Policies and Procedures
Parent Handbook

2017-2018

Your name

“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account balance was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of clothes I wore. But the world may be very different if I was important in the life of the child.”

-Unknown
TTU Early Head Start
Parent Handbook

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(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Part 1 – Welcome to our Program!

Welcome to the TTU Early Head Start program.
We are glad to have you with us.

Early Head Start is about children and families. You are the ones who give Early Head Start its meaning. Thank you for being part of our Head Start Family!
Part 2 – What is Early Head Start?

What is the mission?
The mission of Texas Tech University Early Head Start is to:
- promote School Readiness by nurturing the physical, emotional, social, language, and cognitive development of infants and toddlers
- develop and strengthen families’ abilities as primary educators of their children
- serve as advocates for our children and their families.

What is the TTU Early Head Start Philosophy?
Texas Tech University Early Head Start believes that children reach their highest potential in an atmosphere of caring and respect that offers many opportunities to learn in ways that meet the needs of each individual child.

What are the program’s goals?
TTU Early Head Start has developed School Readiness goals for children based on the following domains:
- Language and Literacy
- Cognition and General Knowledge
- Approaches to Learning
- Physical Development and Health
- Social-Emotional Development
In addition, the program intends to improve family outcomes based on the Parent, Family, and, Community Engagement Framework developed by the Office of Head Start.
- Family Well Being
- Parent Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families Becoming Advocates and Leaders
As we focus on these areas, it is our hope that children will have improved School Readiness skills and families will benefit as a result of participating in the program.

Why a Parent Handbook?
The Parent Handbook is written for the families of the children in Early Head Start to give you a better understanding of the EHS program and to help us work together for your children. All of the parent policies are subject to change, pending approval by Policy Council. Parents will be informed in writing of any changes to TTU EHS Policy.

What is the curriculum?
Early Head Start uses the High/Scope curriculum for infants and toddlers. Children are involved in active learning to help them develop physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Each week your child has the opportunity for a variety of experiences, such as:
- time alone and time with others
- quiet and active play, both inside and outside
- exploring blocks, pretend play, art, discovery, simple problem-solving, games, music, cooking, stories and book sharing, nature walks, and buggy rides.

What are the standards for Early Head Start?
Early Head Start follows the standards set by the:
What other services does Early Head Start provide?

Developmental Screenings
During the first 45 days of enrollment, each child receives screenings with parent consent. These screenings check skills in 4 areas: vision, hearing, social-emotional, and overall development.

Nutritional Information
A nutrition assessment is completed on each child during enrollment, with parental consent. Any concerns that arise from the assessment are addressed with the family and resources are shared as appropriate. Parents are also helped with questions about feeding their families, and provided information on how to prepare economical and nutritious meals as a means to better health.

Mental Health Information
The Mental Health Specialist is available to provide support for good parenting and family relations, through observation and play with children at the center and visiting families in their homes.

Social Service, Education, and Health Information
EHS has on staff a Family Support Specialist available at any time to assist families with social services. The Health Specialist is available at any time to provide information about health concerns or issues. The Education Specialist is also available to assist families with child development concerns, as well as help staff with training and higher education needs.

Family Engagement
Families are provided the opportunity to enhance their parenting and life skills. They are also given the opportunity to participate in a goal setting process that will help the entire family develop positive outcomes.

Research Projects
Occasionally, Early Head Start participates in research projects that involve observation of children or participation in their normal play activities. Families may be asked to participate by taking part in surveys or interviews. All research projects have the approval of the administrative staff and the consent of parents before they or their children participate.

College of Human Sciences
EHS partners with the college of Human Sciences to provide a learning experience for college students enrolled in Human Development and Family Studies courses. These students undergo a required background check, and are supervised by the classroom teacher.

Will you keep my information confidential?
Those of us who have chosen to work with children follow an important code of ethics that guides our work with children and families. It is essential that we protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Medical information and information regarding the children’s development may be shared with the classroom teachers as well as EHS management as necessary. No information will be shared with anyone (other than those included on the consent form) unless written permission is obtained. We also ask that EHS families do not discuss other participants.
Who works at Early Head Start?

**Administrative Staff**

- **Executive Director**
  Oversees the total Early Head Start program, ensures compliance with standards, prepares funding applications

- **Lead Account Processor**
  Bookkeeper; serves as liaison to University departments

**Program Staff**

- **Director**
  Supervises the EHS home-based and center-based programs, serves as Disabilities Coordinator

- **Education Specialist**
  Oversees the Education content for the program

- **Family Support Specialist**
  Oversees the Family Engagement and ERSEA components of the program

- **Health Specialist**
  Oversees the Health content for the program

- **Home Visitors**
  Provide home-based education for children and families

- **Office Assistant**
  Assists the Director and staff with general office responsibilities

- **Teachers**
  Provide center-based education for children and families

- **Classroom Assistants**
  Assist the teachers with various daily duties

- **Cook**
  Provides USDA-approved, nutritious meals for center-based children and various program activity meals

- **Mental Health Specialist**
  Provides support for parent and family relations

**Volunteers (not counted as caregivers for ratio purposes)**

- **University Lab Students**
  TTU students studying child development that words with the teachers in providing the daily program for children

- **Therapists/Case Managers**
  Provide specialized services for children with special needs who qualify

- **Foster Grandparents**
  Volunteer with children to assist with social-emotional development

- **Parent/student/community volunteers**
  May assist with various duties around the center including working directly with children
Part 3 – Attending the Early Head Start Center

Who can attend?
The Center-Based program is for 48 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 3 years of age whose families:

- live in the city of Lubbock
- meet the income eligibility and enrollment priority requirements.

Are there costs for parents?
There are no fees for children and families to participate in Early Head Start.

How does my child begin?
It is important for your child to have a smooth transition from home to Early Head Start. You and your child’s teacher will plan for the transition so that your child can be as comfortable as possible each step of the way. Your plan could include a home visit, a center tour, or visiting the classroom. Children entering the center-based program will be assigned to either an infant (6 weeks-18 months) or a toddler (18 months-3 years) classroom. For continuity of care, the child will remain in this classroom until they transition to the older age room, or to another program once they turn three years old. Enrollment records, such as licensing admission form and CACFP enrollment form are completed by the parent/guardian and renewed annually. EHS will provide translation to all non-English speaking parents when requested.

What is the schedule?
Early Head Start is usually open Monday through Friday, 12 months a year, from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm. Wrap-around care is available for families who qualify for Child Care Services assistance and need child care after the EHS day ends. CCS will determine your parent fee for this service. Wrap-around care ends no later than 5:30 pm.

The program follows the TTU staff calendar for holidays and vacation. There is a Yearly Calendar in the back of the Parent Handbook so you will know the days the center is open and closed. For severe weather or emergency closing, please refer to local news stations.

How do I drop off my child?
The Early Head Start day begins at 8:00 am. EHS allows 30 minutes of travel time; therefore you may bring your child as early as 7:30 am. No children will be received before 7:30 am. Children are expected to be dropped off no later than 8:30 am. If there is an emergency, and you must bring your child after 8:30 am, call the center as early as possible to let your child’s teacher know. To ensure they receive services, children must arrive by 10:30 am in order to come to school for the day. When you drop off your child:

- sign in to your child’s classroom sign-in sheet when dropping them off
- fill out the top portion of the parent report (blue sheet) and be sure to include current phone numbers for the emergency contacts
- check your child’s cubby
- be sure that an adult knows your child is present before you leave
- do not leave your child if there is no adult present in the classroom.

Note: Each time you are late dropping off your child, you will be asked to sign the tardy log. Following the third tardy within a month/30 day period, you will be asked to meet with the Family Support Specialist to discuss an action plan.
How should I say goodbye to my child?
EHS recognizes that it is sometimes hard for parents and children to separate, especially if it is for the first time. Please say goodbye but do not prolong it, and do not sneak out of the classroom. The teachers are competent to handle unhappy children. Allow your child a reasonable adjustment period. If difficulties persist, be sure to talk with the teacher.

What will my child eat?
EHS prepares and serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack, according to the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Upon enrollment and annually thereafter, families will be asked to complete an enrollment form for the CACFP program, and be given “Building for the Future” and an updated WIC flyer. During mealtimes, the staff sits with children to talk to them and model correct behaviors. Menus are created by the EHS Cook and approved by a Registered Dietician to ensure the children receive nutritious meals every day. Copies are made available to the parents and are posted outside of each classroom. Additional food policies:
- water is served at every meal and after active play, and is available at all times
- foods are discarded after the expiration date
- liquids and foods that reach 110 degrees are kept out of children’s reach
- hotdogs are cut lengthwise and quartered
- EHS does not serve foods that are choking hazards such as whole grapes, popcorn, raw peas or pretzels
- EHS serves only 100% fruit juice and only to children over 1 year of age
- cow’s milk is not offered to infants under 1 year of age
- toddlers must sit at the table to drink from a cup
- EHS is a peanut-free facility; we do not serve peanuts or peanut butter
- infants are held at all times when taking a bottle; bottles are never propped and children cannot sleep with a bottle
- formula or breastmilk that is not consumed by the infant will be discarded after one hour, if not refrigerated
- bottle feedings do not contain solid foods or cereal
- bottles are warmed using bottle warmers if needed.

Note: If a child has any allergies or special dietary needs, EHS must have a completed Food Allergy Emergency Plan signed by you and your child’s health care professional.

TTU EHS supports mothers who choose to breastfeed by providing them a comfortable and private place to breastfeed their child. If mothers bring milk into the classrooms, we will coordinate storing and serving the milk. Breast milk must be labeled with the child’s name and the date it was made. We can store frozen milk up to 3 months, and refrigerated milk can be stored up to 48 hours.

When will my child eat?
The program provides nutritious, age-appropriate foods daily: infants are fed on demand, and toddlers are served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack at the following times:
- Breakfast 8:15 am
- Lunch 11:15 am
- PM Snack 2:00 pm

Note: Children arriving after breakfast is over will be offered an alternative. No outside food is allowed in the classrooms (if it is brought in, it will be thrown away.)
How do I pick up my child?
Departure for children is at 2:00 pm, and EHS allows 30 minutes for travel time, so all children must be picked up by 2:30 pm. Children enrolled in CCS wrap-around care must be picked up no later than 5:30 pm. When picking up your child:
- sign them out of the classroom in the presence of EHS staff
- check your child’s cubby and take the items home with you.

Note: Each time you are late in picking up your child, you will be asked to sign the tardy log. Following the third tardy within a month/30 day period, you will be asked to meet with the Family Support Specialist to discuss an action plan.

Children can only be released only to parents/guardians and persons listed on the Authorization to Release form. Under no circumstances can a child be released to anyone not authorized in writing by the parent. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18 (unless the parent is under the age of 18.) In cases of separation, divorce, or other custody disputes, we cannot limit one biological parent’s right to see or pick up the child. A parent’s rights will only be limited if we have been provided a copy of any court action stating those limitations or custody arrangements. For one parent to simply leave off the name of another parent on the child’s Authorization to Release form will not limit that parent’s rights.

What if I am running late for pick up?
If you cannot pick up your child by 2:30 pm, contact the center to let them know you will be late and when you plan to arrive. Your child will be cared for by staff in one of the classrooms until you arrive.

If a child has not been picked up by 3:00 pm for the Early Head Start day, or 6:00 pm for wrap-around care and Early Head Start has not been contacted, EHS staff will contact Child Protective Services.

What happens if I cannot pick up my child?
If you cannot pick up your child, contact one of the people you have listed (designated) on the Authorization to Release form to pick up your child. When the designated person arrives, the EHS staff will follow these procedures for the safety of your child:
- check to see that the person picking up your child is listed on your Authorization to Release form and that they are 18 years of age or older
- make a copy of the person’s driver’s license OR picture ID
- have the person sign your child out, including the date and time your child is released.

Please tell any person you designate about these safety procedures, so that they are not surprised or offended in any way.

IF EHS STAFF SUSPECTS THAT A DESIGNATED PICK UP PERSON IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO NOTIFY AUTHORITIES.

Does my child need to come every day?
Your child does need to attend TTU Early Head Start every day. According to EHS regulations, children must attend 85% of the time (typically 3 or fewer absences each month) in order for TTU EHS to continue receiving funding for the program.

TTU EHS strongly believes that children’s feelings of security, trust, and safety are affected by regular attendance and that children thrive when they can control their environment by knowing what
to expect each day. Regular routines are a very important parenting tool that will be most effective when started at this early age.

Research shows that children who attend school at least 90% of the time have significantly better development in social-emotional skills, language skills, and cognition. Children who regularly attend an Early Head Start program are better prepared when they enter Kindergarten than their peers who do not attend EHS. TTU EHS wishes to help families achieve a 90% rate of attendance for their child. You will be informed on a monthly basis if your child’s attendance falls below 90%.

If your child’s attendance falls below 85% for any month, you may be asked to meet with the Family Support Specialist to support your child’s regular attendance.

If your child is below 85% for 3 months in a row, your child’s spot in the EHS program could be lost.

**Absences with notification: (excused absences)**
If your child must be absent for the day due to illness, professional appointment, or other legitimate reason, you must call the center BEFORE 8:30 am in order to excuse your child. Please call the center and ask to speak to your child’s classroom to give the following information:
- your name
- your child’s name
- the reason for the absence
- how long your child must be absent.

**Absences without notification: (unexcused absences)**
If your child is absent from the center for any reason and you do not contact the center BEFORE 8:30 am, your child is considered unexcused. EHS is required to attempt to contact you by 9:30 a.m. if we have not heard from you. On the third day with no contact, a home visit will be attempted by the teacher and a member of management. If no contact is made at your home, a letter will be mailed to your home asking you to contact the center within 7 days. If there is no contact by the indicated date, the child will be dropped from the program.

*If your child has 3 unexcused absence in a row, OR*
*If your child has 5 unexcused absence within one month,*
then you will be asked to meet with an EHS staff member to discuss your child’s continued participation in the EHS program. As a result of this conference, the decision may be to continue or withdraw your child from the EHS program.

**Exclusionary Rule:**
At no time will a documented illness or hospitalization cause your child to lose their spot in the EHS program.

**Will my child take a nap?**
Each child is provided the opportunity to sleep or rest after lunch for 2 hours, but no more than 3 hours. Infants younger than 12 months who are not walking will sleep in individual cribs with a sheet only. Walking children or children over 12 months will sleep on cots with a sheet and blanket only. Each child’s sheet and blanket are not shared and are laundered regularly. If children wake before naptime is over, they will be provided with quiet activities to allow other children to continue sleeping. Children are always supervised by staff during naptime. Young infants are allowed to maintain their own pattern of sleep. Swaddled infants may not be laid down to sleep, unless a sleep exception form has been signed by the child’s doctor.
Will my child go outside?
Your child will have outdoor experiences every day. When weather permits, children will go outside to participate in active play. When weather does not permit going outside according to Child Care Weather Watch, children are given the opportunity to use the indoor gym for active play.

Will my child play in water outdoors?
The center occasionally has water play days on the playground. Water play is limited to sprinklers placed in the grass, and water tables containing 3 inches of water or less. When water is present on the playground, the children are supervised with extra staff to ensure their safety.

How should my child dress?
**Clothes**
Your child should be dressed and ready to start the day when they arrive at EHS. Your child needs to wear simple, comfortable, washable clothes each day. Children will be participating in activities that cause them to get dirty, so please do not send children in good clothes. Your child also needs extra clothes. Please bring:
- 2 extra outfits in case of messy play or accidents
- an extra pair of shoes
- a jacket during cold weather, as well as hat and mittens if you wish for your child to wear them (Remember: we go outside every day.)

Each piece of clothing must be clearly labeled with your child’s name. You may label the items, or the teacher can mark your items for you with permanent marker.

**Note:** If your child’s clothes become dirty, the teacher may clean them in the washing machine. Please do not bring anything that you would not want run through the washer and dryer.

**Shoes**
Shoes need to be worn every day, preferably sneakers for safety. Please NO flip-flops, boots, or bare feet. Once your child begins to walk, they are required to wear shoes daily.

What can my child bring?
Early Head Start provides all of the learning materials for each child, as well as diapers, wipes, blankets, formula, and food. To protect your personal items, EHS encourages you to leave toys and games at home or in the car. If items are brought in, they will be placed in the child’s cubby until the end of the day.

Items to be left at home include toys, dolls, stuffed animals, action figures, jewelry, toy guns, sleeping bags, large comforters, full-size pillows, candy, gum, and money.

Remember, no outside food is allowed in the center, except for food intended to be shared by the whole class or center, which must be commercially prepared and contain an ingredient list. If personal snacks are brought in, they will be thrown away.

Can I sell things?
To be fair to each parent and each staff member, Early Head Start does not participate in buying from or selling to anyone in the program, or to any person at the EHS center. This includes candles, candy, gift wrap, home decorations, make-up, or any other person-to-person sales.

Can I celebrate my child’s birthday?
Your child’s birthday is important to us and we want to help celebrate it. Talk with your child’s teacher at least 1 week before the birthday if you would like to celebrate at school. Things to consider:

- when to have the party
- what you may wish to bring
- the family or special persons to invite.

**Note:** If you choose to bring food, please bring enough to share for the classroom. Foods brought for sharing must be commercially prepared and have an ingredient list (for allergy or special dietary purposes).

**What should I talk about with my child’s teacher?**

**Changes you notice in your child:**
- not eating favorite foods
- restless night’s sleep
- cutting teeth
- fussier than usual
- any other changes you may see

**Things that may affect your child:**
- family squabbles
- a new baby on the way
- a change in your home, school, or work schedule
- someone moving into or out of the household

**Incidents and accidents in the classroom:**
- the teacher will talk to you about these.

**Can I talk to my child’s teacher every day?**

You may speak to your child’s teacher **every day** about these things or anything else you think is important for the care of your child:

- questions you have
- suggestions you have
- what you see your child learning
- any changes or events that may affect your child.

You can also look in your child’s cubby, read notes, newsletters and bulletin boards.

**What are home visits and conferences?**

Families are asked to participate in two home visits and two parent conferences each year. A home visit consists of teachers visiting your home to get to know you and your child better. A parent conference is a meeting at the center and is a time to share your child’s strengths, your concerns, and complete paperwork as required. During home visits and conferences, you may bring up:

- questions you may have
- things that are bothering you
- concerns about raising children.

**What if I have concerns?**

TTU EHS believes in an open door policy. You may schedule a time to meet with the Director, Education Specialist, Family Support Specialist, Health Specialist, or any staff member. You may call the center at any time and ask to speak to a staff member.

TTU EHS has a grievance policy that teachers will present to families during enrollment and have them read and sign. Parents are also able to review DFPS Minimum Standards at www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care, and a printed copy is available in the Director’s office. The most
current licensing inspection is posted on the licensing board in the front hallway. Parents can also contact the local licensing office by calling (806) 648-5510 or (806) 354-5307.

**When can my family or I visit the center?**
You are welcome to visit the center to see your child or their classroom at any time. You are welcome to include other family members, as long as they have been designated by you on the Authorization to Release. We ask that you take your child’s schedule into consideration when planning your visit. For example, do not visit during nap time.

**What are transitions?**
Transitions are changes in your child’s enrollment, such as:
- moving from one classroom into another
- moving from Early Head Start into another program **on or after your child turns 3**.
It is important for your child to have smooth transitions. You and the teacher will plan for the transition so that your child can be as comfortable as possible each step of the way. Your plan could include 1 or more of the following:
- looking at all the options available
- visiting the new classroom or different programs
- talking with the new teacher
- a home visit by the new teacher.

When it is time to begin planning your child’s transition into another program, your child’s teacher will schedule a Transition Meeting. The first Transition Meeting will happen **6 months** before your child’s 3rd birthday (at 30 months). These meetings will be used to help your family decide the next step for your child once it is time to leave EHS.
Part 4 – What are the health and safety policies?

Why have health and safety policies?
Early Head Start believes in protecting and promoting the health and well-being of each child in the program. To do this, we follow the guidelines required by regulatory agencies and suggested by pediatric authorities.

What if my child has special health care needs?
Early Head Start can make reasonable accommodations for any child with special health care needs or medication requirements, as long as being in the program is not a risk to anyone involved. You and your doctor will need to provide the clear and thorough instructions on how to care for your child.

Does my child need to have regular shots and well checks?
Before your child can begin in the center-based program, you must provide EHS a completed Child Health Certification and a current shot record, showing all required immunizations for your child’s age have been completed. It is your responsibility to bring these items to EHS. Once your child is enrolled, it is also your responsibility to keep your child up-to-date on all required health checks and shots, and provide the documentation to EHS. If your child is over the age of 1, they must have regular dental exams and an Oral Health Certification must be provided to EHS.

If your child is under-immunized due to a medical condition we will need this documented by your child’s doctor. If your child is under-immunized due to personal beliefs, we will need to have an affidavit of Exemption from Immunization for Reasons of Conscience from the State of Texas. Your child will be excluded from care if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program. You may be asked to keep your child home if their immunizations are not current.

Are employees required to have immunizations?
It is the policy of TTU EHS to maintain a health and immunization program that protects both the employee, as well as the children, from diseases that may be prevented through routine screening or vaccination. Employees of EHS must have the following before working with children:

- TB skin test – upon employment and annually thereafter
- A physical exam – upon employment and every two years thereafter
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis) vaccine – upon employment and every 10 years thereafter.
- Flu vaccine – annually at appropriate time of year.

No employee will be allowed to be present in the center while exhibiting symptoms of any contagious disease. If a caregiver cannot receive the flu vaccination for medical reasons, they must provide documentation regarding the reason, and wear appropriate protective barriers (face mask) during flu season. Certain communicable diseases will require a doctor’s release before the employee may return to work. A list of these is posted in the Health Specialist’s office.

What does well mean?
You are responsible for making sure your child comes to the center well:

- rested
- healthy
- able to participate comfortably in all activities, indoors and outdoors

On a daily basis your child’s teacher will conduct a health check through conversation with you and by checking your child for signs of illness or injury and recording all observations. This will include a complete check of the child’s body from head to toe.
What does sick mean?
If your child shows any of these symptoms or conditions, they are sick and should not come to EHS:

Today, at this time:
- cough or earache, so that your child cannot go outdoors
- unusual rash or blisters on any part of the body
- unexpected heavy sweating
- swelling, redness, or throbbing pain in an injured part of the body
- wheezing, uncontrolled breathing, or convulsions
- persistent pain in the stomach (abdomen)
- any contagious illness or condition
- unusual behavior such as excessive fussiness, crying a lot, red or watery eyes, no appetite, no energy, or excessive sleepiness
- any other illness or symptom of an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in daily activities including outdoor play.

In the past 24 hours:
- vomiting (2 or more times)
- diarrhea (uncontrolled).
- a temperature of 101 degrees or more (oral) or
- a temperature of 100 degrees or more (underarm) or
- if showing changes in behavior or other signs or symptoms of an illness.
Note: If you are using medication such as Tylenol to reduce your child’s fever, but the child still has fever without medication, they cannot come to the center.

We know that caring for a suddenly sick child can be hard for parents. EHS staff can help support you in these situations by helping you locate a doctor, clinic, dentist, or other provider as needed.

How do I report it?
If your child is sick and will be absent 1 or more days, contact the center immediately and give the following information:
- your name
- the name of your child
- the classroom your child is in
- the illness or type of disease
- when the illness started
- who made the diagnosis (parent, health care provider, lab report, etc.)
- the name of your health care provider, if needed
- how long your child will be absent.
If needed, the center will notify other parents and report the illness to the proper agency.

What if my child gets sick while at the center?
If your child becomes ill, EHS staff will notify you immediately, and then will keep your child safe, secure, and separate from the other children until you arrive. For the health of your child as well as the health of other children, you must pick up your child immediately once you have been notified that your child is sick. (You will be allowed 30 minutes of travel time to pick up your child.) Please leave a current phone number with your child’s teacher daily.
Children will be required to go home if they vomit once, have diarrhea two or more times in an hour or three times during the day, have a temperature of 100 degrees or more (underarm), or if they show any other signs or symptoms of an illness.

**When can my child come back to the classroom?**
For a usual illness, your child is considered well and can return to the center when:
- free of fever without Tylenol or a similar medicine for 1 day (24 hours), or
- free of symptoms for 1 day (24 hours) or
- you have obtained a health care professional’s statement that the child no longer has an excludable disease or condition.

If your child has been absent due to illness, you may be required to bring a doctor’s note to return. The Health Specialist will determine if a doctor’s note is required. If your child has been absent with a diagnosed communicable disease, EHS requires a doctor’s note stating that your child is no longer contagious and can safely return to the center.

**Note:** Children with suspected impetigo, pink eye, ringworm, or chronic head lice must be seen by a doctor (not a pharmacy) for treatment. After the first 24 hours on medication, your child can return to the center with a note from your doctor that treatment has begun.

**Can the teacher give my child medicine?**
*Only a teacher or full-time EHS staff member can administer medicine to children.*
The teacher can give your child prescription medicine, over-the-counter medicine, and as-needed medicine, only when you:
- bring the medicine in its original, child-proof, labeled container
- follow the specific directions for each type of medicine
- sign the Medication Authorization form each day, or every 6 months for an as-needed medicine
- talk with your child’s teacher each day about:
  - when you gave your child medicine at home
  - how much medicine you gave your child at home
  - your child’s reaction to the medicine.

You should:
- give your child the first dose of medicine at home, so that you can see if your child has a reaction
- ask the pharmacy to use 2 bottles to fill the prescription, or get 2 bottles of the over-the-counter medicine (to leave 1 bottle at home and 1 bottle at the center)
- not bring medications to school that are only to be given twice a day or less.

For all medications, you will need:
- your child’s first and last names on the container
- the directions from the doctor or manufacturer on how and when to give the medicine, including:
  - the amount of each dosage
  - the time for each dosage
  - the minimum time between doses
  - the maximum number of doses
  - how to store the medicine and how to dispose of the medicine.

For over-the-counter and as-needed medicine, you will also need:
- a doctor’s note including:
  - the doctor’s name
  - the child’s name
  - name of the medication
• symptoms that help determine when the medication is needed
• updated doctor’s authorization every 6 months.

Note: If the medication is for fever from teething, the diagnosis from the doctor must state this.

Will teachers put anything else on my child?
EHS does use sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper rash cream, baby bath soap and lotion, and will provide these for your child. You will be asked to sign a consent form when your child enrolls. Sunscreen will not be used on babies younger than 6 months. Insect repellent will be used sparingly only on exposed skin in children older than 2 months. The repellent will not be put on children’s hands because they often put them in their mouths.

What happens when other children in the center are sick?
Early Head Start will notify you if your child is exposed to any contagious illness. You will be given the following information:
• the disease or condition to which the children have been exposed
• signs and symptoms of the disease or condition
• when the exposure occurred
• ways to prevent infection in your family.
EHS has access to a Health Advisory Committee which provides information semi-annually about relevant health information. EHS also obtains advice immediately when outbreaks of communicable diseases occur.

What about incidents and accidents?
Early Head Start will notify you at pick up time if there is any minor incident or accident involving your child, or about anything that may affect your child’s behavior and well-being. In the event of a serious injury or illness:
• 911 will be called immediately
• EHS staff will contact you with information about the injury or illness
• if necessary, your child will be taken by ambulance to the hospital designated by you at enrollment.

What happens in severe weather?
Ice and Snow
When the streets are icy or snow-covered, the Early Head Start Director will determine if EHS will be closed or delayed. Please check your local television stations to see if the center will close for the day, open late, or close early.

Tornadoes
A weather radio is in the EHS front office to alert the staff about changes in the weather. If there is a tornado warning, the children will be moved to the inner hall of the building and helped to feel safe and secure until they can return to their classrooms.

Note: Please do not attempt to drive to the center to take your child home. This could be even more dangerous for you and your child. If you wish, you may come for your child as soon as an all-clear bulletin has been announced over radio or television.

What if we need to evacuate the building?
TTU Early Head Start has an emergency preparedness plan which is posted in every room near the map of the building. If it is deemed necessary to evacuate the building, all children and adults will go to 800 Guava Avenue (Will Sedberry Park) and return to the center only when the building is declared safe.
What are other health and safety policies?

*Child Abuse and Neglect*

As part of a community of people who care for young children, TTU Early Head Start recognizes the importance of preventing and reporting child abuse. We are to report known or suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. The child abuse reporting hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

All EHS staff members are required to participate in annual training on the recognition and prevention of child abuse. Families and other EHS participants are also given opportunities to learn methods of preventing and recognizing child abuse. Families who have any concerns that their child may be a victim of abuse or neglect should immediately contact the EHS Family Support Specialist for assistance.

*No Smoking*

For the health of children and adults, Early Head Start follows a no-smoking policy for all persons while on the property, walks, buggy rides, or at any EHS sponsored event regardless of location. Your Home Visitor appreciates when you have a "no-smoking policy" during home visits.

*Criminal History Restrictions*

All staff and volunteers who will have direct contact with children will have a criminal history and fingerprint check done before working in a classroom. Anyone found by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to be unsafe will not be allowed to work or volunteer at EHS.

*Gang-Free Zone*

Under Texas law, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a Gang-Free Zone.

*Substance Abuse*

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of Early Head Start.

**IF EHS STAFF SUSPECTS THAT A DESIGNATED PICK UP PERSON IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO NOTIFY AUTHORITIES.**

*Prohibited Items*

Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, or any weapon, including a firearm, is prohibited in the Early Head Start center by staff, volunteers, or family members.

*Animals in the Center*

EHS believes that children need opportunities to interact with animals. We frequently have fish or small animals such as rabbits in the classrooms. The teachers ensure that staff and children wash their hands after coming into contact with animals or items used by animals. Teachers supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior. Any children allergic to the animal will not be exposed. If needed, classroom pets have documentation from a veterinarian to show that the animals are fully immunized. **Please do not bring personal pets to the center.**

*Insect and Rodent Control*
Each month the inside and playground of the Early Head Start center is treated with pesticides to control insects and rodents. The treatments are applied so that children will not come in contact with them.

How will my child be disciplined?
TTU Early Head Start follows the discipline and guidance policy mandated by Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Minimum Standards. We will share this policy with you at enrollment. You will be asked to sign this policy at enrollment and every subsequent year.

EHS staff use positive discipline in a safe, non-threatening environment. They set limits and encourage the beginnings of self-control. No child is ever physically punished or humiliated by staff or parents, while on the EHS center site or at program sponsored events.

How do teachers handle children with challenging behavior?
EHS staff are trained to anticipate and take steps to prevent challenging behaviors in children. When this behavior occurs, staff respond in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and others in the classroom.

There are times when appropriate strategies have been tried and the problem continues. It is at these times that we might ask a child to sit quietly by themselves until that child can return to play. Children are always supervised during this time. We do not have a “time-out” place and this time is not seen as punishment; rather, it is a time for the child to regroup. Children will sit for no longer than 1 minute per year of age.

Per HSPPS, EHS will not suspend or expel children from care due to chronic behavior issues. EHS staff will take appropriate action, up to and including referrals for special services.

What are positive strategies that teachers might use with my child?
Teachers promote positive social behavior by:
- interacting in a respectful manner with all children
- modeling turn-taking, sharing, and other caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials
- helping children care for their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them comfort others who are sad or distressed
- describing and encouraging positive social behaviors when seen.

Teachers help children manage their behaviors by guiding and supporting them to:
- persist when frustrated
- play cooperatively with other children
- use language to communicate needs
- learn turn taking
- gain control of physical impulses
- express negative emotions in ways that do not harm themselves or others.

May I wear shoes in the Infant Classrooms?
In the infant classrooms, all adults must either remove their shoes or wear the provided shoe covers. This will prevent unwanted things like dirt and grass being tracked into the classroom where non-mobile infants might play on the floor.
How will EHS reduce the risk of SIDS?
To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, (SIDS) we have adopted policies from both our licensing and accrediting bodies.
- Infants are placed on their backs to sleep. A firm mattress and fitted sheet is provided for each child. If your child’s doctor suggests they sleep in another position, EHS must have a signed doctor’s statement.
- No other items will be allowed in the crib such as pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals. (Sleep sacks will be provided instead of blankets.)
- The child’s head and face will remain uncovered during sleep.
- Infants and toddlers are not swaddled at EHS. If your child’s doctor suggests your baby should be swaddled, you must provide EHS with a signed doctor’s statement.

Part 5 – How can you be a part of Early Head Start?

Can I be on the Parent Committee?
As an Early Head Start parent you are a member of the important Parent Committee. Please participate in parent engagement opportunities as they are provided. Since EHS is family driven, come and share your ideas and ask questions. Want to learn how the program works? Then consider serving on the Policy Council.

Can I be on the Policy Council?
Policy Council members are elected by the Parent Committee annually at the beginning of the program year. The Policy Council is one of the advisory and decision-making groups in the Early Head Start program. The Policy Council meets at least 8 times a year to review mandated information, including: monthly budgets, credit card expenditures, attendance and meal count reports, the financial audit, the annual Self-Assessment, the annual Community Assessment, communication and guidance from the Secretary and the annual Program Information Report.

How can men be a part of Early Head Start?
EHS believes it is critical for children to have positive male role models. We encourage dads and other father figures to be involved in their children’s lives and education. Consider being on the Fatherhood Advisory Committee to help advise the staff at EHS how to implement a successful fatherhood program and get men involved at the center.

We need your help with program activities!
Can you:
- Have lunch with your child?
- Visit the classroom and join in the play?
- Come with us for walks and buggy rides?
- Plan and participate in class parties?
- Be a substitute teacher?
- Share what you know how to do?
  - tell stories
  - cook or sew
  - do art or music or crafts
  - repair and build things
  - work in the garden
  - share your family’s traditions

Then we need you in the classroom!
We need you. Early Head Start is about children and families. We are here to support you as the most important influence in your child’s life. And we need you to make our program complete!

Part 6 – Extra Information for Home-Based Program

Who is the program for?
The Early Head Start Home-Based program is for 24 pregnant women and families with children ages birth to 3 years of age, who live in the city of Lubbock and meet income and eligibility requirements.

Are there costs for parents?
There are no fees for children and families to participate in Early Head Start Home-Based program.

What are the Home Visits?
The home visits are weekly meetings between your family and your Home Visitor. They are scheduled once a week for 1 ½ hours based on your family’s schedule.

How do I get ready for a Home Visit?
Your home visit is the time for you and your child to focus on each other, with support from your Home Visitor. It is important for you to help create a positive atmosphere for the home visit:
- be present for the whole time
- place pets in another room if needed
- turn off the TV, music, and phone
- ask friends to stop by at another time
- if other people are there, have them participate in the activities along with you
- focus on your child.

What happens at a home visit?
The EHS Home-Based program uses the Partners For A Healthy Baby curriculum. You will work with a Home Visitor to learn ways to help your child develop School Readiness skills by using materials found in your home. During each home visit, you and your child may have the opportunity for a variety of experiences, such as
- quiet and active play, both inside and outside
- exploring blocks, pretend play, art, discovery, simple problem-solving, games, music, cooking, stories and book sharing, neighborhood walks, and park play.

At each visit, you may be given information and resources to support you in your role as a parent, such as
- prenatal care
- child development information - follow up on school readiness activities that the family has worked on
- family life skills
- community resources
- assistance with social services
- nutritional, dental, health, and educational services.

Will my child be disciplined at the Home Visit?
During a home visit, you are responsible for discipline, with support from your Home Visitor if requested. No child is ever physically punished or humiliated by a Home Visitor while on a home visit.

What can I talk about with my Home Visitor?
A home visit is a time for you and your child to enjoy an activity together, with support from your Home Visitor and a time for you to talk about child development and parenting issues, or other topics as they affect your child.

Does my family need regular Home Visits?
Your child needs the consistency of a home visit every week, and Early Head Start expects for your family to participate each time. EHS regulations require that your child receives 46 visits per year.

What if I need to reschedule a Home Visit?
Sometimes unexpected things happen and you may not be able to meet for your home visit. If you cannot keep a scheduled home visit for any reason, then contact your Home Visitor immediately to reschedule.

How do I contact my Home Visitor?
It is very important to be able to communicate with your Home Visitor. Please consider providing your Home Visitor with multiple ways to contact you.

What do I do when someone is sick?
If you or your child or any family member at home is showing any of the symptoms listed on page 14 in Health and Safety policies, contact your Home Visitor to discuss whether to reschedule the home visit.

If your Home Visitor comes for a visit and someone in your home has a contagious illness, your Home Visitor must leave and reschedule the visit.

Missed Home Visits:
If you develop a pattern of consistently missed home visits, your Home Visitor will discuss with you whether Early Head Start continues to meet your needs and expectations.

Missed Home Visits with no contact:
If your family has missed 2 home visits in a row with no contact, a letter will be sent asking that you contact TTU EHS. If you do not make contact within 7 days, EHS will drop your child from the program, and your child’s spot will be filled. If you wish to be in the program again, you will need to re-apply and meet the eligibility requirements.

What happens in severe weather?
If there are unsafe weather conditions, your Home Visitor may not be able to come for the home visit. You will be contacted to reschedule the home visit.

What are Socializations?
Socializations give your child the opportunity to be with other young children in a group learning environment. Socializations also give you the opportunity to learn about a variety of topics and may be planned based on family input. They are scheduled weekly, either at the center or at other family-friendly locations. Siblings are welcome to attend but must remain with their parents.

While taking part in socializations, positive discipline is used in a safe, non-threatening environment. Limits are set and the beginnings of self-control are encouraged. No child is ever physically punished or humiliated, by staff or parents, while on Early Head Start property, or while participating in EHS activities.