EASTCONN

EARLY HEAD START

HEAD START

FAMILY HANDBOOK





2024
2025





eastconn.org/headstart

EASTCONN EARLY HEAD START & HEAD START

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Welcome!



WELCOME TO EASTCONN HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START!

We are excited to have your family join our program and we look forward to partnering with you. As you begin this journey with our program there are a few things I want you to keep in mind. Our program vision and beliefs states that together we create opportunities, identify strengths and build partnerships through nurturing relationships for lifelong learning and growth. We strive to work with each of our families to provide a nurturing relationship, meet their needs, and offer their children a healthy environment to learn and grow. Your involvement as a family member is equally important in that learning and growth. I encourage you to ask questions of our teaching staff or family service staff, come into the classroom and get involved with your child's learning.

EASTCONN Head Start and Early Head Start works as a team with public schools, Birth to Three, early childhood specialists, management staff, and our families. Together we will make the future better by positively impacting one child at a time.

The EASTCONN Family Handbook provides a great deal of important information regarding our programs and services, as well as our policies and procedures. Please take time to read the handbook thoroughly and discuss this information with your teacher or family advocate. This relationship between home and our program helps to promote the well-being of our children and their learning process.

Please feel free to contact any member of our staff if you have any questions or concerns. We encourage a close proactive relationship with our families and look forward to working with you.
Together we can change the future and it starts with you enrolling in Head Start.

Sincerely,
Kim Mansfield, EASTCONN Director of Head Start
kmansfield@eastconn.org







Administrative Team



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Shannon Haynes, *Dietitian Consultant*
Melanie Smith-Cervera, *Education Consultant*
Jen Adams, *Nurse Consultant*

Locations



Killingly Early Head Start & Head Start

562 Westcott Road, Danielson, CT 06239 • 860-779-0410



Killingly Head Start at Killingly High School

226 Putnam Pike, Dayville, CT 06241 • 860-779-6793



Moosup Early Head Start & Head Start

10B Gorman Street, Moosup, CT 06354 • 860-564-7199



Putnam Head Start

33 Wicker Street, Putnam, CT 06260 • 860-928-0004

Tolland County Head Start Home-Based

860-455-1586

Windham Early Head Start Home-Based

860-455-1586

What is Early Head Start and Head Start?



Early Head Start and Head Start are federally funded programs that serve income eligible children, with and without disabilities, and their families. Children and families enrolled in Head Start will have access to early education, family services, health and wellness, dental care, nutrition services and mental health services. Early Head Start serves pregnant women and children ages birth to three. Head Start serves children ages three to five.



EASTCONN EARLY HEAD START & HEAD START PROGRAM OPTIONS

EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START HOME-BASED

The home-based option is designed to provide the same services families would receive in our center-based programs in your home. Together, families and home visitors plan weekly home visits. Early Head Start includes pregnant women and children ages birth to three. Head Start includes children ages three to five. Children and families are encouraged to join regularly scheduled playgroups, called Family Connection Time.

EARLY HEAD START CENTER-BASED

Early Head Start classrooms provide children an opportunity to develop trusting relationships with primary caregivers, working together to support growth and development. Classrooms are open full day/full year. This option gives preference to those families working a minimum of 25 hours per week, or enrolled in school or a job-training program. In the event of job loss, families are given support and time to obtain employment in order to meet the requirements of the program. Children ages 6 weeks to three years of age are eligible. Sliding scale fees apply. Every family has a family advocate assigned to provide support, education and referrals to community resources.Family Advocates conduct at least 4 home visits throughout the year.

HEAD START CENTER-BASED

Head Start classrooms provide a learning environment that supports all areas of development and promotes school readiness skills. Classrooms are open during the school year and for a full school day. Head Start includes children ages three to five. Eligible children must be three years old on or before September 1st. There is no cost for the program. Transportation is available, as needed. Every family has a family advocate assigned to provide support, education and referrals to community resources. Family Advocates conduct at least 4 home visits throughout the year.

NAEYC Accreditation



EASTCONN center-based Early Head Start and Head Start programs are involved in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process. A national review team visits and reviews practices, confirming the program meets high standards related to relationships, teachers, teaching, assessment, health and safety, curriculum, families, professionalism, community, physical environment and management.








EASTCONN HEAD START
annual
ART
SHOW





Program Vision and Beliefs



TOGETHER WE CREATE OPPORTUNITIES, IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS FOR LIFELONG AND LEARNING AND GROWTH.





TOGETHER

- We believe that nurturing relationships with families are essential to goal-achievement.
- We believe in meeting our families where they are to support their family strengths.
- We provide a nurturing, supportive and healthy climate for children to learn and grow.
- We provide community resources and build strong partnerships with community agencies.
- We empower our families to achieve family goals, which builds self-esteem and confidence.
- Together we will ensure compliance of policies and procedures that reflect our program's vision in supporting social and emotional development.
- We believe that data and assessment informs program planning and positive outcomes.
- Together we will support all staff and families to build leadership skills.
- We believe high-quality programs are achieved through personal accountability, consistency and strong communication systems.



COMMUNICATION

- Center-Based families will participate in minimum of two family conferences and two educational home visits with their teacher and a minimum of four home visits with their family advocate. In addition, you may request a meeting with your child's teacher at any time.
- Home-Based families will participate in two educational family conferences, in addition to weekly home visits and family connection time each week.
- Families are encouraged to communicate their thoughts and ideas about the program at any time. Throughout the year, we will ask you to complete surveys and participate in ongoing evaluation of the program. Your feedback is important and appreciated.
- We will share information with you about special activities that happen in our program and in the community, i.e. flyers, notes and newsletters.
- Staff are trained to communicate with your family in a way that is sensitive to your family's values, culture and home language.
- Two-way communication through journals, emails, notes, phone calls and conversations in person are other ways we communicate with families.
- SeeSaw is an app designed to help families stay connected to what is going on in their child's classroom. Staff post pictures, notification, and other pertinent information. This allows teachers and families to remain in constant communication. Families are encouraged to sign up as soon as their child begins school.
- Parents and caregivers are expected to communicate in a respectful and collaborative manner. Foul language and/or disrespect will not be tolerated.
- If a parent/caregiver has multiple interactions that include threatening or disrespectful behavior, they may be denied access to the building and will be asked to meet with the Director to create a mutual agreement for continued communication.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We respect your privacy. All family information shared is kept confidential. You may request your child's file at any time. Parent/Guardian written consent is required before information and records are shared with support service personnel and consultants. At no time will a staff member or any classroom visitor discuss children and families outside of school or on their own time. Families may take photos of their own child while he or she is in the classroom. However, they may not take photos of other children or post such photos on social media sites. Program photos of children require Parent/Guardian permission. While arrival & pick-up times are an opportunity for families to collaborate with one another and teaching staff, please be mindful of confidentiality while teaching staff speak with another parent or guardian. EASTCONN staff and their consultants, as well as regulatory authorities (such as state licensing inspectors), are the only other people able to view files.





FAMILY SERVICES

Early Head Start & Head Start focus on supporting the entire family. We believe that supporting family well-being will lead to greater lifelong success for you and your child. We work together to build trusting relationships with you and your family, collaborating to identify family strengths, interests, needs and goals. Together, we will develop a Family Partnership Agreement, including action steps, responsibilities and strategies to support your goals. This may include connecting your family to community resources and collaborating with other community agencies, coordinating to help you reach your goals. EASTCONN Early Head Start & Head Start offer many opportunities for families to get to know and support each other through special events, volunteer opportunities, Policy Council involvement & more.

Head Start Performance Standards outline expectations for families, which include:

- Establishing and working towards meeting a family goal
- Attending monthly parent meetings
- Participating in parent education opportunities
- Completing program surveys (to inform program improvement)
- Participating in home visits with your family advocate, home visitor and teacher
- For home-based families, attending weekly playgroup/socialization (Family Connection Time)

GOALS

All Home Visitors develop education and family goals with families. In our center-based programs, teachers will work with you on developing an education goal for your child, and your Family Advocate will work with you to develop a Family Goal. Education goals are made to help track your child's growth and development while in our programs. Family Goals are identified together to work on any potential areas of need within a family.



PARENT LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

All The governing body of EASTCONN Early Head Start & Head Start is our Policy Council. Policy Council makes important decisions about the program, personnel, policies and procedures, budget, program plans and self-assessment. Involvement in Policy Council is an opportunity for parents to build confidence, leadership skills and knowledge and be a voice for your child's education and program. This group consists of Head Start staff, parents and individuals from within the community. Policy Council consists of at least 51% of parents of enrolled children and are elected by other parents in the program. Policy Council meets once per month and the timeframe for membership is from one to up to five years. Policy Council is a requirement of every Head Start program. All parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to attend monthly family meetings which inform Policy Council on center updates and happenings.

GETTING INVOLVED

Family involvement is essential for a quality program. Throughout the year, there are many opportunities for you to actively participate in the program;

- Establishing and working towards meeting a family goal
- Attending monthly parent meetings
- Participating in parent education opportunities
- Share ideas for monthly newsletters and classroom activities
- Be a classroom volunteer
- Share a skill or talent with the children or other parents
- Participate in planning committees
- Be a member of Policy Council
- Share in book reading
- Donate recycled materials for classroom projects
- Serve on interview committees to hire new staff



IN-KIND DONATIONS

Head Start programs are federally funded and therefore are required to keep accurate records and report in-kind donations.

In-kind donations include, but are not limited to:

Time parents & guardians spend volunteering in the classroom, for example:

- Read a book
- Participate in an art activity
- Play outside
- Materials that are donated to the classroom or program.

VOLUNTEERING

In order to volunteer in our center-based programs, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) requires that all persons volunteering, with direct contact with children:

1. Complete a Volunteer Application.
2. Complete a DCF background check, with no DCF substantiations. Complete an OEC check of the State Child Abuse Registry and a state and federal finger print card for a criminal records check.
3. Provide a medical Statement of Good Health and negative T.B. test (within the last year).
4. Participate in a volunteer orientation prior to volunteering in the classroom. This includes: mandated reporter training, confidentiality, emergency procedures, positive discipline, drop off and pick up procedures and health and safety protocols. Volunteers will be given a Volunteer Handbook.
5. Volunteers will adhere to all staff policies and procedures.

Please communicate with the teaching staff when you are planning to spend time in the classroom. This will ensure a meaningful visit & that the time/activity meets the needs of the classroom.

Thank you for volunteering your valuable time and talents to support our program and for your efforts to keep all children safe.





FAMILY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Family Meetings are scheduled by Family Service Staff on a monthly basis for center and home-based families. These scheduled meetings are a way to get involved with your child's education and socialize within the Head Start community. Family Meetings can also be completed in collaboration with other local community agencies such as Family Resource Centers. During family meetings, parents and caregivers are informed of up-to-date information about the Head Start program and individual sites and classrooms. In order to plan successful meetings, parent involvement and feedback is important. Your interests and ideas are important for planning these events. If you have any further questions, talk to your family advocate or home visitor about your ideas. The program encourages the entire family to attend these events. Refreshments and childcare are offered at most meetings or events.

Family Meetings from the past few years include:

- Art Show
- Collaboration with local library for literacy event
- Fall Festival & Apple Picking at local orchard
- Health & Safety Nutrition event for healthy cooking
- Partnerships with Peace at Home Parenting
- Sports Events



EARLY EDUCATION

Early Childhood is an important time in your child's development. Developmental milestones that occur between birth and age 5 create a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success.

Our program provides nurturing and educational experiences that support social and emotional development, language and literacy, physical growth and health, early math, science and social studies. EASTCONN uses the High Scope curriculum, enriched with the Pyramid Model and Executive Function, to guide development. Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework (ELOF) and the CT Early Learning Development Standards (CT ELDS) provide standards and benchmarks for planning and implementing learning experiences. Children learn in an enriched environment that fosters independence, decision-making, curiosity and creativity. Indoor and outdoor play, child and teacher-directed experiences, combined with ongoing assessment and input from families, supports learning.

The Domains of Child Development are embedded into children's learning experiences:

- Social and emotional development
- Language, literacy and communication
- Physical growth and health
- Early mathematics, science, social studies and creative arts

Learning is hands-on and can be messy. Please provide an extra set of clothing, closed-toe shoes for outside play and climbing and appropriate indoor and outerwear for the season. We play outside year-round, with weather and air quality conditions monitored daily.

PARENTING CURRICULUM

As a parent, you are your child's first teacher. Our Early Head Start and Head Start home visitors are trained in the Parents as Teachers curriculum. This curriculum provides resources to home visitors and families during weekly home visits. Parents as Teachers is an evidence-based home visiting model. During weekly home visits, parents and guardians work with their home visitor to plan activities that promote their child's growth and development.



TEACHERS AND HOME VISITORS

Teachers work with children enrolled in center-based classrooms individually and provide small and whole group experiences. Classroom teaching teams provide safe nurturing responsive environments. Each classroom is assigned a teaching team that includes a Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher and Teacher Aide. This team will be consistent in the classroom day-to-day and over the span of the school year. Teachers have a bachelor's degree and assistants have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or additional early childhood coursework/degrees. Teaching staff are trained in First Aid and CPR and administration of medication to ensure child health and safety. Home visitors work with parents/guardians to support child growth and development in the home. Home-based families commit to participating in weekly playgroups (Family Connection Time) to support social emotional development. All learning experiences are developmentally appropriate, with a child's interests, learning style, temperament, language and cultural background, considered.

Education goals are created with either your Teacher or Home Visitor. These goals are supported in the classroom and reviewed during home visits and family conferences. Teachers will share strategies and activities to support your child in reaching goals as you work with them at home. Teachers create Learning Experience Plans (LEPS) to plan classroom experiences to enrich growth in all areas of development. LEPs are posted on the family board for you to review.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

All children have individual needs and develop at their own pace. Each child receives developmental screenings within 45 days of enrollment. This helps identify their current level of development and identify possible areas of concern. Families are included in the screening process and always informed of outcomes. Results become part of your child's file. In addition to our screening tools, please share any developmental concerns you may have with your child's teacher, whenever they may develop.

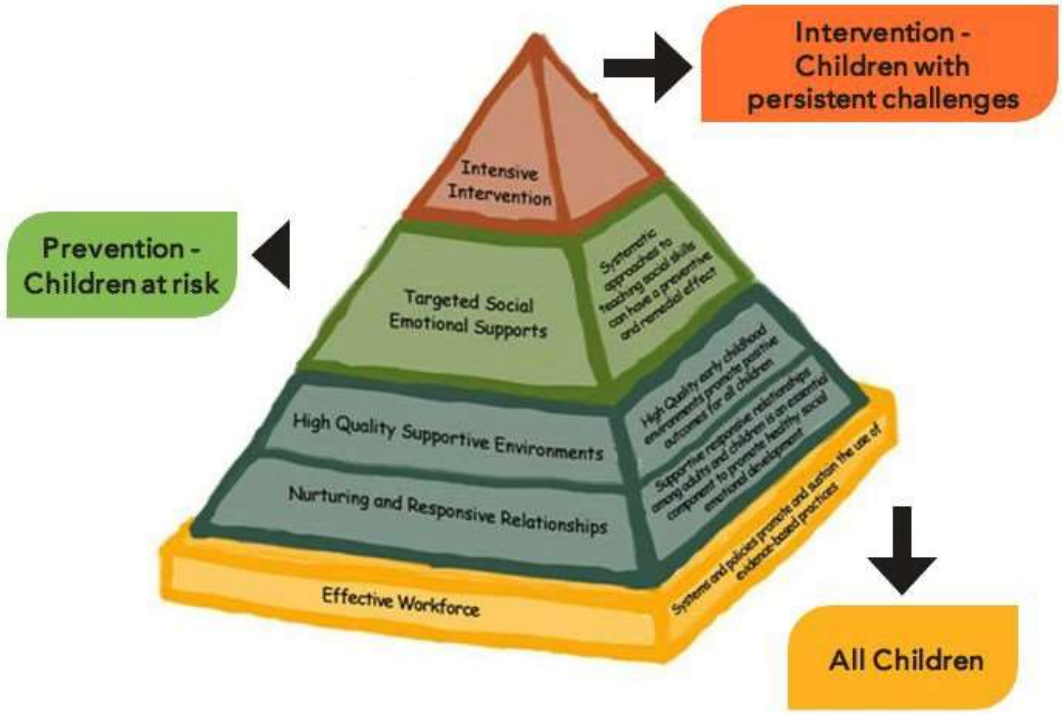
Teachers use the following assessment tools:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social Emotional (ASQ-SE 2)
- Child Observation Record (COR)



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EASTCONN Head Start and Early Head Start uses The Pyramid Model to promote the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Young Children. The Pyramid Model is a framework that promotes healthy development and prevents challenging behaviors in our youngest learners by developing adult skills. The Second Step Program is evidenced-based and implemented in our Head Start classrooms. Each week, a new theme is introduced to teach and promote self-regulation and social emotional skills.





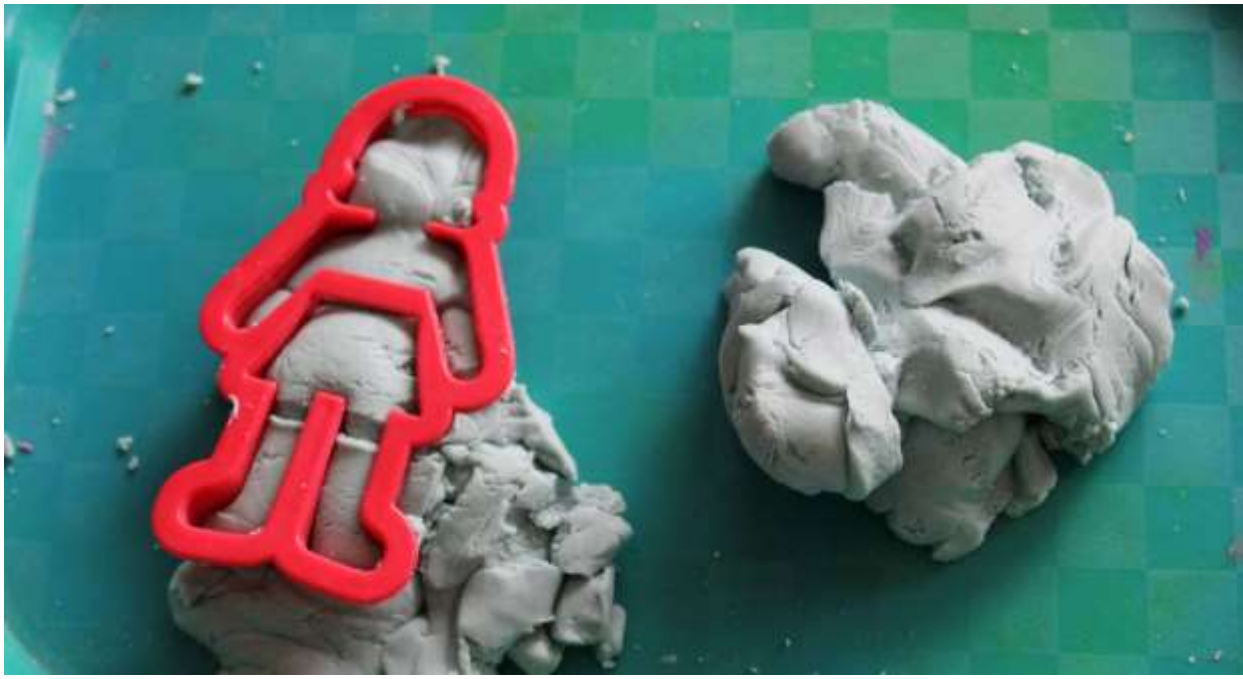
POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

A goal of discipline is to help children develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior. Teachers work with parents and support staff to assess the function of behavior and then develop a plan with positive behavior strategies to support the child. Positive guidance, setting clear limits and redirection are developmentally appropriate strategies used to develop self-regulation and promote self-esteem.

- ✔ **Positive Guidance** When disputes arise among children or between a child and staff, the staff will encourage a "talking out" process where the goal is to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using the children's ideas wherever possible.
- ✔ **Setting Clear Limits** Staff will encourage and model positive behavior, positive reinforcement, the use of peer support and clearly defined rules.
- ✔ **Redirection** A child who may be aggressive, disruptive, or destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area.

CHILD ACTION TEAM (CAT)

EASTCONN Early Head Start and Head Start's goal is to help all children be ready to learn. We help them to learn to solve problems, express their feelings and emotions and build healthy relationships with peers and adults. We believe that all children should be in a safe environment that supports their learning. We work to build strong relationships with each child so that we can foster their unique learning styles and strengths. Each child develops at their own pace and we work in collaboration with families to meet individual goals. EASTCONN Head Start utilizes our Child Action Team (CAT) process to support children who are currently on IFSPs, IEPs and also for those children whom staff and families have concerns regarding their development. These meetings occur monthly or more frequently if needed, to monitor and develop strategies for support for both the school and home settings. Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate. Family Advocates, Teachers, Managers and in some instances, the Director participate in CAT meetings.



DISABILITIES

If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), your child's teacher and EASTCONN's Transition Coordinator will work with you and your child to support specific goals and monitor progress. We work closely with birth to three and local school districts as well as other specialists and consultants to support your child.

Please be sure to inform your teacher if there is an IEP or IFSP in place. A copy should be provided to Head Start staff. Head Start staff want to participate in any IFSP reviews or PPT meetings. Please consider inviting them to attend.

Please note that program placement decisions are made during Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings with the local education agency and the family for children with an IFSP or IEP.

Should you ever have concerns about your child not meeting developmental milestones, please talk to your child's teacher, home visitor or family service staff. Teaching staff and home visitors will also bring any observations that they have made regarding your child's development to your attention. Program staff, along with the Transition Coordinator will support and guide families to the right resources and make referrals with parental consents when necessary.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Classroom staff are trained in both The Pyramid Model and Second Step Curriculum. Staff work hard to create classroom communities that build prosocial behaviors. It is developmentally appropriate that children will struggle to navigate conflicts with peers. Sometimes, children use physical actions rather than words to obtain a desired item or activity. Head Start records these interactions through incident reports.

There are three types of incident tracking reports:

- Accident/Injury – this report will be completed if your child is injured at school, whether by accident or by the actions of another. The report will indicate if another child is involved. The Transition Coordinator will review the incident and make appropriate recommendations as necessary. EASTCONN Head Start will exhaust all supports, referrals, and collaborative efforts to avoid suspension, expulsion, or un-enrolling a child from Head Start.
- Behavior – this report will be completed if your child causes harm to another child or staff member. The Transition Coordinator will review the incident and make recommendations as necessary. An emergency Child Action Team meeting may be warranted based on severity.
- Illness – this report will be completed when an illness develops during school hours. Incident reports will be provided to families the same day of the incident or as soon as possible and signature is required.
- The severity, frequency and duration of challenging behaviors will all be considered when addressing an individual child. Staff will never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, coercion, humiliating or frightening punishment, under any circumstances. No child will be physically restrained. If it becomes necessary to protect the safety or health of the child or others, the classroom will be evacuated and two staff will remain with the child and the family contacted.
- If it is determined that challenging behaviors are significant because of severity – frequency – duration, then an emergency Child Action Team meeting will be convened on the child's behalf. Families are encouraged to participate as well as any professionals (B23, LEA, etc) currently involved. During the first meeting, the following will be considered: (1) Identify the concerns, (2) develop a child support plan (which will include outside agencies, such as 211), (3) Develop and implement a behavior plan, (4) make referrals to community based programs, (5) make referrals to B23/LEA) and (6) conduct additional observations by mental health and child specific consultants or Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). Parents/caregivers are expected to be involved with the process and will be asked to stay in up-to-date communication.

TRANSITIONS IN EARLY HEAD START

Your Child's First Days: Starting school is a big transition for children and families. We find that most children adjust well into Early Head Start and Head Start. When your child first attends school, being positive and reassuring helps your child learn that school is a safe place to learn and grow. Regular attendance supports a successful transition. Every child and family are unique and if you or your child experience difficulty during this transition time, we will work together to develop strategies to best support your family.

As Your Child Grows – Early Head Start: It is never too early to be thinking about your child's next steps and your family's needs. Your child can participate in our Early Head Start programs until they turn three. At that time, they will need to transition into another program. Planning for this transition starts long before their third birthday and we will be there to support you along the way. Ongoing conversations are encouraged throughout your child's enrollment and plans can be discussed and changed as your needs shift, but a transition meeting will be officially planned 6 months before your child transitions out of our Early Head Start program and into another. Family advocates and home visitors, along with the transition coordinator, will work with families to complete applications, set up visits to other programs and schools to help ease the transition. Additional guidance and support will be provided to families with children with supports, such as an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) from a birth to three agency.

Please note that program placement decisions are made during Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings with the local education agency and the family for children with an IFSP or Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Teachers and home visitors also support transitions with activities, discussions and site visits when possible. Discussions and support will continue until your child successfully transitions to their next program, whether with Head Start, public school or community-based program. All staff will support families to finalize paperwork and schedule exit dates.

TRANSITIONS IN HEAD START

As Your Child Grows – Head Start: If your child is enrolled in one of our Head Start classrooms, the next transition for your child will be to start kindergarten with the local public school in the town you live in. Family advocates and the transition coordinator will support you during this process by providing information about registration appointments and applications for schools. Field trips are coordinated with public schools when possible. Sometimes, concerns may develop for your child and the public school may evaluate their needs through special education. Should an Individualized Education Program (IEP) be developed, your child's placement will be determined at the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting and it may no longer be with Head Start. Staff will support families through all transitions during your child's enrollment with Basic Head Start.





CENTER-BASED ATTENDANCE

Early Head Start and Head Start require that children attend regularly in order to receive the full educational benefits of the program and to establish good school attendance habits early. Your child should not attend when sick or unable to fully participate in the program. Please contact us if your child cannot attend for any reason. If we do not hear from you within the first hour of the school day, we will contact you. If there are frequent absences, the EASTCONN Head Start team will work with you to develop solutions to improve attendance. Family vacations are special. Please make every effort to plan vacations during scheduled school vacations. You will receive a school calendar upon enrollment to help with planning. Head Start staff will use all available resources to support transitions into and out of the program. If you decided to withdraw your child from the program, please give a two-week notice. We support families to understand and comply with Head Start and licensing policies and regulations. If guidelines are not followed, there may be a need to modify services.

HOME-BASED ATTENDANCE

Weekly home visits will support full educational benefits of our program.
Our Home Visitors will work with you to establish regularly scheduled home visits that are convenient for your family. If it is necessary to cancel a home visit (sickness or emergency, for example,) please plan to make up the visit. We want your child to have every opportunity to learn! Weekly Family Connection Time, with opportunities to support social emotional development in a group setting, is an important component of the home-based option. Please plan to attend regularly.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

CHILD PROTECTION

Our primary concern is for the health and safety of children enrolled in our program. Please keep us informed about your child's well-being and safety. All EASTCONN Early Head Start and Head Start staff members are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required by Connecticut General Laws Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect to inform the Department of Children and Families if there is a reasonable cause to believe that a child has been neglected or abused. If there is a suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect, we are required to share this information with DCF. A staff member who fails to make a necessary report is subject to a fine and disciplinary action. We understand that as children explore their environment, they often fall and bump into things. It is normal for children to get an occasional bruise. When your child has a bruise from playing or from a fall at home, be sure to let the teacher know as soon as he/she comes to school. We will do the same for you; your family will receive an injury report if an injury happens at school.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

We follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' schedule for physical exams and immunizations. Well baby exams or well child exams should be completed at a timely manner based on your child's age group. Well exams are an opportunity to review your child's health and growth with his or her pediatrician. Well exams are completed at months: 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24 and 36, and yearly going forward. At every physical appointment, please have your child's health care provider complete a health evaluation form and submit a copy to your family advocate or home visitor. Every child entering a center-based classroom must have an updated physical form, signed and dated by his/her health care provider, including current immunization documentation. Your child may be excluded from school until this requirement is met.

FLU SHOT

The State of Connecticut requires all preschool students have a flu shot. Families must show written proof of the vaccine from a health care provider. Every child must have one dose administered each year between August 1 – December 31. Two doses separated by at least 28 days are required for those receiving the flu vaccine for the first time. Please see your child's health care provider if a medical exemption is needed. For center-based programs, all documentation must be received by January 2nd in order for your child to be eligible to attend.

DENTAL HEALTH AND DENTAL EXAMS

We assist children with dental care by helping them brush their teeth once daily after a meal or snack. For children without teeth, staff will gently wipe gums/ teeth after each feeding. For children with teeth, staff will assist children in brushing with a small smear of toothpaste containing fluoride. Early Head Start and Head Start requires children to have dental exams every six months, beginning at age one. **Children are required to have a documented dental visit within 90 days of enrollment.** EASTCONN will work to offer opportunities for your child to see a dentist. We will also assist you in finding a dental home, if needed.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Health screenings are an important way to make sure children are growing and developing well. They also help identify and prevent health problems. All children, one year or older, are required to be screened for hemoglobin, lead and TB at the time of their physical exam. Children ages 3 and older should also have a blood pressure check performed during the physical exam. This information needs to be documented by a health care provider on the physical exam form. We screen each child for vision and hearing. Heights and weights will be taken for children two years and older, twice a year. Families are given the results of the screenings. Children who are uncooperative or shy will be re-screened later or referred to your child's healthcare provider for screening. Families are responsible for follow-up on all health referrals.

HEALTH EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Health education will be provided to you throughout the year. Our health manager is available to families with concerns or questions about your child's health and safety. Our Health Manager can assist families interested in breast feeding to find a lactation consultant if interested. If your child has any special health or safety need, an *Individualized Health Care Plan* will be developed with you. This plan is to make sure your child's needs are being met.

MEDICATION

Safeguards are used with all medications for children. Most medications are stored in a locked container. Emergency medications are stored in such a way that they are quickly and easily accessible to staff but not the children. Staff may administer prescription or over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's medical provider has completed a Medication Authorization, the parent has signed the Medication Authorization, and the Health Manager has reviewed and verified the medication provided by the parent matches the authorization. Medication training must be completed by any staff that will be administering medications. Certain medications require specific, specialized training. This additional layer of approval may require an extended period of time. Administration of any medication must be documented in the Medication Administration Record. Any errors or omissions of a medication dosage must be reported immediately to the Health Manager and a Medication Error or Incident Report must be completed. The parent or guardian must be notified of the error or omission as soon as reasonably possible. Medications must be labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the order was obtained from the provider, the name of the provider and the expiration date of the medication. All medications must be delivered by the parent/guardian in the original pharmacy container or in the original manufacturer packaging. Medication training must be completed every three years for most medications and yearly for injectable medications. No medications may be administered unless the staff has been trained and the medication plan has been reviewed with the Health Manager.



HEALTHY HABITS

We will work with you to teach your child good habits to keep them healthy. Proper hand washing is the first line of defense against infectious diseases. We require staff, children and volunteers to wash their hands properly and frequently: at drop off, after wiping noses, before and after eating, toileting, diapering and after sensory experiences and outdoor play. We teach children to cover their mouths when they sneeze or cough. Coughing or sneezing into the elbow works well because it does not transfer germs to their hands. Please help your child learn these skills at home too.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

We provide all children with daily physical activities and experiences. Activities are fun and designed for their age group. They may take place inside or outside.

REST TIME

Children have the opportunity to rest at a designated time during the scheduled day. Infants shall be allowed to rest or sleep according to each child's individual pattern, as determined in consultation with parents/guardian. Children 3 years of age and older (until they are enrolled in kindergarten) generally shall not nap for more than 1 hour or rest without sleeping for more than 20 minutes. Children in this age group who do not sleep may be offered quiet activities that will not disturb the napping children. In most cases, it is developmentally appropriate for young children to be given a time to rest and relax; at no time will Head Start staff prohibit a child from falling asleep, should they do so on their own. If a parent requests their child not nap, they should do so with consultation of the classroom teaching staff. This will enable a better child-appropriate plan to be established.

DIAPERING AND TOILETING

Early Head Start and Head Start center-based classrooms will provide diapers and wipes for those children who are still learning. We will encourage children and praise their attempts. Accidents are a natural part of the learning process. Please provide at least one set of extra clothes labeled with your child’s name.



WATER PLAY

Water play allows children to explore and interact with each other. New experiences and discovering new things within shared spaces offer a great opportunity for social development. EASTCONN Head Start classrooms will provide and encourage safe and healthy sensory play for children throughout the day as indicated below.

1. On a daily basis, water tables must be opened for a substantial part of the day.
2. Children are not permitted to play around any water without constant supervision.
3. The water tables should be filled with fresh potable water immediately before designated children begin a water play activity at the table, and changed when a new group begins a water play activity at the table even if all the child-users are from a single group in the space where the water table is located; or, the table should be supplied with freely flowing fresh potable water during the play activity.
4. Water activities include sinks, water tables, tubs, pails and any other pooled water.
5. Infants are not allowed access to large buckets that contain liquids of any kind.
6. Toddlers are only allowed access to water not exceeding 1 inch and must be monitored by teachers at all times.
7. Staff must take steps to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious diseases which include:
    a) Children must wash hands prior to and after water and sensory play.
    b) Staff will ensure no child drinks the water.
    c) Children with cuts, scratches, and open sores on their hands will not be permitted to play in the water table.
    d) Water tables must be filled with fresh potable water in the morning.
8. During naptime or after the children leave for the day, the water table must be emptied, bleached or use an appropriate cleaning solution, and wiped down. Classrooms should refill the water table for afternoon play if in use. At the end of the day, staff will empty, bleach or use an appropriate cleaning solution, and wipe down the water table. All toys in the table will be sanitized with a bleach and water solution and set out to air dry.
9. Floor/surface under and around the water table should be dried during and after play.



GUIDELINES FOR SICK CHILDREN

Our program does not offer sick childcare. Children should come to school ready and able to participate in all activities. Upon arrival, staff will complete a wellness health check: listening, observing and feeling for signs of illness. If your child becomes sick while at school, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times. We cannot transport a sick child on the bus. When a parent or guardian cannot be reached, we will begin calling people you have designated on the Emergency Contact form. To return to school, a child MUST be fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medication,) have symptoms that are significantly improved, be able to participate in classroom activities, and be eating their regular diet. If a child is out sick for 3 consecutive day's they need a Doctor's note to return.



SICK CHILD SYMPTOMS

Please keep your child home if he/she is sick. This prevents the spread of contagious illness and allows your child to rest and recover, even if not contagious. Your child will be sent home if the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 100° or higher.
- Severe runny nose, discharge from eyes or nose, uncontrollable coughing, goopy eyes or severe fatigue.
- Any instance of vomiting.
- Two or more episodes of loose diarrhea.
- Tears, redness of eyelid lining, eye irritation, swelling and discharge.
- Severe itching of hair and scalp, caused by head lice.
- Mouth sores.
- Any rash associated with a fever, behavior change or severe itching.
- Any complaints or signs of pain.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

If your child becomes infected with a contagious illness, please let us know as soon as possible. If a child in your child's classroom is diagnosed with a contagious illness by a medical professional, a letter will be sent home to notify you of the illness.

EXCLUSIONS

A child will be sent home or excluded from school with (but not limited to):

- Pink Eye
- Strep throat
- Head Lice
- Impetigo, Ringworm, Pinworm
- Hand, Foot and Mouth disease

NUTRITION

We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP is a federally funded program administered by the state. It provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods. What children eat affects their development in many ways. Children enrolled in center-based classrooms are served healthy meals and snacks that follow CACFP guidelines. This includes breakfast, lunch and snack, depending on the program option. Home-based families attending Family Connection Time will be offered a healthy snack. Meals and snacks are planned by our dietitian consultant. Meals are a social event and are served family style. Children and adults sit together and talk. Children help set the tables, serve themselves, pass food to their friends and clean up. We provide children with a variety of familiar foods and expose them to new tastes. Children are encouraged to try foods, but never forced to eat. Foods are not used as a reward, nor will we deny a child food for any reason, unless a substitution is required by your child's Doctor. Copies of the menu are available each month. Our dietitian consultant will review the Nutrition Questionnaire you completed at enrollment and will chart your child's height and weight. A nutrition assessment will be completed and families will receive a copy. Nutrition information and counseling is available to families by phone or in person. Parents are encouraged to help with planned cooking activities in the classroom. Your feedback and input about the menu is also appreciated.

FOOD ALLERGIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Please let us know if your child has a food allergy, preference or may need other food substitutions. Our classrooms are nut-free environments. We will make substitutions for children with food allergies or any foods that your child cannot eat due to religious or family beliefs. Food allergies, with the exception of allergies to milk and lactose, must be documented by your child's Doctor before accommodations can be made. Our dietitian consultant will work with staff and families to be sure a proper menu is established for your child.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Throughout the year, parents' contributions of songs, stories, traditions or recipes are a welcome addition to our curriculum. Please talk to your child's teacher if you are interested in sharing. We do not have holiday or birthday celebrations in the classroom.







SAFETY

- Emergency plans are posted at all Early Head Start and Head Start sites. Fire drills and other emergency drills are practiced regularly. Programs housed in public school buildings will follow their emergency procedures.
- Staff are First Aid and CPR trained and will provide this care if needed. In the event of an emergency due to illness or injury, we will call 911 and you will be contacted. Your child will be transported to the nearest emergency room by ambulance with a staff member and child's file. A staff member will notify the family or designated pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room.
- We follow Universal Precautions. This means that measures are taken to prevent contact with bodily fluids, such as blood, to prevent disease transmission.
- Staff complete accident, injury, illness and behavior incident reports when a child receives or causes any injury. You will be asked to sign this document to be kept on file. You will receive a copy.
- Our buildings remain locked throughout the day. Please use the buzzer to enter the building. We ask that you do not hold the door open for people who may enter behind you.
- Proper staff/child ratios shall be maintained at all times. For infants and toddlers under 3 years of age, there will be at least one program staff member for every 4 children. For preschool children ages 3-5, there will be at least one program staff member for every 8 children. In addition, there will be at least two staff members, 18 years of age or older, on the premises when one or more children are in attendance.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Please let us know if your child has a food allergy, preference or may need other food EASTCONN Early Head Start and Head Start programs may be closed, open on a delay or dismiss early due to inclement weather. Families are encouraged to watch local news stations, listen to the radio or sign up for text alerts from your local news station in order to stay informed about changes in program schedule. In the event of an early dismissal, two staff, 18 years of age or older, will be on site until the last child has left the center. Updated weather policies and procedures are distributed to families each year.



EMERGENCY CONTACT SHEET

All children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start have an E*mergency Contact* form on file. Families should be sure this is up to date with current emergency contact information and phone numbers. Emergency contacts should be 18 years of age or older.
Parents/Guardians should make sure that their emergency contacts have the proper child restraints in their cars and can provide a valid photo ID.



CENTER-BASED ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

EASTCONN Your child's arrival routine can set the tone for the day! For everyone's safety, do not leave cars idling in the parking lot. Please make every effort to get your child to school at the assigned time. Parking lots are very busy, especially during drop off and pick up times. Please be constantly aware of where your child is during this busy transition time, hold their hand in the parking lot and stay with them as they enter the classroom. Parents/guardians must sign-in your child on the designated sign- in sheet every day. To support overall health, teachers will ensure children wash their hands upon arrival. In addition, ensure your child has a clean diaper to start the day. If arriving after breakfast has been served, please sit with your child for breakfast. This will allow for teaching staff to continue with the classroom routine to support the learning of all children. Otherwise, we encourage drop-off to be prompt and consistent to eliminate additional disruption and child dysregulation. Let a teacher know of any important information that may affect your child's day. Parents of infants and toddlers should complete daily sheets to inform teachers of eating, diapering and sleeping routines.During this time, please inform teaching staff of any questions, concerns or requests that you may have.

At pick-up, a designated adult (over 18) must come into the classroom and sign out your child. If an emergency prevents you from picking up at the designated time, please call the classroom as soon as possible. Anyone picking up your child must be listed on the Emergency Contact form, have a photo ID and a proper car seat restraint.

If no one arrives at the regular pick-up time and we have not heard from you, designated emergency contacts will be called. If, after 30 minutes, no one has come to pick up your child and we have not been able to reach you or your emergency contacts, staff will contact a program manager, notify the local police department and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). During this time, staff will continue attempting to reach you and your emergency contacts.

LATE ARRIVALS

EASTCONN Head Start classrooms have a strict daily schedule. This schedule includes exact times for meals, rest, outdoor play, and activities. When a child arrives late to the classroom he or she loses that valuable learning time and nutritional needs. Arriving 10 minutes after the classroom start time is considered tardy. EASTCONN Head Start will allow children to arrive up to 90 minutes late to their center-based classroom, with an excused reason. If your child is going to arrive late, please notify the classroom staff as early as possible, preferably the day before. If a child is dropped off more than 90 minutes late, they may not be able to attend. A note from a medical provider is requested when the child is late due to a scheduled appointment. Regular communication with your family advocate and classroom teachers will help them to plan accordingly for your child. Regular tardiness will result in an attendance letter from the ERSEA Coordinator and can lead to a conversation with the Director.



VEHICLE IDLING POLICY

Idling vehicles contribute to air pollution and emit air toxins, which are pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects. Monitoring at schools has shown elevated levels of benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and other air toxins during the afternoon hour coinciding with parents picking up their children. Children's lungs are still developing, and when they are exposed to elevated levels of these pollutants, children have an increased risk of developing asthma, respiratory problems and other adverse health effects. Limiting a vehicle's idling time can dramatically reduce these pollutants and the exposure to them.

EASTCONN HEAD START has instituted a vehicle idling policy at locations. All persons operating vehicles at the school should adhere to the following guidelines:

- When waiting for students to be picked up, all engines should be shut off.
- All drivers should turn off engines when they arrive at school and when they expect to be parked for more than 10 seconds.
- If idling is necessary for temperature control, please restrict it to no more than 5 minutes.

We are implementing this policy to reduce the children's exposure to air toxins emitted in the exhaust of idling vehicles.



BUS TRANSPORTATION

There are limited spaces on the bus for children attending Head Start. Families attending Early Head Start transport their children to and from school each day. If your child comes to school or goes home on the bus, you must be waiting outside 10 minutes before and after the scheduled pick-up/drop-off time. Bus schedules vary. Families will receive a list of bus rules upon enrollment. When a child comes home from school, the person taking the child off the bus must be 18 years of age or older and on your child's *Emergency Contact* form. This person must sign your child off the bus and have proper identification. Parents/caregivers are asked not to board the bus. EASTCONN Head Start supplies a bus monitor to support this transition, buckling, and overall safety for all bus riders. Bus drivers are not employees of EASTCONN Head Start and are supervised by EASTCONN Transportation. If someone on your child's *Emergency Contact* form is <u>not</u> there to get your child off the bus, your child will be transported back to school and you will be contacted to come and pick him/her up. If after 30 minutes no contact has been made with the child's parents or emergency contacts, The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the police will be contacted.

If child is brought back to center, the following steps will take place:

- First time: Verbal Warning
- Second time: Written Warning
- Third time: Meeting will take place with family advocate and appropriate manager.
- Fourth time: Transportation service may be discontinued.

Bus evacuation drills happen 3 times each year. Please contact your family advocate if your child no longer needs bus transportation.



GETTING TO KNOW HEAD START CENTER BASED

OVERVIEW

The preschool years are a pivotal stage in a child's development—setting the stage for success in school and a lifelong love of learning. We view young children as capable, active, sensorial explorers who grow through authentic, hands-on experiences in a supportive environment. Our program provides both structure and freedom as children develop their capacities for self-regulation, problem-solving, creative expression, and communication. Our curriculum is content-rich and culturally-responsive with a strong emphasis on social-emotional learning and language acquisition. Through ongoing collaboration with families, we strive to learn children's unique interests, preferences, and aptitudes so we can best support their overall development and school readiness.

NUTRITION

Health, safety, and nutrition are key components of the Head Start Performance Standards. We serve two nutritious, CACFP-compliant meals daily—breakfast and lunch. Children eat family-style with their teachers which allows them to practice serving themselves, passing dishes, and conversing with peers and adults in a relaxed atmosphere. Children also learn life skills like setting and clearing the table. Meals are prepared by our LEA partners (Putnam Elementary School and Killingly High School) or at our own kitchen facility at the Killingly-Westcott site. Children are served 1% milk. Food substitutions for allergies, intolerances, or religious reasons are provided. A doctor's note is required for medically related substitutions.

STAFFING AND RATIOS

Our maximum class size is 18 students and we follow the teacher-student ratio of 1:10 established by the CT Office of Early Childhood. Typically, there are three adults per classroom—a lead teacher, assistant teacher, and teacher aide. The teaching team works together to support your child's holistic development—from cognitive skills to toileting independence to social-emotional growth. All teaching staff follow the NAEYC Code of Conduct and receive monthly professional development. Our teachers' performance and quality of care is regularly assessed by members of our Education Team and by impartial, trained observers. We are committed to following best practices for early care and learning.

TOILETING

Toileting independence is a significant milestone for young children. We will support your child's growth in this area by scaffolding the transition from pull-ups to cloth underwear with daily support based on the child's level of readiness. Our teachers know that accidents are part of the learning process and will respond with gentle cues and zero shaming. Please support progress in this area by sending your child to school in cloth underwear (or a pull-up) and loose fitting clothing (i.e., sweatpants, elastic waistbands)—and by packing several extra pairs of underwear, pants, and socks.

TYPICAL DAY

Your child's day will begin with a warm welcome and a family-style meal. Schedules vary from site to site, but the daily routine consists of whole group activities (i.e., calendar, message of the day), small group activities focused on math and literacy, music and movement, center-based exploration, outdoor play, read-aloud stories, and rest time. Your child will enjoy a mix of teacher-directed and self-directed activities, as well as varied opportunities for messy play, big body movement, and quiet exploration.





CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

EASTCONN Head Start implements the HighScope curriculum in alignment with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) and the CTELDS. The High Scope curriculum supports play-based learning and develops children's executive function skills through a plan-do-review cycle. We further support your child's executive function skills through concrete strategies like center choice and play planning. Small group lessons focus on academic skills like early literacy and numeracy, while center play allows for more child-directed, open-ended exploration. We specifically target early literacy skills through highly-regarded, evidenced-based programs like Heggerty® and Learning Without Tears®, while daily Second Step® lessons teach skills like sharing, problem-solving, and identifying emotions.

Your child's skills and competencies are captured by teachers through planned and naturalistic observations then documented through HighScope's Child Observation Record (COR). In addition, we assess your child's fundamental skills through quick, formative assessments at regular intervals. You will receive formal reports of your child's progress at parent-teacher conferences during which teachers will share COR reports, writing rubrics, and work samples.





GETTING TO KNOW EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED

WHAT IS THE HOME-BASED OPTION?

Home Visitors meet weekly with pregnant participants and/or families with children ages birth to three. Educational, health, nutrition, family services, mental wellness, and dental services are supported during these 1 ½ hour home visits. Working together, parents and home visitors will plan visits to meet your family's needs and support family goals. Weekly playgroups – Family Connection Time (FCT) encourage parents and children to interact with each other as well as other families to support social and emotional development. A parent support group meets during FCT, with time dedicated to building connections and discussing parenting topics.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON A HOME VISIT?

We believe you are your child's first and most important teacher. Home visitors work with you to strengthen parent/child relationships and parenting skills, and to use everyday materials to enhance learning. We focus on nutritional activities, creative expression, music and movement, and language and literacy skills. Activities to support social emotional, cognitive, and problem-solving skills are prioritized.





A typical home visit includes:

- **Arrival & Greeting Time:** Parent/guardian and home visitor check in about previous week and updates.
- **Family/Child Experience:** Family member and child spend time on an activity with the home visitor offering support and suggestions to make the experience enjoyable AND meaningful.
- **Family/Home Visitor Activity:** Home Visitor shares activities with the family member and child to support learning and give ideas about ways to support growth and development. Parent and child join activity together, learning new skills.
- **Family/Home Visitor Discussion:** Child may play independently with supervision while family and home visitor discuss the visit, areas to focus on during the week and plan and talk about family goals, hopes, dreams.

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

- Be home and ready at the time of the scheduled visit,
- Call if you need to reschedule
- Child dressed, ready and encouraged to participate
- TV, electronics off, phone silent
- Be an active participant – you are your child's first teacher
- Help plan for the next visit





EARLY HEAD START FOR PREGNANT PEOPLE

Early Head Start provides services for expectant participants. A healthy pregnancy has a direct influence on the health and development of a child. The prenatal period has a lasting impact on the child's potential for healthy growth and development. These services include, but are not limited to; up to weekly home visits, pregnancy education for the expectant person, nutrition information, education surrounding the developing baby and access to community referrals and resources.

WHAT IS “FAMILY CONNECTION TIME”?

Family Connection Time (FCT) is a playgroup giving parents and children opportunities to learn and grow together. FCT is supported using Parents as Teachers and the Partners for a Healthy Baby curricula, building on strengths and supporting child/family relationships. Emotional development, parent/child bonds, and strong emotional connections are supported. Your child will become more confident socially and emotionally as they grow and develop. You will have the opportunity to read, listen and respond to your child’s emotional cues while playing and participating in activities. Your home visitor will give a brief explanation of a skill and/or topic, demonstrate how to do the activity and support you in doing it with your child. You will have the opportunity to reflect and share what you have noticed about your child’s involvement and how you can use what you have learned at home. Parents are invited to help plan and lead activities and participate in wellness groups. Let us know what experiences you like and what you would like to see more of. This is a time and place to spend time with and have fun with your child





GETTING TO KNOW EARLY HEAD START CENTER-BASED

During your child's first three years in Early Head Start, strong bonds are formed with caregivers and teachers. Children develop relationship-building skills by spending longer periods of time with caring and trusted adults. Primary caregiving supports growth through nurturing and responsive routines such as diapering, feeding, reading and play. Teachers become familiar with each child's needs, skills and interests. Teachers use this information, as well as family input, to plan, set and reach your child's learning goals.

COMMUNICATION & DAILY SHEETS

We encourage two-way communication between parents and teachers. Upon arrival, please complete your child's *Daily Sheet* to inform teachers of the needs of your child. Teachers will use this form to share your child's daily activities, routine care, etc. Please review and sign the form at pick up each day.



NUTRITION

- We provide BPA free bottles for bottle-feeding.
- You are welcome to bring your own from home.
- Breast milk will be accepted in ready to feed containers labeled with the infant's name and date it was expressed. Unused breast milk will be discarded after 48 hours.
- Once breast milk thaws, it must be used within 24 hours and may not be refrozen.
- Staff prepare formula following manufacturer's instructions.
- Unfinished formula or breast milk will be discarded after one hour of being offered to the child.
- Staff wash hands before feeding. Bottles may be warmed by setting them in warm water. Bottles are never warmed in a microwave. Babies are held for all bottle-feedings and fed on-demand. Older infants may join our family style meal service from a "low chair".
- Let us know when you begin transitioning from a bottle to a cup.
- Nursing mothers have a quiet, comfortable place to nurse, with a nearby hand washing area.
- Strained/pureed foods will be added, as developmentally appropriate. All new foods must be tried at home first. To avoid choking, infant foods are cut into ¼-inch bites; toddler foods are cut to ½-inch bites. We encourage self-feeding and introduction of finger foods. Our Nutrition Consultant prepares a toddler menu for children over a year old.
- Parents complete our Baby Food Introduction List to support this process.
- Please review menus daily. Food substitutions for allergies, intolerances or religious reasons are provided. A doctor's note is required for medically related substitutions.
- Children under 12 months are served breast milk or iron-fortified formula.
- Children 12-24 months are served whole milk.
- Children over 2 years of age are served 1% milk.

DIAPERING

EASTCONN Early Head Start provides disposable diapers and wipes. If cloth diapers or another brand of disposable diapers are needed because of an allergy, please provide a doctor's note so we can provide another brand. We change diapers every 2 hours or as needed. Diapers are checked/changed after napping. Please ensure your child has a clean diaper to start the day. If your child soils their diaper on their way to school, please change it upon entering the classroom. If diaper rash develops, the teaching staff will give you the Diaper Cream Permission form to complete.

LET'S STAY HEALTHY

- Please wash your hands with your child every day.
- Toys and surfaces in the classrooms are cleaned regularly according to state guidelines.
- Toys that are mouthed by children are removed from play and cleaned.
- Because infants spend so much time on the floor, we allow only non-slip slippers or "inside shoes" in classrooms with infants.
- These shoes are left in the classroom after use. Please remove your street shoes before entering Early Head Start classrooms. Shoe covers are available upon request. Stocking feet are allowed for visitors. Bare feet are not allowed.

SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

- To reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome,) infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. A medical waiver is required if your infant is to be placed in the crib in any other position. Please review Safe Sleep information sheet given at the enrollment visit.
- All cribs and mattresses meet the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- No blankets, toys, etc. are permitted in cribs. Approved sleep sacks for infants are provided.
- Pacifiers will not be on a holder/ribbon while infants are sleeping in a crib.
- When an infant can turn themselves over from back to tummy, they may stay in that sleeping position.
- When an infant turns one-year old, we will transition them to a cot for resting.



GETTING TO KNOW HEAD START HOME-BASED

WHAT IS THE HOME-BASED OPTION?

Home Visitors meet weekly with families with children ages three to five. Educational, health, nutrition, family services, mental wellness, and dental services are supported during these 1½ hour home visits. Working together, parents and home visitors will plan visits to meet your family's needs and support family goals. Weekly playgroups – Family Connection Time (FCT) encourage parents and children to interact with each other as well as other families to support social and emotional development.

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WHAT IS "FAMILY CONNECTION TIME"?

Family Connection Time (FCT) is a playgroup giving parents and children opportunities to learn and grow together. FCT is supported using PAT, Parents as Teachers, building on strengths and supporting child/ family relationships. Emotional development, parent/ child bonds, and strong emotional connections are supported. Your child will become more confident socially and emotionally as they grow and develop. You will have the opportunity to read, listen and respond to your child's emotional cues while playing and participating in activities. Your home visitor will give a brief explanation of a skill and/or topic, demonstrate how to do the activity and support you in doing it with your child. You will have the opportunity to reflect and share what you have noticed about your child's involvement and how you can use what you have learned at home. Parents are invited to help plan and lead activities, and participate in wellness groups. Let us know what experiences you like and what you would like to see more of. This is a time and place to spend time with and have fun with your child.

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- **Arrival & Greeting Time:** Parent/guardian and home visitor check in about previous week and updates.
- **Family/Child Experience:** Family member and child spend time on an activity with the home visitor offering support and suggestions to make the experience enjoyable meaningful.
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- **Family/Home Visitor Discussion:** Child may play independently with supervision while family and home visitor discuss the visit, areas to focus on during the week and plan and talk about family goals, hopes and dreams.

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

Be home and ready at the time of the scheduled visit, call if you need to reschedule

- Child dressed, ready and encouraged to participate
- TV, electronics off, phone silent
- Be an active participant – you are your child's first teacher
- Help plan for the next home visit

Thank You!



Thank you for choosing a high quality early childhood program for your child & family.
The benefits last a lifetime!

EASTCONN EARLY HEAD START &
HEAD START CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS:

My child's teacher is:

and his/her classroom hours are:

My family advocate is:

HOME-BASED PROGRAMS:

My home visitor is:

and their phone # is:

Notes:

eastconn.org/headstart

Email: kmansfield@eastconn.org

Facebook.com/EASTCONNHeadStart

EASTCONN
Where Learning Comes to Life