KALAMAZOO RESA

Head Start

2026-2027 FAMILY HANDBOOK

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start / GSRP Office | 422 E. South St.

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

YOUR CHILD'S SITE INFORMATION

Site Name: _____

Teachers' Names: _____

Family Advocate's Name and Phone: _____

Site Supervisor's Name and Phone: _____

Classroom Phone: _____ Transportation Phone: _____

Days of Operation: _____ Hours of Operation: _____

WELCOME FAMILIES!

We are so excited that you have chosen to enroll your child in preschool at Kalamazoo RESA Head Start/GSRP! We are proud to partner with you to provide a comprehensive pre-kindergarten experience for your child. Our goal is to partner with you to teach your child important language, literacy, numeracy, social emotional and overall development skills needed to be ready to engage successfully in kindergarten and throughout life.

At Kalamazoo RESA Head Start/GSRP we hold high expectations for all children and families to ensure that every child has every opportunity to succeed! We work to increase family engagement and empower families to advocate for their children's and family's education, health and overall wellbeing. We encourage you to become involved in the program by volunteering in your child's classroom, participating in program family events and engaging in parent involvement meetings.

Please get to know your child's classroom teaching team, family advocate, and site supervisor. Through partnership, they will assist you with ensuring your child meets all of the Head Start program requirements, which promotes a healthy life! We are here to partner with you and find ways to support your involvement in your child's education!

Sincerely,

Rachel M. Roberts, Executive Director for Early Childhood
Bethany Foote, Head Start Administrator
Kyle Fall, Head Start Coordinator

ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start is committed to creating and embracing an inclusive and diverse program where everyone feels welcome, safe and empowered. We believe that human diversity is necessary for the care and education of children and families. Therefore, staff are intentional about teaching students inclusive language, challenging stereotypes, standing up to injustices and promoting equity. We are committed to better understand how we can celebrate cultural and historical differences in experiences, values and practices. Our program and classrooms use the four Anti-Bias Education goals to accomplish this mission.

Goal 1 Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride and positive social identities.

Goal 2 Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity, accurate language for human differences and deep, caring human connections.

Goal 3 Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

Goal 4 Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start is committed to creating a program that truly reflects the lives of our children, families, staff and communities.

CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES

- No School - Both Calendars
- First Day of School - Both Calendars
- Last Day of School - Both Calendars
- Home Visits
- Family Teacher Conferences
- Student Count Day

August 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	1/8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

February 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

June 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

163 CLASSROOM DAYS (MONDAY-FRIDAY)

Beginning of Year Home Visits	August 17-28
First Day of School	August 31
No School for Students	
Labor Day Break	September 4-7
No Students / No Staff	September 25
Fall Break	October 30
Professional Development	November 6
Family Teacher Conferences	November 23-24
No Students / No Staff	November 25
Thanksgiving Break	November 26-27
Professional Development	December 18
Winter Break	December 21 - January 1
Professional Development	January 22
Professional Development	February 5
Professional Development	February 22
Family Teacher Conferences	February 23-24
Midwinter Break	February 25-26
Professional Development	March 25
Spring Break	March 26 - April 2
Professional Development	May 7
Memorial Day Break	May 28-31
Last Day of School	June 9

140 CLASSROOM DAYS (MONDAY-THURSDAY)

First Day of School	August 31
No School for Students	
Labor Day Break	September 4-7
Family Teacher Conferences	November 23-24
No Students / No Staff	November 25
Thanksgiving Break	November 26-27
Winter Break	December 21 - January 1
Professional Development	February 22
Family Teacher Conferences	February 23-24
Midwinter Break	February 25-26
Professional Development	March 25
Spring Break	March 26 - April 2
Memorial Day Break	May 28-31
Last Day of School	June 9

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Kalamazoo RESA Head Start Program provides comprehensive services for three- and four-year-old children and their families. We offer two (2) options of full day programming that operates from August to June. Those options include:

1. 7-hour class sessions, Monday - Thursday.
2. 6.25-hour class sessions, Monday - Friday.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

A family is eligible for Kalamazoo RESA Head Start, if:

- Child is at least 3- or 4-years-old by December 1 of the program year. Priority is given to children 3- or 4-years-old by September 1 of the program year.
- The family's income is at or below the federal poverty guidelines
- The family is receiving or eligible for, or in the absence of child care would be eligible for, public assistance – including TANF and SNAP
- The family is experiencing homelessness (per McKinney Vento)
- The child has foster care placement

If a family doesn't meet the eligibility stated above, the program may enroll a child who would benefit from services up to 10% of the program's enrollment. The program must also ensure at least 10% of total enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA.

ADMISSION & HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

In order for the child to attend school, we will need:

- Up-to-date record of immunizations
- A completed Child Information Card (CIC) signed by the parent or legal guardian with a current phone number – Program staff will comply with all legal documents concerning guardianship and parentage
- Health plans for any chronic health conditions or allergies
- Physical/Well Child Exam within the first 30 days
- Up-to-date Dental Exam by a dentist within 90 calendar days of child's first day

Other program health requirements include:

- Height and Weight Growth Assessment
- Hemoglobin
- Dental Screening
- Hearing Screening
- Vision Screening
- Lead Screening- Only necessary if student has never received the screening, or if the previous result is 5 or greater

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

We know that children who attend our program regularly gain the most benefits. We encourage you to make it a goal to have your child ready to attend school every day, on time and for the entire school day.

Children who attend regularly:

- Adapt more readily to the classroom environment
- Have more opportunities to practice what they are learning
- Learn that school is important and fun
- Establish a positive pattern for attendance early

If your child will be absent from school, call the classroom staff as soon as possible, as well as the transportation office if applicable. If you have not reported your child's absence, staff will contact you within 60 minutes from the start of class.

LATE ARRIVAL POLICY

- If a child arrives more than 15 minutes late more than twice in a week, the teacher will speak with the family.
- If a child continues to have chronic late arrivals (2 or more per week), the teacher will contact the Family Advocate who will contact the family to discuss the importance of arriving on time.

- If the child continues to have chronic late arrivals, the teacher will again inform the Family Advocate who will work with the family to create a documented goal.
- If a family is unable to make progress toward the agreed upon goal within 30 days, the child may be placed on the waitlist.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

- Staff will remain with child until they are picked up.
- If a child remains 5 minutes after class ends, staff will call the primary and secondary contacts.
- 10 minutes after class ends, staff will re-call primary and secondary contacts, all authorized persons listed on the Child Information Record. Staff will notify the Site Supervisor.
- 30 minutes after class ends, if a child remains and contacts have not called back, staff will complete a 3200 (Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Form) and will call to file a report.
- Staff will follow guidance from DHHS and wait for a case worker or a police officer to take custody of the child.
- After 2 late pick-ups, the Family Advocate will make direct contact with the family to discuss the importance of picking up the child on time.

SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY

- If a child has 2 consecutive unexplained absences, the teacher will inform the Family Advocate who will make direct contact with the family. If the Family Advocate is unable to contact the family and the child is not attending the program, an attendance letter will be sent to the family to indicate that if we do not hear from them within seven calendar days, the child will be placed on the waitlist.
- If patterns of absences are identified, the Family Advocate will set a goal with the family to improve attendance.
- If a family is unable to make progress toward the agreed upon attendance goal within 30 days, and the child's attendance falls below 85%, the child may be placed on the waitlist.

We encourage you to make it a goal to have your child ready to attend school every day, on time and for the entire school day.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & DELAYS

In the event of severe weather, Head Start classrooms will close if the public school district where the Site is located is closed. Local school closings are announced on the radio, television and online – please note, you will not see a message that Kalamazoo RESA Head Start is closed. You will receive a courtesy School Messenger Announcement the first time your child's school is closed due to severe weather.

If your public school district is delayed, Head Start/GSRP classrooms will be delayed for the same duration as the district.

BUSING & TRANSPORTATION

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start transportation services are contracted through Dean Transportation and routes differ from those of local school districts. We are committed to providing transportation to as many families as possible. Please note:

- You may be offered transportation for your child to the classroom site, however, transportation is not guaranteed and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- First priority will be given to families who have children that need to be picked-up or dropped off at child care and/or live more than 1 mile from the classroom site.
- In order to receive transportation, families must live within the busing route area.
- Transportation services are not door-to-door, as many stops are with a group of families.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- Keep Child Information Card (CIC) updated, especially phone numbers and emergency contact information. Children will only be released to an authorized person listed on the CIC and with a photo ID. Contact your classroom teacher and the transportation office if you need to make a change to your information. Changes to authorized "release to" contacts will not be accepted over the phone.
- An authorized person will remain with the child at the stop and escort their child to and from the bus.
- If the child is not at their bus stop for 3 consecutive days without contacting transportation, bus services will be suspended until transportation is notified of the change. Please contact the transportation office if your child will be absent from school or the bus stop.
- Allow transportation up to 2 weeks to make a transportation change for child care facilities, and up to 5 school days for all other pick-up and drop-off changes.

- Families should understand that for the first couple of weeks the routes may not run on time.
- Please treat staff in a courteous and respectful manner, as staff will always treat our families in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Transportation staff will make all necessary precautions to keep children safe.
- Transportation staff will do their best to be on time. If the buses are more than 10 minutes late, transportation will make every attempt to contact families.
- Transportation will attempt to contact families if your child has to be returned to the school or to the transportation office.
- Families can contact the transportation office at (269) 250-9861.

For more information regarding transportation and busing, please refer to your Transportation Compact.

SELF-TRANSPORTATION

Several of the Kalamazoo RESA Head Start centers are considered "self-transport" sites. This means that you are responsible for getting your child to and from school each day. Please note:

- It is important that your child arrives to school on time. When you bring your child to school at the beginning of class, you will need to sign your child in. It is our policy that an approved person accompanies children into the classroom.
- It is important that you pick up your child from school on time. When you pick up your child at the end of the class session you will need to sign out your child. Classroom staff are not permitted to sign out your child for you.
- If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please make sure that their name is on the Child Information Card (CIC). Your child cannot be released to anyone who is not listed on the card.
- Please let anyone who is picking up your child know that they will have to show a photo ID before the child will be released.
- If your child is not picked up on time at the end of the class session, our classroom staff will follow the outlined procedures of the Late Pick-Up Policy.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Kalamazoo RESA Head start is committed to providing comprehensive health support to all families. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the program Health Team at (269) 250-9874.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Obtain a physical/Well Child Exam within 30 calendar days of the child's first day of school, which include: growth assessment, hemoglobin, hearing and vision testing, lead screening and up-to-date immunizations.
- Children who do not have an up-to-date physical/Well Child Exam within 30 calendar days will be excluded from attending until an up-to-date exam is received.
- Obtain a dental exam, completed by a dentist, within 90 days of enrollment. Unfortunately, dental screenings by a hygienist do not meet Head Start program requirements.
- Have child attend a lead screening clinic or coordinate a lead screening with medical provider, if needed.
- Contact your Family Advocate or Head Start health staff when a health concern or question arises.
- If a child has a chronic health condition the following must be provided by a doctor, prior to attending school: a treatment plan, any required medication in its original container with the prescription label.
- Provide documentation to program staff when your child obtains an updated Well Child Exam, dental exam and 6-month teeth cleanings.
- If a medical plan or required medication expires during the program year, your child will be excluded from class until an updated plan from your doctor has been received.
- If your child has a food allergy, the following must be provided by a doctor prior to the students first day: a treatment plan, any required medication in its original container with prescription label and Special Diet Statement.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work with families to assist meeting Head Start program health requirements.
- Provide families with a folder to hold all important health and program documents.
- Family Advocates will assist families to establish a dental and/or medical home, if needed.
- Provide the following health services: hearing and vision screen, hemoglobin screening, and opportunities to access lead screening clinics.
- Communicate with families about opportunities to attend dental, hearing, vision and lead clinics.

  Note: We encourage ALL families to take their child to these appointments as clinics are not guaranteed.
- Coordinate follow-up treatment that may be required for health or dental needs, if needed.
- Follow doctor's treatment plan and administer medication as directed by a doctor.

CHILD ILLNESS

Head Start requires that families keep their child home when they are ill. If your child will not be attending class, please contact classroom and transportation staff. If your child becomes sick at school, classroom staff will contact you to pick-up your child. Children cannot attend class until the following symptoms have subsided for a minimum of 24 hours.

- Temperature of 100.4 with other symptoms of illness
- Diarrhea 2 or more times in 24 hours
- Vomiting 2 or more times in 24 hours
- Watering or drainage of eyes, if 2 or more children in classroom show symptoms
- Any type of unidentified rashes, with or without other symptoms of illness
- Any type of weeping sore that cannot be covered with a waterproof dressing

Exceptions will be made with a doctor's note indicating that the child is not contagious and can attend school safely.

If a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, they will be temporarily excluded from attending the program. A doctor's note clearing the child to return to school will be required. For questions regarding your child's health, or our Health policies, please contact the Head Start Health Team at (269) 250-9874.

RESPONSE TO RESPIRATORY ILLNESS (FLU, COVID-19, RSV)

Your child's health and safety are our priority. KRESA Head Start has safety procedures in place for the safety of our students, families and staff. These include monitoring symptoms of respiratory illness, practicing social distancing when possible, proper hygiene and sanitation, and the use of safety equipment. Families will be informed if there is a known exposure to a respiratory illness (such as Flu, COVID-19, or RSV).

Children are sent home from school if they show multiple symptoms of respiratory illness:

- Temperature of 100.4 or signs of fever (chills/sweating)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache

Any child with a fever alone, or a fever with multiple symptoms will be isolated from the group and parents will be contacted for prompt pick up. Parents should contact their primary care provider for follow up if their child is sent home with respiratory illness symptoms.

If a child has symptoms of respiratory illness or tests positive for COVID-19, they need to remain home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and their symptoms are improving. Masking may be recommended upon return, based on the timeline of the illness, to assist in keeping classroom staff and students healthy and safe.

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start will follow the guidance of the local health department and the Office of Head Start and these procedures may be adjusted as needed. To prevent the spread of disease, wash your hands often, keep hands away from face, and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

RELATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

The program Relational Health Specialist (RHS) supports children, families and staff with relational health consultation and referrals to community agencies. The RHS provides a wide range of services, which includes working with children and families in the classroom and through home visits, training of program staff, parent trainings, and providing families with ongoing support and resources. The RHS works in partnership with classroom and program staff on increasing social-emotional skills and implementing activities to promote self-regulation and positive behavior.

MEDICATION POLICY

Children who require prescriptions or over-the-counter medications will be excluded from class until the following requirements are met.

- A completed Medication Permission form, which gives Head Start staff permission to administer the medication must be signed by the parent or guardian.
- A note from the doctor indicating that the prescribed medication must be administered during school hours, the name of the medication, dosage, time to be administered and possible side effects.
- Prescribed medication must be current and in the original bottle with the prescription label on it.
- If a child requires medication at school, a second prescription is needed to have at school per licensing requirements.
- Over-the-counter medication must be in its original container with the child's name written on it.

NUTRITION POLICY

Kalamazoo RESA Head start partners with several local school districts to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program that provides cash reimbursement to the local school districts for nutritious meals which helps children develop healthy eating habits. The CACFP is administered by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

Through the CACFP you can be assured that your child is receiving balanced, nutritious meals and developing lifelong healthy eating habits. Proper nutrition during the early years ensures fewer physical and educational problems later in life.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

MICHIGAN Department of Education

FOOD FROM HOME

All meals are provided as part of the Head Start program. We ask that you please do not send food from home into your child's classroom. If your child has food allergies or needs dietary accommodations, please fill out the Special Diet Statement form provided by your Family Advocate. Food policies also apply to classroom celebrations. Please note that if a request is made without a medical diagnosis, the food accommodation may be denied at the discretion of the food service provider.

CLASS OUTINGS

Occasionally, our classroom curriculum lends itself to classroom outings or field trips. Classroom staff will notify parents in advance of specific trip dates, times and locations. A signed permission slip will be required in order for your child to attend the outing. Field trips will occur during regular school hours.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start ensures that child and family records will not be disclosed without written consent of the parent or legal guardian, except as needed when child abuse and neglect is of concern. Confidential information is only shared with staff members who need the information to perform their jobs. Families have the right to examine their own records.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Our goal is to provide high-quality services and a positive preschool experience to our students and their families. All families are encouraged to express their concerns to the classroom teacher and/or Family Advocate at any time. This may be done through face-to-face contact, a phone call, a letter, or by email. We anticipate most concerns will be resolved quickly through classroom staff and/or the Family Advocate. If the problem persists, please contact the Site Supervisor and/or Program Administrators to help resolve the situation.

MOVING FROM THE KALAMAZOO RESA HEAD START SERVICE AREA

We understand that sometimes families must leave the program before the end of the year. With that in mind, we ask that as soon as you know that you plan to withdraw your child, please notify the teacher and your Family Advocate of your child's last day. Our program staff would be happy to help you transition to a new PRE-K program.

SAFETY

Kalamazoo RESA Head Start ensures that the physical classroom environments support child safety and wellbeing. The primary focus of the safety plan is the prevention of disease, injury and the management of potential health hazards. Each of the classrooms has a complete Safety Plan, which outlines the purpose, rationale, guidelines and procedures for child and staff hand washing, handling bodily fluids, cleaning and sanitizing all equipment, toys and other surfaces, and controlling Infection. Other safety practices include Active Supervision, redundant roll-call procedures and practicing of emergency drills in the event of severe weather or other threats to student and staff safety.

PARENT NOTIFICATION OF ACCIDENTS, INJURIES & INCIDENTS

Two-way communication between home and school is our top priority. If your child is involved in an accident or injury during the school day, program staff will immediately contact you by phone. If we are unable to reach you over the phone and it is an emergency, program staff will proceed to contact your emergency contacts that are listed on the Child Information Card (CIC).

PHILOSOPHY ON BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

At Kalamazoo RESA Head Start, we use the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which encourages and teaches students to continuously make good behavior choices. We teach students to Always be kind, Be safe, and to Care for the environment. Teachers communicate these expectations to all students and provide frequent opportunities to practice.

Site Supervisors and other program staff provide additional support to classroom staff and families to aide in teaching behavioral expectations, including the Relational Health Specialist who can make referrals, meet individually and work with children during program hours. The Relational Health Specialist can be contacted at (269) 250-9863.

METHODS WE DO USE

- Redirection
- Reteaching appropriate behavior
- Teaching replacement behavior
- Practicing expected behavior
- Engaging family in problem solving
- Creating an individual behavior plan for reoccurring behaviors
- Consulting with Site Supervisors and other support staff for coaching methods
- Consulting with Mental Health Specialist for social emotional support

METHODS WE DO NOT USE

We do not use the following means of discipline, as outlined in the State of Michigan Licensing Notebook (R400.8140), at Kalamazoo RESA Head Start:

- Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment
- Placing substances in a child's mouth including, but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
- Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming or threatening a child
- Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest or necessary toilet use
- Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities
- Excluding a child from daily learning experiences
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle
- Timeout is not an appropriate method of discipline for children under three years of age

DAILY SCHEDULE

To guide and plan instruction, our program uses research-based core curriculum. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Teaching Guides are utilized in each classroom for implementing engaging, hands-on studies that are relevant to children's daily lives. It offers comprehensive daily plans that support teachers as they help every child explore, investigate, learn and succeed. Preparing children for kindergarten is a primary focus and the curriculum aligns with the early childhood learning domains which are outlined by the Head Start Child Development & Early Learning Framework.

Another important curriculum that we use to teach and increase social-emotional skills is Second Step, which teaches children to identify and understand their own, and others' emotions, choosing positive actions and successfully managing their emotions.

- Arrival/Greeting
- Meal Times – Breakfast, Lunch and/or Snack
- Brushing Teeth
- Small Group
- Free Choice
- Outdoor Time – Children go outside every day.
- Please make sure that your child is dressed for the weather.
- Whole Group
- Rest/Naptime
- Dismissal

Ask your child's teacher for an individual classroom schedule.

TEACHER CONFERENCES & HOME VISITS

Family-teacher conferences are held twice throughout the year, once in November and again in February.

During conferences, teachers will discuss your child's overall development, and review educational goals and an action plan to achieve that goal. Family Advocates will also provide a Health Report to highlight progress on your child meeting the program's health requirements.

Classroom staff also conduct Education Home Visits with each family two times a year. The first Home Visit occurs prior to the program year or whenever a new child enrolls in the program. Home Visits are very important as they help children and families to feel comfortable sending their child to school, provide an opportunity for staff and families to build a positive relationship and to get to know families' strengths as well as areas we can support.

Families are encouraged to ask questions, give suggestions, or share concerns regarding the program, or their child and family.

Families may schedule a meeting with their teacher, Family Advocate or Site Supervisor at any time to address questions or concerns.

FAMILY ADVOCATES & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

A Family Advocate team is assigned to each classroom to provide further support and act as a liaison between families, program staff and the community. They will conduct home visits with each family throughout the program year. The Family Advocate will work to build a trusting and collaborative partnership with your family to provide support to assist in meeting the needs of your child(ren) and family. We believe that parents are their child's first and most important teacher. Your Family Advocate will encourage you to become an advocate for your child and family and be engaged in your child's education through participation in the program.

We plan to support you by identifying your strengths and achieving various goals you set for yourself and family. These goals may include health, family engagement, transitions and/or wellbeing.

Family Advocates can also make referrals for your family to outside community organizations, as needed or requested.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are critical to the success of our program. Head Start is comprehensive and family oriented. We encourage families to volunteer in their child's classroom and participate in other aspects of the program. Some ways volunteers can assist are:

- In classroom activities
- Policy Council
- At the administration office
- Read to children
- Play educational games
- Attend Family Resource Events

To find out how you can help serve, please see your child's classroom teacher or Family Advocate.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING

To ensure the safety of all children, every person who volunteers in the classroom, including those attending outings and field trips, must complete an I-Chat form and a Public Sex Offender Registry (PSOR) form. Parents may obtain the forms from their child's teacher or Family Advocate. Once your form has been returned, it will be sent to our human resources office for processing. The program staff will send letters out to the volunteers and classroom teachers, letting them know of their volunteer status.

Every person who volunteers in the classroom, including those attending outings and field trips, must complete an I-Chat form and a Public Sex Offender Registry (PSOR) form.

POLICY COUNCIL

The Kalamazoo RESA Head Start Policy Council is made up of Head Start parents and various community members. Representatives on Policy Council are elected by Head Start parents and are responsible for making and contributing to program decisions, such as approving the budget, hiring and recruitment policies. The Policy Council meets once a month and is open to anyone who would like to attend. Please let your child's teacher or Family Advocate know if you are interested in being a Policy Council representative this year.

FAMILY RESOURCE EVENTS

Throughout the year, there will be several fun family activities, resource nights and various events to keep families engaged. These events will give you an opportunity to be an active participant in your child's education and create a chance for you to network with other families. Please stay tuned for more information about these opportunities:

- Family Dance
- Employment Education Fairs
- March is Reading Month
- Family Health & Resource Night

SUPERMEN: MALE ENGAGEMENT & NETWORKING

The SuperMEN: Male Engagement & Networking program was created for fathers, grandfathers, uncles and any other male role models in your child's life. SuperMEN creates a bond between the male participants who see the value of building relationships.

HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HSAC)

We believe that caregivers and parents are the greatest influencers of their children. By breaking generational patterns, we educate families, empower families, and improve the health of families in our community. The Health Services Advisory Committee connects families to resources, helps to establish priorities and plan interventions, build community networks and raise awareness for better health. We are educators, collaborators, advocates, providers, and parents; we are leading the change and improving access to care.

ABRIENDO PUERTAS/ OPENING DOORS

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors is an evidence-based parenting, leadership and advocacy program for Latino parents with children from birth to age 5. With dinner and childcare provided, meetings will focus on improving the lives of Latino children in the U.S. across areas such as education and health, as well as social and emotional wellbeing. Those interested are encouraged to contact their Family Advocate for more information.

FAMILY MEETINGS

Individual Head Start sites host a family meeting that meets monthly at a convenient time to be determined by families. These meetings serve as an opportunity for families to network, discuss topics of interest and receive important information and updates from Head Start staff.

FAMILY WORKSHOP SERIES

The Family Workshop Series provides Head Start families with the opportunities to participate in evidence-based parenting workshops designed to increase parenting skills, child self-regulation, and family relationships. Those interested are encouraged to contact their Family Advocate to learn more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

This is to acknowledge that I:

- Received access to an electronic copy of the Family Handbook (or a physical copy, upon request)
- A Head Start staff member explained the handbook and program
- Agree to adhere to the program policies outlined in the manual
- Agree to advocate for my family and child(ren) in an appropriate and respectful manner
- Agree to encourage safe and healthy practices for my child and family, and will ensure my child receives the needed program health requirements and will provide Head Start with the appropriate documentation
- Will commit to participate in the program and play an active role in my child's education
- Will partner with my Family Advocate to identify goals based on my interest and need, complete identified goals, and meet regularly throughout the school year according to the home visiting schedule
- Understand that all program and transportation staff are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Children's Protective Services (CPS)
- Understand there is a Licensing Binder at my child's site which is available for families to view during regular business hours and includes:
    - » All licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans
    - » Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare

Thank you for taking the time to review this handbook. All of the staff members here are looking forward to offering your child and family an enriching experience.

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_____

Head Start Staff Signature Date

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Child Care Resources
(269) 349-3296

Hispanic American Council
(269) 385-6279

Housing Resource Inc.
(269) 382-0287

Integrated Services of Kalamazoo
(269) 373-6000

Family Health Center
(269) 349-2641

Kalamazoo RESA Preprimary Evaluation Team (PET)
(269) 250-9670

Kalamazoo Deacon's Conference
(269) 344-7333

Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center
(269) 382-3640

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission
(269) 345-2974

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes
(269) 343-3663

Michigan Works! Southwest
(269) 383-2536

Salvation Army
(269) 344-6119

YWCA Kalamazoo
(269) 345-5595

Legal Aid of Western Michigan
(269) 344-8113

Gryphon Place
(269) 381-1510

United Way of the Battle Creek & Kalamazoo Region
(269) 343-2524

American Red Cross of Greater Kalamazoo
(269) 353-6180

KALAMAZOO RESA

Early Childhood

Great Start Readiness Program

Michigan's Nationally Recognized Pre-K Program

KALAMAZOO RESA

Head Start