first day of school.
- Routine screening tests and immunizations are based on the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Academy of Family Practice. The recommendations of these organizations are updated periodically and represent best practice; HEEC follows these guidelines in order for these indicators to be met.

Health Forms expire one year after the date of the physical exam. The families have 30 days post the expiration date to submit a current health form. After that the child will not be able to attend school until a new Health Form is on file. It is your responsibility to maintain a current Health Form on file for your child throughout the school year.

- Child Health Records include:
  - Information regarding the child's health insurance coverage including the carrier, policy number, and insured name is located on the Health Form.
  - Evidence of immunizations; screening tests; and indicators of normal or abnormal test results.
  - Lead tests and developmental screenings are mandated by the State of CT and need to be reported on the Health Assessment Form.
  - Family member/guardian signature on the Health Form authorizes HEEC to have access to health information about the child.
- The Nurse consultant reviews each Health Form for routine screening tests, updated immunizations, updated physicals, and allergy information prior to the first day of school. Should the nurse identify missing or abnormal test results, a letter is sent to the families/guardians requiring medical resolution

If you have questions or need assistance to secure medical insurance, a physician, on-going well-child care, immunizations, and health, dental and nutritional screening, please visit the following websites or contact the HEEC for further assistance: [www.medicalhomeinfo.org](http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org) – [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph). For general information about HUSKY Health, please visit [www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com). To apply by phone or for additional information about the HUSKY Health and Access Health CT programs, contact their information hotline at 1-855-805-4325 or visit [www.accesshealthct.com](http://www.accesshealthct.com).

## **Illnesses, Communicable and/or Infectious Disease**

HEEC has written procedures to promote wellness and safeguard the health and safety of children and adults.

- Upon arrival in the classroom, children are greeted by an adult and observed for any possible health problems.
- If a child becomes ill at the center, a family member or authorized person is contacted to pick up the child. A designated quiet area within the school office is set up for the child until a family member or authorized adult arrives. A staff member provides continual visual supervision.
- If an illness prevents the child from participating in activities or creates greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children or if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious, then the child is made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised until he or she can be picked up by a parent/guardian, family member or other person authorized by the parent/guardian.
- A note from child's physician is required in order for child to return to school after any communicable disease/illness (i.e. Chicken Pox, Measles). The note should be given to the office and will be filed in the student's Health Assessment Record.
- The administrator will immediately notify all families and staff in writing when any communicable disease/illness has been introduced to the preschool.
- All soiled clothing is sent home in a plastic bag (see toileting procedure).
- Scheduled times for daily cleaning of toys and play areas are arranged.
- Use of gloves when dealing with bodily fluids is required.

## **Plan for Identifying Special Health Care Needs**

- Families provide information regarding any allergies or other health care concerns at registration. Information is listed on the child's emergency card and updated as needed.
- A list of all allergies is posted in classroom information binders. All staff members are made aware of the list and the children identified.
- Families are asked to sign a release of information regarding food allergy information.
- If a child has an allergy and medication is prescribed for an anaphylaxis reaction, families must provide: (1) A written order from an authorized prescriber/parent permission form, (2) Emergency health care plan, and (3) Medication administration checklist. All forms need to be submitted and cleared by the nurse consultant and preschool administrator before administration of medication.

## **Emergency Health Care**

When a child becomes sick or an accident occurs, HEEC determines the severity of the situation and contacts the family member/authorized person or arranges for transportation to the hospital and/or calls for an ambulance. One staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and take the child's medical information. They will remain with the child until the family member or designee arrives. If a family member cannot be reached, they will contact the designated person on the child's Emergency Information Sheet.

The Captain Nathan Hale Middle School nurse is available in the event of emergencies.

## **Injury Prevention Plan**

- Monitoring of the environment by all staff members occurs daily. All staff are required to bring to the attention of the administrator any problems, repairs, or hazards.
- Staff conduct regular safety checks of the Preschool.
- Teachers and Para-educators check rooms and outdoor playground daily.
- Staff examine equipment and toy purchases carefully and all donated materials are checked for safety and health concerns.
- Teachers maintain an injury log for their classroom.
- Families are given a written accident form informing them of any significant injuries. Families and staff member(s) sign the form, and then staff file the original in the student's file. A copy goes home with the child.
- The temperature and wind chill factor are checked daily and then the Child Care Weather Watch System is followed to determine when it is safe to bring preschool children outside.
- In the warm weather, children wear sun-protective clothes (clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection, or clothing that protects skin areas most prone to sun damage. Examples of sun-protective clothing: broad-brim hats, long sleeve shirts, full-length pants/skirts).
  - In summer months, we ask that families apply sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of at least SPF15 to their child before he/she comes to school.
  - Only with written parental/guardian permission (OEC Form Administration of Nonprescription Topical Medications) do staff apply sunscreen or sunblock.
- Only with written parental/guardian permission (Administration of Nonprescription Topical Medications) do staff apply sunscreen or sunblock. In the event the public health authorities recommend the use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellent containing DEET can be used. Families will be advised to apply a repellent at home prior to coming to school.
- Storage and Administration of Medication is found in Attachment A of this Family Handbook.

## **Illness Guidelines**

We know that managing the demands of work can be challenging when your child is ill. We strive to limit the spread of communicable disease in our center and are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these circumstances.

There are circumstances when a child needs to be sent home from the to reduce the transmission of illness. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- a fever of 100.5 degrees or more
- inflammation of the eyes (excessive redness, glassy or discharge)
- vomiting
- two or more incidences of diarrhea or loose stool in one day
- sore throat or new cough with no fever
- Impetigo. Begins as red pimples on the skin, which eventually become small vesicle surrounded by a reddened area. When the blister breaks, the surface is raw and weeping. The lesions occur in moist areas of the body, such as: creases of the neck, groin, and under the arm, around the mouth and nose.
- If a child becomes sick without obvious symptoms. In this case, the child may look or act differently. There may be an unusual paleness, tiredness, irritability, or lack of interest.

- excessive nasal discharge, especially if yellow or greenish, since this indicates infection
- pain

If your child is sent home due to illness, they cannot return until they have been free from symptoms for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducer. This is to allow your child ample time to recover and stop the spread of illness to the other children and staff.

If a doctor diagnoses an ear or throat infection, as an example, and the child is prescribed an antibiotic, the child may not be brought to the Preschool until he/she has been on the medication for at least 24 hours.

In case you are unavailable to pick up your child in the event of sickness, families should have an emergency number for an adult who will be able to pick up your child and care for him/her until you return. At all times, the school must have some way of reaching a family member or legal guardian in case of emergency or illness. Please be sure you indicate your emergency contacts when filling the Emergency Contact/Medical page in PowerSchool.

Thank you for helping us to keep the school environment as healthy as possible for all students and staff.

### **Immunization Requirements for Flu**

To reduce the risk of hospitalization from complications of influenza, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommend routine annual influenza vaccination of children older than 6 months. By law, children who attend preschool must receive an annual flu vaccination.

The CT immunization regulation requires at a minimum 1 dose of influenza vaccine for school entry, each year between August 1st and December 31. Children who do not get the influenza vaccine prior to December 31 will not be allowed entry into the preschool until flu season is over (March 31).

### **Toilet Training**

We recognize that this process is unique for each child and want toilet training to be a positive, rewarding experience. Staff will work with families to support children wherever they are in the toilet training process and will assist children in changing should an accident occur during the school day.

Children will be cared for using the following procedure following a toileting accident at school:

- Staff check children for signs that pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every two hours when children are awake and when children awaken from rest time.
- Pull-ups are changed when wet or soiled.
- Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces is immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Underwear is changed when wet or soiled.
- Staff will change children in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- Both the staff member and the child will wash their hands after changing.

## **Hand Washing Policy**

Children and adults must wash their hands prior to entering the classroom for the day. Children are taught and utilize the following hand washing procedure:

- use liquid soap and running water
- rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails (staff wash around jewelry)
- rinse well and dry hands with paper towel
- avoid touching the faucet with just washed hands (use paper towel to turn off water)

Children and adults wash their hands:

- on arrival for the day
- after changing or using the toilet
- after handling body fluids (blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, touching any mucus, blood or vomit)
- before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people (emerging criteria)
- after handling pets and other animals or other materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals
- when moving from one group of children to another

## **Nap/Rest**

Each child who spends more than four hours a day in the program needs to rest for at least 20 minutes. HEEC provides an opportunity for but does not require sleep. The children who are unable to sleep, HEEC provides space for quiet play. Books, puzzles, and other forms of quiet play are made available.

- HEEC will provide a cot, and parents/guardians may send in a small pillow, blanket and stuffed animal. Rest time items will be sent home every Friday to be washed.
- Each child has their own designated cubby to store their belongings.

## **Behavior and Discipline**

The HEEC Behavior and Discipline Procedure complies with federal and state civil rights laws. In addition, expectations for behavior are consistent with developmentally appropriate practices issued by NAEYC. This includes building a community that values considerate, respectful, and accepting attitudes toward all families, and arranging the environment to avoid problem-causing situations. Staff members model and encourage skills that allow each child to develop a sense of control and autonomy, identify feelings, solve problems, and find their own rewards in cooperative social behavior. Classroom learning activities stress the importance of friendships, caring, sharing, and celebrating differences in others. As part of this, the Second Step Curriculum: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning is integrated into the HEEC curriculum and utilized in each classroom throughout each week. HEEC emphasizes five basic rules:

- Take Care of Yourself
- Take Care of Your Friends

- Take Care of Your Teachers
- Take Care of Your Classroom
- Take Care of Your World

HEEC is committed to working with any child to improve their social-emotional functioning. Staff members are trained to respond to a variety of situations using best practices, such as establishing clear and consistent expectations, offering choices, redirecting activity, pointing out natural or logical consequences of different behaviors, and scaffolding problem solving. Positive reinforcement is always used to encourage positive behavior. Staff never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Examples of prohibited staff practices include hitting and withholding of food.

In addition, HEEC never uses suspension and expulsion to address problem behaviors. Use of other exclusionary measures (i.e., seclusion) is limited as much as possible, but may be used in extreme situations as a temporary measure when a child in our care becomes harmful to himself, harmful to another child or staff, and/or highly destructive to property. Appropriate use of restraint for safety reasons is also permissible in extreme situations when a child becomes harmful to herself and/or harmful to another child or staff. Any staff member engaged in such restraint has received proper training through the Coventry Public Schools (i.e., Physical Management Training).

Use of seclusion and/or restraint are only considered if the following conditions are met:

- After all other strategies have been exhausted
- After the steps listed below (relative to addressing ongoing challenging behavior) have been taken
- When there is agreement that exclusion is the in the best interest of the child
- In the rare instance when exclusionary measures must be taken, HEEC offers assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

When a child's ongoing challenging behavior must be addressed, the following occurs:

- Data is collected to assess what function the behavior is serving for the child (e.g., Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence data, observations)
- Teachers collaborate with family members and other professionals to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior
- Positive behavior supports are always included in the plan
- Plans are reviewed weekly or bi-weekly with teachers and support staff to monitor progress and adjust the plans as needed.
- After two weeks, the SRBI (Scientifically Researched Behavior Intervention) process may also be implemented, including identification of specific target goals and ongoing monitoring of progress through specific data collection. Tiered interventions are identified by the team.

HEEC's behavior and discipline policy is communicated to all staff several ways:

- Staff Orientation Meeting held every year prior to the start of the school
- Operation's Manual reviewed by all staff annually

# **Parent Communication and Involvement**

## **HEEC Parent Group**

The purpose of the HEEC Parent Group is to enhance and support the educational experience at the Hale Early Education Center (HEEC), develop a closer connection between school and home by encouraging parent involvement and to improve the environment at Hale Early Education Center through volunteer and financial support. The goals of this organization are to provide a forum for discussion and foster communication between parents, administrators, educators and the community, to enhance the educational facilities and opportunities for students at HEEC that are not otherwise provided for in the school budgets, and to sponsor projects and events for the benefit of HEEC students. This home/school partnership initiative is designed to develop reciprocal communication and engagement. A variety of fundraisers and events take place throughout the school year. Families are not required to participate; however, any contribution or volunteering of time is greatly appreciated. All parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings when possible.

HEEC also provides opportunities for parenting education. In our monthly newsletter we share ideas that families can do at home like practicing problem-solving skills through learning and play based activities, and also sharing a segment of a document from the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), "Supporting All Children Using the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards: A Guide for Families," that provide suggestions for parents and guardians related to the standards that underpin our curriculum.

## **Welcoming Children and Families to the Preschool**

HEEC's staff establish intentional practices designed to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families from the first contact and to maintain those relationships over time. In addition, HEEC has plans and procedures to prepare for, orient and welcome children and families. The following plans and procedures are shared verbally and in writing with families of enrolled children and are available in languages that families use and understand.

Program events encouraging family involvement are held throughout the school year:

- A Q&A session is held three times a year. Families are welcome to visit the preschool and meet with the Administrator who is available to answer any questions about the program.
- A welcome letter from the child's assigned teacher is mailed to the child in August.
- Come and See Day is held before the first day of school. Children are invited to explore their classroom and the center, and have an opportunity to meet their teacher, classmates and center staff.

In addition, HEEC staff maintain relationships with families throughout the year:

- Monthly newsletters are sent home from the classroom and center
- Teachers, families and relevant specialists meet at conferences times in the fall and spring and other times throughout the school year as needed to discuss each child's progress, accomplishments and any difficulties in the classroom and at home, as well as to plan learning activities.

HEEC also has committees and educational teams and a parent/guardian group that work collaboratively throughout the school year to ensure the partnerships between the program families, staff and professionals are strengthened. This includes:

- Parent/Guardian Group Meetings; Gingerbread House Family Activity, Mystery Readers, Pedal for a Purpose and End of Year Picnic

Program staff engage with families to learn from their knowledge of their children's interests, approaches to learning, and the child's developmental needs, and to learn about their concerns and goals for their children.

This information is incorporated into ongoing classroom planning and obtained through activities such as:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire; All About Me; Preschool Screen, Sparkler App

## **Family/Teacher Conferences**

Family/Teacher conferences will be offered two times during the year. The first conference in October will involve discussion of your child's progress toward meeting initial standards and their transition into preschool. The second conference in March involves continued discussion of the child's development toward meeting CT ELDS standards. We value family participation and feedback as a crucial aspect of the preschool program. If you wish to request a conference at a different point in the year, please feel free to speak to your child's teacher. Should you need a translator to assist during the conference; every effort will be made to translate program information in the appropriate language.

## **Transition to Kindergarten**

HEEC collaborates with the Coventry Grammar School administrators and teachers to prepare for and manage children's transition to the kindergarten, including special education programs. HEEC staff members also provide information to families that can assist them in communicating with other programs. The following measures are taken to ensure a smooth transition:

- Post information regarding kindergarten registration, kindergarten information nights, etc. and assist families in completing the kindergarten registration process (if needed).
- HEEC teachers share information, including relevant assessment information, with the Coventry Grammar School (CGS) Principal.
- Records transferred to Kindergarten include: Report Cards, SRBI Data, Health Forms
- Special education students are transitioned via the Planning and Placement Team Process.
- HEEC staff and CGS kindergarten staff participate in vertical team meetings to articulate the sequence of skill development from preschool to kindergarten in key developmental areas.
- Coventry Public School Kindergarten transition activities include:
  - Initial online registration process begins in the Spring.
  - A parent/guardian orientation night is held to provide information and opportunity to ask questions.
  - Children are invited to visit their classroom, meet their teacher and new classmates and take a short bus ride.

For those families whose child is eligible to attend kindergarten but who feel that an extra year at HEEC is needed, the parent/guardian must schedule a meeting to review this request with their child's teacher and the Preschool and Early Childhood Education Coordinator.

If, despite the fact that the teacher and Education Coordinator determine the student is ready for kindergarten, the family wants their child to remain at HEEC for another year, the child will be placed on a waitlist. Priority will be given to our families of incoming 3- and 4-year-olds. If, at the end of summer, there is still availability for your child to attend HEEC for another year, program staff will contact the family and offer the family a spot.

## **Program Evaluation and Improvement**

### **Accreditation**

HEEC is a National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited preschool. As HEEC houses the Early Start Program and receives funds, NAEYC accreditation status must be maintained. Early Start requires programs that are not yet accredited to be working towards accreditation, have a timeline for completion of the process and demonstrate adherence to the timeline. Programs must be working weekly with an early childhood consultant or be participating in the Accreditation Facilitation Project. Any changes proposed in the program that may affect the NAEYC accreditation must be reported in writing to the LGP. The LGP provides support to HEEC in the following ways:

1. Provide training for staff regarding curriculum development and evaluation
2. Provide resources and materials that support learning center and child interest
3. Provide for family understanding of curriculum and assessment
4. Provide for training for staff in Health, Diversity and Inclusion
5. Supports the transition to kindergarten process

### **Program Evaluations**

HEEC is responsible to a number of agencies. Each agency has developed guidelines and mandates that align to state and federal standards. These standards define program procedures and help identify areas of need for program improvement. If required, action plans are developed annually and implemented within a six-month period of time. All action plans will be reviewed to ensure that progress has been made.

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is a state agency that administers and regulates state child daycare centers. HEEC has received license-exempt status from the OEC. Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-77(b) provides that a program administered by a public school system is not required to be licensed to operate. The Coventry Public Schools Board of Education administers HEEC and retains responsibility for the management and oversight of the program and for the program staff and children served.

### **The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

NAEYC is a national organization that sets standards for a high quality preschool program. The program is evaluated using ten standards, including relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment, health, teachers, families, community relationships, physical environment, and leadership and management. Programs wishing to become accredited must apply for candidacy, participate in the self-study process and undergo an extensive onsite visit by a trained NAEYC evaluator. NAEYC accreditation is valid for five years; however, programs must maintain standards of excellence through ongoing program improvement, family

surveys, and by filing an annual report.

### **Family Surveys**

As part of the NAEYC accreditation process, HEEC will provide each family with a survey near the end of the school year in order to receive feedback in assessing our program and helping to improve our overall quality. This survey is confidential and the results will be provided to families.

### **The Local Governance Partners (LGP)**

The LGP administers and maintains the Early Start grant through the Connecticut Department of Education. Council members may visit the program at any time to ensure the program's compliance to all mandates. The LGP will direct the program to self-monitor, utilizing an instrument that encompasses all program components, to be implemented annually.

In the event that any complaint is filed with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Children and Families, or any other police or investigative agency concerning an alleged act at the site:

- The LGP is to be notified in writing by the provider of the details of the complaint. Such notification shall include the date and time of the alleged noncompliance, the nature of the complaint, the results of any investigation by provider personnel, and any action taken by the provider to correct the situation. Notification shall be made within 24 hours of the time that the provider is made aware of the complaint.
- The provider shall make the LGP aware of any findings made by the investigating agency within reasonable limits of confidentiality. Formal complaints made against the program, or a staff member must be reported to NAEYC. The academy retains the right to initiate a review of accreditation of a program at any time based on evidence of non-compliance of NAEYC standards.
- Monitoring results from the above evaluations will be reported to the LGP in the fall of each year and/or during the review of proposals for funding.
- The State Department of Education (SDE) will be notified in the event of a violation

## **Safety and Security**

### **Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency, the school will retain responsibility of all children on premises until they are released to a family member, guardian, or other designated person, or until they have been transported to an official evacuation center, in which case selected staff will remain with the children until they have reunited with their families.

Families should not telephone the school; they will be updated via email for whatever situation is taking place. If families are able to reach the school without danger to themselves or without interference with emergency personnel, they should come to pick up their children. Children will be released only to families, guardians, or other persons designated persons by the family.

### **Evacuation**

- Daily attendance recorded each day by the classroom teacher
- Evacuation plans are posted at every exit
- Teacher and/or paraeducator lead children out of the building

- All meet on the field between the HEEC playground and the CNH softball field for head count by classroom teacher or paraeducator
- Teacher or paraeducator take attendance book and daily schedule whenever possible
- Children or staff with a disability may require additional assistance

## **Fire Drill Procedure**

Fire Drills are scheduled regularly in conjunction with the Captain Nathan Hale Middle School and Coventry High School. A log of each fire drill document each drill. Sprinklers are installed in all classrooms and common areas of the preschool. Staff follow evacuation procedures as noted above.

## **Fire Drill Procedure While Families are in the Building**

The following is our procedure for fire safety when families are in the building:

- If the child is NOT in the classroom, families will take their child out to the nearest exit door.
- If the child is in the classroom, **FAMILIES ARE NOT ALLOWED BACK INTO THE CLASSROOM TO REMOVE THE CHILD.** Classroom teachers are responsible for taking your child outside through their designated exits.
- Families should proceed out the exit to the softball field to the right of the playground.
- Once outside, families are instructed to **REMAIN IN THE FIELD.** Children must remain with the class so accountability is insured. Your cooperation on this point is vital.
- Families should wait until either the signal is given to return into the building or additional instructions are given by fire personnel.
- **FAMILIES ARE NOT ALLOWED** to take their child until instructed to do so by school or the emergency personnel when the area is clear, or the drill is complete.
- The teachers will bring the classroom children back into the building.
- Families should then bring children who were not dropped off at the time of the drill into the building and to their respective classes.

## **Lock Down Procedure**

Lockdown drills are also practiced in conjunction with Captain Nathan Hale Middle School and Coventry High School. During lockdown drills the teachers will direct children to an area of the room away from windows and doors. It will be explained to the children in a calm, reassuring manner that, “We are practicing in case there was ever something unsafe outside of our classroom.” The doors will be locked from the inside and the teachers will work with the children to remain quiet until the completion of the drill. Our teachers have a number of strategies to utilize to make this a positive, learning experience.

## **Building Security**

The safety and security of the children and staff at the center is important to us. As a result, the following security system procedure is in place:

- Exterior doors always remain locked.
- Press the doorbell and a staff member will allow entrance once the person states their name and purpose for visiting
- When school is in session, visitors will be required to show identification and receive a visitor badge.

# **School Activities and Community Service**

## **Family Involvement and Visitations**

Families are the most important people in their children's lives. They are also their first and primary teachers. Early childhood programs are far more effective when the families are involved in meaningful ways so that children's learning is a joint effort between early childhood educators and families. This involvement begins with a mutual respect and trust. The early childhood educator provides knowledge of child development and early childhood education and families contribute specialized knowledge and experiences about their children. When young children observe positive and genuine communication between their families and teachers, they feel that their two worlds are connected.

HEEC encourages and welcomes families to visit the facility at any time during the program hours of operation: Monday through Friday from 8:30-2:30 p.m.

If a parent/guardian would like to schedule a classroom/program observation, they may contact the teacher or Preschool and Early Childhood Education Coordinator or call the office to make an appointment.

Parents/guardians are welcome to volunteer in the classrooms (e.g., read a story, share a craft; share family culture, share a special talent).

## **Volunteers**

If you would be interested in participating in the classroom environment, please consider becoming a volunteer. Volunteers can go to the following link:

<https://www.applitrack.com/coventry/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Volunteers>

Look for: JobID: 1253 for School Volunteer. The fingerprinting fee is waived once the online application is completed. The school contacts you on the next steps.

## **Celebrations**

### *Birthdays/Special Occasions*

Families are encouraged to acknowledge special occasions in other ways, such as coming in to read a child's favorite story or participating in a special game or craft with the children. Please see the above information related to visitation.

If you wish to bring in food for a special occasion, such as a child's birthday or a seasonal celebration, please discuss plans with your child's teacher. Due to food allergies, food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. The Centers for Disease Control recommends this practice because of the risks of potential allergic reactions to ingredients that may not be identified, as well as, in maintaining food safety especially during transport.

### *Cultural*

We know that each family has unique and special interests or traditions. We encourage families to share these ideas, which will enhance our curriculum and support children in recognizing and celebrating our

similarities and differences. If there is a conflict between home values and school activities, please let us know so that we can accommodate your child.

### Year End Celebration

HEEC will hold a family picnic to celebrate the end of the school year and the children entering Kindergarten in the fall. All HEEC families are welcome! This event is held in June. The goal is to congratulate the children on their successful completion of the preschool year.

## **Community Resources and Events**

Throughout the school year, HEEC will share information with preschool families related to local events, support services, and educational opportunities for families with young children. This may include information such as library programming, local theater performances appropriate for young children, parenting seminars, recreational opportunities, available support from Coventry Human and Youth Services, etc. This information will be shared in numerous ways, such as via email, sent home in student backpacks, and/or posted in the entryway of the school.

## **Local Governance Partners (LGP)**

In partnering with the HEEC program, the LGP works with community agencies, such as Booth & Dimock library, Town Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Adult Education, and with Pupil Services to provide a seamless network for families with young children. The LGP obtains interagency agreements with all partners each year. The interagency agreements will be reviewed annually and should collaboration show to be unsatisfactory, an action plan will be developed to improve the collaboration.

## **Other Services**

If families are in need of social, mental health, educational, or medical services for their child or family, HEEC will assist the family in making the appropriate referral for services. If needed, a referral can be made to any of the agencies listed below:

- *School Social Worker: (860) 742-7317*
- *Town Social Services: (860) 742-5324*
- *Booth and Dimock Memorial Library: (860) 742-7606*
- *Adult Education or Job Training: Vernon Adult Education Program [www.vrabe.org](http://www.vrabe.org).*

## **Family Rights**

1. Families/Guardians have the right to access their child's file including information such as; child's profile/assessments, enrollment, health records, etc.
2. Family members who are legally responsible have the right to receive support and information about the care and well-being of the child.
3. All families, regardless of family structure; socioeconomic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds; gender; abilities; or preferred language have the right to be included in all aspects of the program, including volunteer opportunities. These opportunities consider each families interests and skills and the needs of program staff.

4. Families have the right to receive program information in a language they can understand which includes program policies and operating procedures. HEEC Staff are familiar with family support services and specialized consultants who are able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
5. Families have the right to be informed about the program's formal and informal assessment of children's progress. This information includes the purposes of the assessment, the procedures used for assessment, procedures for gathering family input and information, the timing of assessments, the way assessment results, or information will be shared with families and the ways the program will use the information.
6. Families have the right to receive communication regarding a suspected child developmental delay or other special need in a manner that is sensitive, supportive, confidential, and provided with documentation and explanation for the concern with suggested next steps and information about resources for assessment.
7. HEEC staff encourage families to raise concerns and work collaboratively with families to find mutually satisfying solutions that staff then incorporate into classroom practice. Staff use a variety of techniques to negotiate difficulties that arise in their interactions with family members and make arrangements to use these techniques in a language the family can understand.

If a parent/guardian has a complaint, the following is the process to be followed:

- Parent/Guardian must first contact the teacher/special education case manager verbally and/or in writing
- Teacher sets up a meeting
- Notes are taken at the meeting stating the following:
  - the concern
  - a plan of action
  - date to revisit to determine complaint resolution

If the complaint was not resolved after the initial meeting:

- Teacher sets up a time verbally and/or in writing to meet with the Program and Early Childhood Education Coordinator.
- If concern involves special education, a Pupil Planning Team Meeting is set.
- A plan of action is documented.

## **What Does Your Child Need?**

### **Proper Attire**

Families should send their children to school appropriately dressed for a day of outdoor play, art activities, water play, and other, often messy, school activities. Non-slippery shoes such as sneakers are best.

During the winter months, winter boots, snow pants, hats and mittens are required to participate in outdoor play in the snow. We recommend name labels on boots, gloves, and other items of apparel to determine ownership.

## **Change of Clothing**

Families will be responsible for sending a complete change of clothes appropriate to the season (shirt, pants, socks, underwear).

## **Snack**

Families are responsible for supplying a nutritious snack and drink for their child each day she/he attends. Snack items should be placed in the bins in front of the child's classroom when dropping your child off. The snack bags should be labeled with the child's name and, if necessary, please include an ice pack.

- For School Day students: there will be an *optional* morning snack served immediately upon arrival. If your child orders school breakfast, it will be served during this time. If you would like your child to participate, please send in two snacks daily.

## **Lunch**

Families are responsible for supplying a nutritious lunch daily for School Day and Lunch Bunch students. Lunch bags should be labeled with the child's name and, if necessary, please include an ice pack.

## **School Lunch Program**

School Day and Lunch Bunch students have the option to purchase school lunch through Coventry School Food Services. The lunches are delivered to HEEC from the middle school cafeteria on a daily basis.

The Coventry Public Schools participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP meals follow USDA nutrition standards. Breakfast consists of milk, fruits or vegetables and grains. A choice of a hot entrée or a yogurt plate with an English muffin will be available each day. Meals require milk, grains, meat or other proteins, fruits and vegetables.

If you choose to order lunch: please complete a Monthly Lunch Calendar and return to school at the beginning of each month. Circle which days your child will be purchasing lunch, including their choice of hot lunch or yogurt and bagel. There is a daily cost for lunch. Families may choose to have their child purchase lunch on a daily basis, or they may choose to purchase lunch on some days and send in a lunch from home on others. Students are assigned an ID number, and families may view their student's account and make payments by visiting [www.myschoolaccount.com](http://www.myschoolaccount.com). Families may also send a check (made payable to "Coventry School Food Services") or cash into school for deposit on the account.

If you would like information about applying for Free and Reduced Priced School Meals, please contact the Director of School Food Services at 860-742-4571 or visit the "Food Services" link on [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).

## **Nutrition and Food Safety**

We ask that you refrain from sending the following foods to school: popcorn, hard pretzels, raw peas, raw carrots and whole grapes since these items pose a choking risk for children under the age of four. While we recognize that some children may be developmentally able to handle these foods, we ask that you save these items to be enjoyed at home.

We encourage families to promote good eating habits and good food choices. For more information please

visit: [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&Q=320670](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&Q=320670).

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

All staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center. HEEC policy defines and outlines the proper procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect to comply with applicable federal, state and local laws.

### Procedure Mandating Reporting

“As professionals in contact with young children and their families, you are required by law to help the Department of Social Services (DSS) become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters.” Thus, it is the policy of HEEC to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DSS, the Child Care Circuit, and the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing, within 12 hours, with the same information as reported by telephone. HEEC will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident.

#### Phone Number of Services Involved in Abuse/Neglect Cases

- Call DCF Child Abuse Hotline: 1(800) 842-2288
- The reporters name is required but may be kept confidential.

See BOE Policy 4116.35: Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees.

## **Attachment A: Storage and Administration of Medication:**

HEEC has a plan to ensure that medication administered to their students is done so appropriately and that there is detailed instructions and permission/authorization from parents or legal guardians and providers.

1. Parent/Guardian notifies HEEC that their child has an allergy and/or specific medication need.
2. HEEC gives the following forms to the parent/guardian for completion:
  - a. Emergency Health Care Plan
  - b. Written Order From An Authorized Prescriber; Parent's Permission for Emergency Medication
3. Parent/guardian provides written permission/authorization to administer medication to their child by completing forms which include physician authorization/prescriber instruction and signature, etc.
4. Parent/guardian brings forms along with EPI PEN and/or specified medication to HEEC.
5. Prior to accepting any medication from a parent/guardian, the following procedure is followed:
  - a. Nurse consultant and/or child's teacher with Medication Certification reviews that the medication is labeled with the child's first and last name; the date the prescription was filled or the recommendation from the child's licensed health care provider; the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication; the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and the strength of the medication and the instructions on how to administer and store it.
  - b. Staff administer both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission.
6. All medications are locked in a cabinet in the hallway by the Center's refrigerator. Children do not use this hallway unless accompanied by an adult and the cabinet is located out of reach of any child. The key for the cabinet is hung just to the left of the cabinet, out of reach of any child. At the end of the school year, all forms are filed in the student Health Record.
7. All medication is returned to the parent/guardian.

### **Procedure for Documenting Medication Administration – HEEC Staff:**

1. Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has completed and passed the CT Medical Administration in Early Education and Child Care Settings. Any staff who administer the medication check the "5 Rights":

Verifying that:

1. Right child
2. Right medication
3. Right dose
4. Right time
5. Right route

The person giving the medication signs documentation of items 1-5 above. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.