

2023-24

FAMILY HANDBOOK

EARLY HEAD START
HEAD START





My child attends the _____ site.
 My child's Teachers are _____.
 My child's site phone number is _____.
 My Family Service Worker is _____.
 My Site Leader is _____.

☆ The Early Head Start/Head Start Administration Office phone number is 734-785-7702 (to reach a member of the management team dial 734-785-7705 and the extension of the person you are trying to reach when prompted)

☆ Visit our website at www.guidance-center.org



Early Head Start/Head Start Management Team

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Assistant Director	Suzanne Wilson	Ext 7095
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Health Specialist	Shawn Rodgers	Ext 7447
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Kitchen Monitor	Wendy Moore	Ext 7147
Mentor Teacher	Kristine Davidson	Ext 7238
Mentor Teacher	Megan Bozymowski	Ext 7029
Monitoring Specialist	Sheila Gondek	Ext 7026
Nutrition Specialist	Kim Holt	Ext 7198
Parent Involvement Specialist	Kristie Shields	Ext 7541
Social Service Specialist	Mary Lynn Smock	Ext 7397
Site Leader – Lincoln Park	Vanessa Robinson	Ext 7570
Site Leader – River Rouge	Geneva Walker-Smith	Ext 7601
Site Leader – Romulus	Lela Dunn	Ext 7510
Site Leader – Southgate	Kim Barnhart	Ext 7631
Site Leader – Taylor-Fischer	Monica Bancroft	Ext 7387
Assistant Site Leader – Belleville	Meagan Anderson	Ext 7197

August 2024,

Welcome to The Guidance Center (TGC) Early Head Start/Head Start Program. We are pleased to welcome you and your child to one of the finest early childhood programs available right here in your own community! Early Head Start/Head Start is a partnership that brings together parents, community and staff to support the growth and development of children in our community. All of us work together to give every child a Head Start in their education. Much of the success that your child will experience in our program comes from your active participation. You are your child's first and most important Teacher. Your active participation in our program not only helps your child, it also gives you the opportunity to become engaged in activities to enhance your life in many areas. We encourage all parents/guardians to volunteer at least 5 or more hours per month. We provide many exciting school and home volunteer opportunities to help you to become active in your child's early childhood education experience. Some of these volunteer opportunities are:

1. Parent Meetings
2. Policy Council Meetings, Workshops and Activities
3. Family Connections In-Home Activity Sheets
4. ReadyRosie Program
5. Parent Workshops
6. Family Activities & Events
7. Classroom Curriculum and Menu Planning
8. Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)
9. Classroom Volunteer
10. And many more volunteer opportunities!

Within the next few weeks you will become more familiar with our program and all that it offers for you and your child. Our program uses a developmentally appropriate, child centered approach to learning that builds your child's self-esteem, develops early reading, math, writing, problem-solving, and social skills which helps prepare them for kindergarten. You and our staff will become active partners in your child's early learning experiences.

Please read this handbook carefully. It contains important information you will need throughout the school year and highlights many opportunities for you to become actively involved in our program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your family service worker, site leader or any Early Head Start/Head Start staff person for further assistance.

Have a great school year!

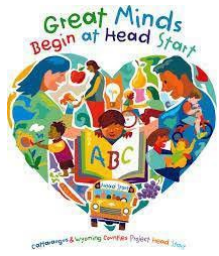
Sincerely,

Adrienne Sewell, Director of Early Childhood Education Programs



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2023-2024 School Year

Head Start Program Philosophy

The philosophy of our Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children from low-income families while providing them with high quality, nurturing and responsive learning environments. Social competence means the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and later responsibilities in school and life.

Early Head Start Program Philosophy

The philosophy of our Early Head Start program is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of very young children, and promote healthy family development.

Early Head Start/Head Start Program Goals

1. TGC EHS/HS will provide parents the opportunity to increase their knowledge of early childhood education and build staff capacity.
2. TGC EHS/HS will implement a comprehensive professional development program that increase staff abilities to better meet the needs of children and families and to advance their career within the program.
3. TGC EHS/HS will put supports in place to support the mental health and wellness of staff and families.

The Guidance Center Mission & Vision Statement

Mission: Nurture development. Foster resilience. Cultivate well-being.

Vision: The Guidance Center will be an innovative leader in programs, community engagement, and collaboration to create a vibrant future for those we serve.

Funding & Licensing Information

Funding for our Early Head Start and Head Start program originates from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) who grants funding to the Office of Head Start (OHS)/Administration of Children and Families (ACF) who directly funds TGC to provide Early Head Start and Head Start services.

All of our Early Head Start/Head Start sites are licensed by the State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory (LARA)-Child Care Licensing. Our sites do not keep a licensing notebook, but internet is available onsite. Reports from at least the last three years are available at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

All Early Head Start/Head Start nutritious meals and snacks are provided by the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) and administered by the US. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) (http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) online, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Enrollment & Vacancies

The Office of Head Start requires all Early Head Start and Head Start programs to maintain full enrollment for the entire school year. Recruitment occurs throughout the year to ensure full enrollment. Selection into Early Head Start and Head Start is based on current federal income guidelines and TGC Early Head Start and Head Start selection criteria. All Early Head Start and Head Start children must have a completed physical, immunizations, health and nutrition histories on file before the first day of school to be counted as enrolled. Head Start Children also need a completed dental exam on file before the first day of school to be counted as enrolled.

Selection & Attendance

Selection into Early Head Start and Head Start is based on the family eligibility factors. Applications must be completed to determine eligibility for selection. Families with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are automatically eligible with proof of current benefits. Proof of family income, residency, documentation of the child's birth, and a signed record of immunizations are required to be submitted to complete the family file for selection. Completed family files are ranked according to the total number of eligibility factors. Those with the highest eligibility factors are selected into the program first.

Research shows that regular attendance in preschool continues on to first through third grades. We want to help you and your child achieve regular attendance so they will be ready for kindergarten and continued school success. If a child is chronically absent, missing more than 10% of school (one or two days every few weeks), staff will request to meet with your family to create an Attendance Success Plan. Parents are asked to call, text or email to report their child's absence and the reason for the absence. If you do not contact the site after the classroom start time, we will call you to make sure that you and your child are safe or if you are in need of assistance. If we do not receive a response from you for 3 days, we will send you a letter and possibly conduct a home visit. If there is no response from you for 8 days, we will assume that you are no longer interested in attending our program and will withdraw you and your child from our program.

Fee Policy

There are no fees to enroll, participate or receive services from our Early Head Start or Head Start program.

Parent & Community Grievance Policy

All TGC Governing Board members, Policy Council members, staff and volunteers strive to establish and maintain positive relationships with all parents, children, and community members involved in our program. The Parent and Community Grievance Policy provides guidance to present, discuss and resolve program and/or individual issues that may occur. This policy is posted on all site parent boards and at the Grantee office. All formal grievances will be resolved at the appropriate level and with the designated TGC Early Head Start/Head Start staff person. For most concerns, parents should first speak with a site staff member, then to the site leader.



Family Engagement and Volunteering



Whether you schedule a day to come in or just have extra time to help, we are always happy to see you. You can participate in many different ways in our Early Head Start/Head Start program. Your engagement enhances your child's experiences. We encourage you to participate in as many ways as possible.

Home Visits & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Over the course of the school year, you will be given the opportunity to participate in two home visits in August/September and March, and two parent-teacher conferences in December and May/June. These may take place in your home or at another agreed upon location within the community. During this time, our staff and your family get to know each other and discuss common goals for your child. Site staff will contact you in advance to schedule the best date and time that works for you and your family.

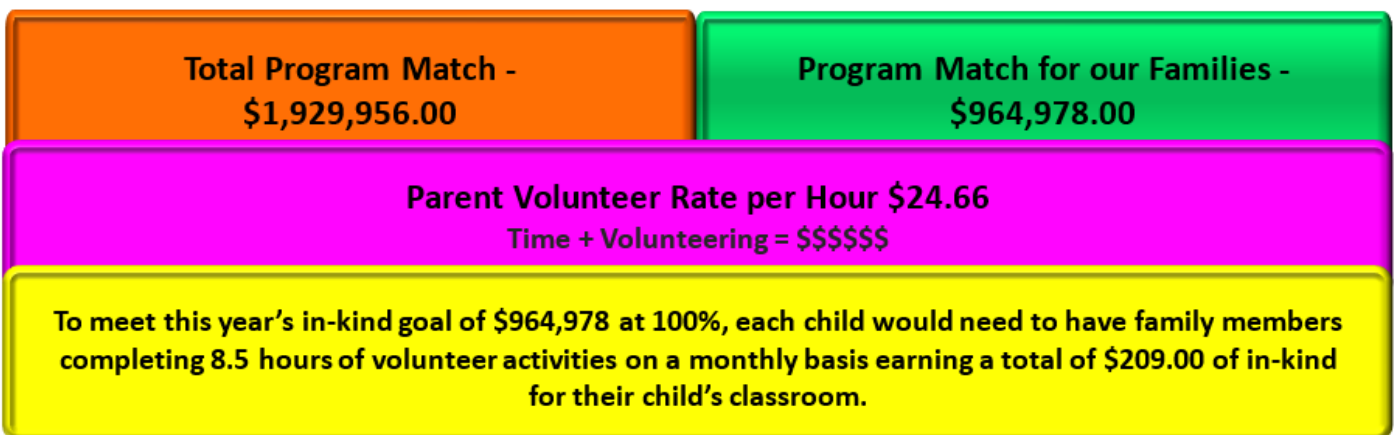
The Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)

Within 45 days of enrolling your child, a family service worker will contact you to start working on a Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). Your family will work closely with your family service worker at the site to identify current and ongoing strengths in your family, short and long-term needs/goals, as well as any situation that requires resources and support. You may have a specific goal you want to accomplish. Your family service worker will help you develop an action plan that outlines the steps to achieve that goal. Over the course of the school year, you will participate in three family meetings with your family service worker. For your convenience, your family service worker will contact you in advance to schedule these meetings around home visits and parent-teacher conference appointments.

In-Kind Match & Volunteering

Parent and community participation is very important to our Early Head Start/Head Start program. 75% of the funding needed to run the Early Head Start/Head Start program is provided through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which is our direct funding source. Our Early Head Start/Head Start program is required to provide the other 25%, identified as "in-kind" by donations from members of the community and/or community organizations and parent and/or community volunteer hours. These hours/donations count towards the in-kind goal we must reach each year.

In-kind Goals for 2023-2024



Volunteer participation is very important to our Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Parents also play a major part in achieving our in-kind goals. Parents can help with the in-kind requirement by volunteering their time within the program. Without family engagement, the program cannot be funded. Your participation as a

volunteer enriches the Early Head Start/Head Start experience in all of our children. You can volunteer in many different ways in our program.

- **At home you can:**
 - Complete the Family Connection In-Home activity sheets with your child.
 - Complete the Physical Fitness and Literacy activity sheets with your child.
 - Watch ReadyRosie videos and complete the activities with your child.
 - Repair classroom toys or equipment.
 - Work on or make things for the classroom (make playdough, cut out materials, etc.).
 - Recruit new families.
- **In the classroom you can:**
 - Help children with daily activities, including outdoor play.
 - Assist the teacher and assistant teacher during rest time.
 - Help plan classroom activities with the teacher and assistant teacher.
 - Read a book or share a story with children.
 - Introduce a talent, family culture or tradition.
 - Introduce songs and sing with the children.
- **At the site you can:**
 - Work on newsletters, calendars, flyers, posters or bulletin boards, etc.
 - Assist with building and playground safety.
 - Complete general office work (phones, buzzers, copies, etc.).
 - Volunteer as a greeter at the start of the day or at site events.
 - Assist in menu planning.
 - Help with events such as Buddy Day and Culture Night.
 - Serve as a bilingual translator.
 - Attend parent meetings and workshops.
 - Participate in family activities and events.

Please make sure to complete the documentation of your volunteer time on the proper form. If you need help finding or completing the form, do not hesitate to ask any staff person.

Volunteer Orientation & Screening Process

Every person who chooses to volunteer in our program will be required to participate in our volunteer orientation process before joining their child in the classroom. This process may be offered during parent orientation, family review meetings, home visits, and the first site parent meeting in September. You can also schedule a time to meet with your site leader, family service worker, or the Parent Involvement Specialist at your convenience.

As required by The State of Michigan, Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs (LARA) – Child Care Licensing, all volunteers who participate in classroom activities interacting with children other than their own, must complete a Public Sex Offenders Registry clearance before volunteering in the classroom. To complete this, the Public Sex Offenders Registry Clearance Authorization Form must be filled out and submitted with a current copy of a valid driver's license or state issued identification card. This clearance will be kept securely on file at the site as required by LARA. If your clearance contains information that does not meet LARA regulations, such as a conviction, you will not be permitted to volunteer in-person in our program, but your child will remain enrolled.

Volunteering in the Classroom 4 Hours per Week or More

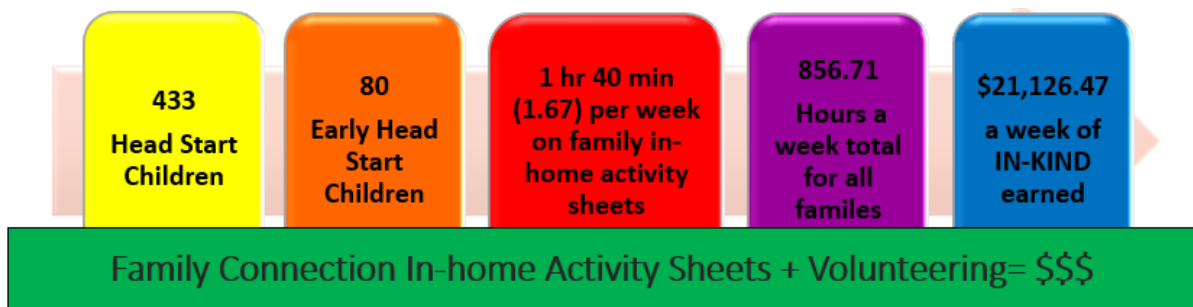
Volunteers who are in the classroom more than 4 hours per week within 2 consecutive weeks, will also be asked to complete the Volunteer Screening packet and submit a copy of a valid driver's license or state issued identification card for completion of criminal and sex offender background checks. Volunteers must also obtain a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Central Registry Clearance and pass a Tuberculosis (TB) test. Your site leader can assist you regarding the steps to obtain these clearances. If any

of these clearances come back with information that may prove to be more serious than a minor traffic offense, it may result in the termination of your in-person volunteer status.

Family Connections In-Home Activity Sheets

Family Connections In-Home activity sheets are a great way for you to stay connected and involved in supporting your child's learning at home. Based on Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) goals that you developed with your child's teacher at the initial home visit, and update at parent-teacher conferences, your child's teacher will send home the activity sheets for you and your child to work on together. These activity sheets are designed to foster your child's growth and development, ultimately preparing him/her for kindergarten.

When you receive the weekly activity sheets, select an activity each day to do with your child for a total of no more than 20 minutes. Record the time spent at home with your child each day on the activity sheet; also note your feedback on the sheet. Please return the completed Family Connections In-Home activity sheet to your child's teacher on a weekly basis. Please remember to add together and record the total number of minutes from the week on the bottom of the sheet. The total minutes per sheet may add up to, but may not exceed 100 minutes. Be sure to sign and date the form.



ReadyRosie Program & Parent Curriculum

ReadyRosie is a research-based parenting curriculum, family engagement and early learning resource that supports child development and parenting skills. ReadyRosie harnesses the power of video and mobile technology to empower families and schools to work together to promote school readiness. The program provides short model moment videos for families with simple, quick and fun activities which are rooted in learning goals for children. Families can access the program through the ReadyRosie app or web-based program at ReadyRosie.com. Your child's teacher will provide you with more information during your first home visit. Keep an eye out through the month of September for your invitation to join the program!



Parent Meetings

Parents will have the opportunity to meet together virtually or in-person at each site once per month. Each of these meetings will focus on a specific topic, but also have some fun activities for your enjoyment. They provide an opportunity for parents to get to know each other; discuss issues and concerns; help plan special

events; learn about volunteering, workshop opportunities and other information related specifically to your site. This is an opportunity for parents to have ownership of their site and get involved in their child's education.

Policy Council

Policy Council is a group of parents/guardians of currently enrolled Early Head Start/Head Start children elected at each site by their peers to be parent representatives. This group of parents' works with key management staff, community representatives and TGC Governing Board members to make important decisions about how our programs should operate to ensure that we successfully meet the needs of all of our children and families. Policy Council provides parents with opportunities for leadership and the ability to say, "Yes, I have a voice in what's happening in my community, my family's life and in my child's education."

Participation in Policy Council gives you the opportunity to:

- Have a voice in program decision making.
- Gain knowledge of program operations and budgets.
- Interact with other parents on workgroups and program activities.
- Become an advocate for children and families in our program and communities.
- Gain leadership skills.

Parent Trainings & Workshops

Be sure to look for and take advantage of FREE learning opportunities provided by our program. Staff will partner with you to provide many opportunities to attend valuable educational presentations, workshops and trainings at no cost. Some of our most popular workshop topics are Certified CPR/First Aid training, nutrition, health, wellness, and financial literacy.

Parent Activities & Events

Each site will partner with their families to provide a unique set of events and activities to support learning and to promote volunteering. Please stay in communication with your child's teacher, family service worker or site leader to hear more about these opportunities throughout the year. You may also attend your site's monthly parent meeting if you are interested in assisting with the planning of these events and activities. Some of these might include Culture Day, Literacy Day, Buddy Days, Music Lady, Exotic Zoo, etc.

Male Engagement

Our program welcomes all male and father figures and provides them with the necessary support to become stronger advocates, to build better relationships, and to promote the healthy development of their child. Males and father figures have a very important and unique influence in the lives of our children. Whether it's joining a group or spending a day in the classroom, we welcome you to share a smile, give a hug, or read a book. You may be the only male influence in that child's life, which could make a significant impact. We provide many fun and engaging opportunities that support a stronger, healthier relationship among yourself, your child, your family and the community.





Site Information

Discipline Policy

Positive discipline helps children recognize limits and learn appropriate behavior. Our staff/volunteers encourage children to respect themselves, others and their environment. The goal of positive methods of discipline is for children to develop the skills necessary to resolve conflicts in a positive and healthy way. All Early Head Start/Head Start staff and volunteers are responsible for adhering to positive discipline techniques at all times. Volunteers will never be left alone with the children and are to enlist the help of a staff member when child management and behavior concerns arise.

Our positive discipline techniques consist of teaching children conflict resolution skills and other methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. These methods have proven to effectively redirect the behavior of children and are used at all times by our staff. Staff and all volunteers are prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment including but not limited to:

- Hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, squeezing, or biting.
- Demanding excessive physical exercise, excessive rest or strenuous or bizarre postures.
- Isolating a child in any area where a child cannot be seen or supervised.
- Using or withholding food or beverages as a punishment.
- Toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean or humiliate a child.
- Abusive, profane or sarcastic language or verbal abuse threats.

When a child's challenging behavior does not respond to the behavioral intervention strategies, the teacher will work with the parent, site leader and grantee specialist(s) on developing strategies that will best support that child and the other children in the classroom.

If at any time the child becomes a threat to themselves or others, parents may be contacted to discuss the possible need for additional observations and/or referrals for services to help address these behaviors.

Confidentiality Policy

All staff, parents and volunteers must adhere to the program policies of confidentiality. All family information and records are kept confidential. All files are kept in a secure area in the site's administrative office. Parents or legal guardians may review their own child's file at any time. No parent/legal guardian may see another child's file. Staff members will discuss families/children on a need to know basis with other staff members. Staff members will not discuss another child with a family and will stop any such discussion by any staff member, parent or volunteer. Information or records regarding a child or family (written or verbal) will be released only after the parent/legal guardian has signed a Release of Information form or at the request of the court system subpoena. A copy of the release shall be placed in the child's file.

Anything said by a child and/or family about their life or personal experiences must not be discussed outside of the classroom or at any site activity, meeting, etc. Parents and volunteers must agree not to repeat a child's conversation to anyone, including any other Head Start/Early Head Start parent or volunteer. A violation of confidentiality can lead to dismissal from participation in all volunteering privileges within the site and program. If you are unclear or have questions regarding confidentiality, please feel free to ask your child's teacher or site leader.

Child Information Cards

The State of Michigan, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) – Child Care Licensing requires that a Child Information Card be on file for all children in our program. All contact information must

be complete and up-to-date for all individuals listed. This is extremely important for the safety of your child so we may have accurate and reliable contact information in case of an emergency or any other issue. **Your child will not be released to any individual that is not listed on this card or to individuals that are listed who cannot provide proper picture identification.** If you need to add or update information to your child's card, this must be done in person at the site. This Information cannot be updated over the phone, by email or by someone who is not the parent or legal guardian.

Entering & Exiting the Site

Parents are required to follow safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed to protect the welfare and best interest of the children, their families and employees. When transporting children to and from the site, please use extreme caution and patience. Respect all traffic and parking directions, and move vehicles slowly where there might be children walking or running to and from the building. Always hold your child's hand. Please be particularly mindful of your site's entrance and exit procedures. Please do not hold the door open for an unidentified person following you into the site. This person may be someone who is not authorized to be there. Always make sure to build enough time into your schedule to allow for things that take a little extra time like traffic lines, parking, walking to the building, sign in/out procedures and dealing with any last minute needs your child may have. Please immediately report any safety concerns to the site leader or supervisor on site immediately. Let's work together to promote child safety!

School Attendance & Absences

Arriving to school on time, as well as regularly attending school, is important in order for your child to have the best possible learning experience. It is important for your child to attend Early Head Start/Head Start every day for his/her ongoing educational growth and development. Your child should attend every day with the exception of days when illness or severe family circumstances occur.

- **Excused absences:** If your child is going to be absent, please call the site and let us know why.
- **Unexcused absences:** If you do not call in your child's absence, it will be considered unexcused. For you and your child's safety, we will also contact you within 1 hour of class start time. Unexcused absences lead to chronic absenteeism. This may affect your child's ongoing enrollment in the program.
- **Accumulated absences without contact:** If your child is absent for 8 consecutive days without any contact, we will begin the withdrawal process by sending you a letter requesting that you contact the site to address the barriers of regular attendance. We also may conduct a home visit to determine if you need additional services or support. If we do not hear from you by the date on the letter, your child will be withdrawn from the program.
- **Average daily attendance (ADA):** We track your child's percentage of attendance and inform you at family meetings of your child's ADA. Our program requires students to attend at least 85% of the time. When your child's ADA drops below 90%, they are considered chronically absent which affects their overall learning. After 60 days of enrollment, you will receive a letter stating your child's average daily attendance (ADA) and it will tell you whether your child is at risk for being chronically absent.
- **Chronic absences:** If your child has 10% or more absences, your family service worker will contact you to develop an Attendance Success Plan to identify and discuss the challenges that affect your child's attendance. If your child has over 20% absences, their ongoing enrollment may be affected.
- **Dropping-off late:** Please bring your child to school on time. It is disruptive to the class when your child shows up late. Your child will miss valuable learning time. If there is an emergency and you cannot make it on time, please call ahead to the office so they can inform the classroom of your expected arrival.
- **Signing-in/out:** Please sign your child in when you arrive and out when you leave each day.
- **Picking-up late:** Please pick up your child on time. Late arrival causes your child to be anxious for your return. Inform your emergency contacts of the pick-up time and need for picture identification when alternative pick-up arrangements are necessary. All changes to emergency contacts on your child's emergency card must be done in person in the office. This helps to reinforce your commitment of

responsibility to your child and respect of the site staff. Please refer to the Late Drop Off/Pick-Up of Children policy for more details.

School Closures

If the school district in which your child's site is located closes due to weather conditions, then the Early Head Start/Head Start sites/classrooms in that district will not be in session. Watch the local TV stations or listen to the local news radio stations such as WWJ (950AM) for up-to-date school closing information. We will make every effort to notify you if school is cancelled for any other reason. Please contact your site leader or family service worker with any questions. You may also receive a text or email for any unexpected site closures.



Site Safety

Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children, Families & Staff

- Any individual observed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave by the site leader or site staff in charge. Police will be called if a person asked to leave does not do so and/or displays actions listed below:
 - Verbal or physical abuse
 - Any act of violence, or threatening behavior
 - Damaging or stealing property
 - Possession of a weapon
- The State of Michigan Legislation MCL 750.237 has designated all school buildings a WEAPON FREE ZONE. **No person may possess any firearms including a permit to own and/or carry firearms, knives, tasers or other lethal weapons on the premises of any TGC Head Start/Early Head Start Facility. This includes parking lots, articles of clothing, purses, backpacks or vehicles.** All violations will be reported to the proper authorities.
- **Cell phone use is prohibited at any time during drop-off and pick-up at the site.** Drop-off and pick-up times are an opportunity for families to connect with their child's teacher, focus on your child's needs and share critical information about your child's day. For the safety of all everyone in our program, it is best to have present adults who are focused on their children to set their day up for success.
- We will not release your child to anyone on the Child Information Card who does not appear to be a safe "pick-up person", due to apparent intoxication or other impairment. The following steps will be taken when a parent or other "pick-up person" appears to be intoxicated or otherwise impaired. The staff will attempt to contact the other parent or another person responsible for the child. The staff will keep the child until another authorized person can pick up the child. If such a situation occurs and the "pick-up person" insists on leaving with the child, the staff will tell the "pick-up person" that they feel it is not safe for the child to ride with him/her and the local police will be notified.
- Please help us set a good example for the children in our program by modeling appropriate behavior and language and refrain from using profanity at the site at any time. For many children, the most important role models are their parents and caregivers. Children look up to their role models to help shape how they behave in school, form relationships, or when making difficult decisions.
- Parents are prohibited from engaging in any physical, verbal, email, social media or any other type of written correspondence used to threaten, intimidate or inflict bodily harm towards any employee, child, parent or community volunteer.
- When volunteering in the classroom, it is important to your child that you are there to be part of the classroom/site activities. Therefore, we ask that you do not bring other children to the site with you

during this time. We also ask that you put your cell phone on vibrate and refrain from using it while in the classroom or participating in site events and activities. If you must use your cell phone for any reason while volunteering at the site, we ask that you exit the classroom or area where children are present before using your cell phone for the safety of the children and the staff. Additionally, personal cell phones or any other mobile devices cannot be used to take pictures or record any child, parent, volunteer or TGC staff member.

Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect

The State of Michigan Legislation MCL 722.623 designates any employee or volunteer of a child care provider a Mandated Reporter. Any Early Head Start/Head Start employee or volunteer who has reason to suspect that a child has been sexually, physically, psychologically abused or neglected is required to report the suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Protective Services agency at 1-855-444-3911.

While the legal obligation falls on each employee/volunteer individually, Early Head Start/Head Start needs to know if you experience a situation in which you suspect abuse or neglect of a child. Report your suspicions to the teacher, site leader, or supervisor immediately. Failure to file a report of suspected abuse or neglect places both the employee/volunteer and the program at risk. If you are struggling with a concern about possible abuse or neglect, please immediately discuss the matter with the site leader or supervisor.

No Smoking

As is required for compliance with Michigan Public Act 116, smoking is prohibited in the building and on the grounds of our sites.

Emergency Drills & Emergency Response throughout the Year

Drills (tornado, fire, lockdown, etc.) are conducted at each site and evacuation maps are posted in the each classroom. During tornado season, drills are practiced in case severe weather requires that children be moved to the safest interior sections of the building. Actual evacuation and lockdown drills are conducted according to The State of Michigan, Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs (LARA) – Child Care Licensing. At all times, staff members are present who have been trained and have certification in First Aid and CPR.



Daily Program Information

Indoor & Outdoor Play

Learning through play in early childhood is one of the best foundations for success in school. Play develops many skills that are necessary for children to learn to read and write and be successful in math and science. Play also develops behaviors that help children learn all school subjects. Outdoor play is a fun, healthy part of the school experience. Therefore, your child will be taken outside every day, weather permitting. Please bring your child to school dressed appropriately for the weather.

Children's Clothing

Accidents and spills happen frequently in the classroom and some of our activities can be messy. Children should be dressed in clothing they can manage and be comfortable in during play both indoors and outdoors, and while taking part in classroom activities. Make sure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor play in all seasons. With all of our indoor and outdoor activities, it is safest for children to wear closed toe, rubber soled shoes. It is also necessary to have an extra change of clothing at school. Please make sure extra clothing is brought to school in a plastic bag, is marked with your child's name and kept in his/her cubby or locker in keeping with requirements from the State of Michigan, Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs

(LARA) – Child Care Licensing, all clothing soiled with bodily fluids will be placed, un-rinsed, in a sealed plastic bag labeled with your child’s name. Please check daily for soiled clothes.

Rest Time

Children in the Head Start full-day program will be given an opportunity to rest daily. Infants and toddlers in the Early Head Start program will be able rest on demand. Cots and cribs are sanitized on a weekly basis and a laundering service is also used weekly to provide clean linen for all sites. Cots, cribs and linens are only used by one child between washing/sanitizing.

Items from Home

Please leave personal items at home. Many toys look exactly alike and when one comes up missing, it can be a cause for tears. Our program cannot be held responsible for any items, including clothing, brought from home that are lost or stolen from any site.

Special Occasions

TGC Early Head Start/Head Start staff and families are richly diverse in racial backgrounds, ethnic and cultural practices, and religious affiliations. Staff and parents are encouraged to share their customs and ethnic backgrounds in the classroom. Parents’ contributions of songs, stories, experiences, traditions or recipes are a welcome addition to our curriculum. Cultural diversity is respected every day in many ways in our classrooms. Our posters, pictures, classroom items, books, dolls, etc. reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the children and families our program services. Out of respect for each person’s traditions, we do not celebrate holidays in the classroom; rather, each day will be a “celebration” to honor the world in which we live, the wonders of nature and the friendships we have made.

Daily Classroom Schedules

In the Early Head Start classrooms, the HighScope curriculum allows staff to maintain the consistency of our infant and toddler routines as much as possible while still being flexible to meet their individual needs. Each child’s schedule is maintained by a primary staff member who strives to meet and understand the child’s individual needs and assists with smooth transitions throughout the day. Children in the Early Head Start classrooms are allowed to eat and sleep on demand.

In the Head Start Classroom, the HighScope curriculum allows children to participate in a daily “plan-do-review” process. With this approach, children are involved in direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. Teachers provide children with a wide variety of materials and planned activities that build on children’s interests as well as expand their learning and development. Each day children have the opportunity to plan their own activities, accomplish their plan, solve problems, make necessary changes in their original plan and reflect on the outcomes of their actions.

The daily classroom schedules vary from site to site and from classroom to classroom. See your child’s teacher for a copy of your child’s daily schedule.



HighScope Curriculum

HighScope is the curriculum used by all of our Early Head Start center-based and Head Start classrooms. HighScope is an active learning curriculum that provides children with many hands-on experiences with materials, people, events and ideas. The HighScope curriculum helps children to:

- Become independent, responsible, confident and ready for success in school and life.

- Identify and gradually regulate their feelings.
- Problem solve by talking about their emotions instead of just acting on them.
- Become aware of other children and adult's feelings.
- Learn to plan many of their own activities, carry out their plans, and talk about what they did with other children and their teachers.
- Participate in positive interactions that build relationships with other children and adults.

The HighScope curriculum uses an assessment called the Child Observation Record (COR). The COR assesses children from infancy through kindergarten in eight content areas: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy, and Communication; Mathematics; Creative Arts; Science and Technology; and Social Studies. A ninth area, English Language Learning, is used with children whose first language is something other than English.

This is an ongoing assessment where teachers observe and record what children say and do throughout the day. Based upon these careful observations, teachers are able to plan activities that promote children's growth and development in all content areas. The teachers share this assessment by providing parents with a COR Advantage Family Report three times throughout the program year during parent-teacher conferences and home visits. This report will help parents better understand their children's progress and development toward school readiness.

For the documentation of COR, our program uses the Kaymbu software to bridge the gap between school and home. The Kaymbu for Families app is connected to our program which will give you a window into your child's classroom, helping you to connect with your child's learning experiences and school activities. You will receive photos, videos, messages and more from your child's teacher via the app, text and/or email. You can also communicate with your child's teacher by commenting on the photos, video's and messages you receive. You will receive more information on how to download and login to the Kaymbu app during your first home visit.



Parents as Teachers Curriculum

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is the curriculum used by our Early Head Start home-based program. This curriculum is based on the following philosophy:

- Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers.
- The early years of a child's life are critical for optimal development and provide the foundation for success in school and life.
- Established and emerging research should be the foundation of parent education and family support curricula, training, materials, and services.
- All young children and their families deserve the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of any demographic, geographic, or economic considerations.
- An understanding and appreciation of the history and tradition of diverse cultures is essential in serving Families.

A trained home-based visitor will schedule personal visits in the home with the parent and child once a week for 90 minutes. These visits will focus on child development and parent-child interactions that are warm, responsive, engaging and communicative. The home-based visitor incorporates activities families are already doing and builds on them. The family will be informed about child development and make connections

between the child's stage of development and his/her behavior. The family will also be provided with a network of community resources that can support their needs.

Group connection socializations are scheduled twice per month. This gives families an opportunity to share experiences, discuss concerns, learn from each other, support one another, interact with their child in a group setting, and practice parenting skills. Child development information is shared and social connections between parents are fostered.

The home-based visitors also use the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) and Kaymbu software to assess the children's growth and development (for more information see the HighScope section above).



Health & Nutrition

Health Records

Your child must have the following records on file prior to the first day of school:

- Immunization record which is up-to-date according to the age of the child
- Current physical or well child exam:
 - Ages 3 to 5 completed a physical within the previous 12
 - Ages 1 to 3 completed a well-child exam within the previous 6 months
 - Ages 6 weeks to 1 year completed a well-child exam within the previous 3 months
- Results of a hemoglobin and lead test completed within the ages of 12 to 23 months or completion of these tests when age appropriate (Hemoglobin completed at 12 months, Lead completed at 12 months and 24 months)
- Dental exam for children ages 3 to 5 completed within the previous 6 months

Health Screenings

The Office of Head Start requires families to follow the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment Schedule. The purpose of health screenings is to track your child's growth and development, identify concerns and create a plan to ensure the health and well-being of your child. Your child will be required to be up-to-date with the following screenings:

- Well-Child exams completed at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24 and 30 months; completed at 3 and 4 years
- Oral exam completed at 2 months to 3 years at the well-child visits
- Hearing and Vision exams completed at 2 months to 3 years at the well-child visits
- Hearing and Vision exams completed yearly for ages 3 to 5 years at a Head Start event, the Wayne County Health Department, pediatrician or eye doctor's office
- Height, weight and blood pressure completed at well-child visits, at your child's Head Start site
- Hemoglobin test completed at the 12-month well-child visit
- Lead test completed at the 12- and 24-month well-child visit
- Dental exam completed at 3 to 5 years of age at a dentist twice a year

Parents are required to provide the required updated health forms for the child's health record throughout the program year.

Medical follow-up care is very important when a screening indicates a potential health issue and is required for all children with an abnormal screening result. Dental follow-up is required for children with cavities. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and

learning. A severe infection called an abscess can form under the gums that can spread to other parts of the body which could result in the need for emergency care.

Health in the earliest years supports learning throughout childhood and lays the groundwork for a lifetime of well-being and success. If you require assistance in locating health services or follow-up care please contact your family service work.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and Ages & Stages Questionnaire Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2) Screenings

All children new to our program or new to a program option, will complete the required ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 screenings within 45 days for developmental concerns. These screenings will ensure all children are provided with high-quality early education and development services, including children with disabilities that promote children's communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, personal social growth and social-emotional development for later success in school. Children who have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) do not need to complete the ASQ-3 screening.

The ASQ-3 online screening of all newly enrolled children will occur during summer enrollment or during home visits at the beginning of each program year (if the parent/legal guardian does not complete the summer screening at enrollment), or upon enrollment throughout the year. Regardless of the time a child is enrolled or transitioned into the new program option, screening must be completed within 45 calendar days of the child's enrollment.

Medication

If your child requires medication during school hours, we must have the following before your child attends their first day of school before our staff can administer any medication:

- A medication authorization form signed by a licensed health care professional which includes the parent/legal guardian's written/signed consent
- A Case Conference meeting to review the child's needs with the Health Specialist, teachers, site leader, family service worker and any other required support staff
- A health action plan completed by a licensed health care provider
- The medication which must be in the original container with the pharmacy labeled with the following information included:
 - The child's name
 - Date medication was filled by the pharmacy
 - Prescribing licensed healthcare provider's name
 - The pharmacy name and phone number
 - The dosage to be administered
 - The medication administration instructions
 - The side- affect warnings

Medications must be on site the first day your child attends our program. Emergency medications (Epi pens, Inhalers, or Diastat) will be kept in the area where your child will be. All medications will be administered as stated on the Medication Authorization form, health action plan and pharmacy label. Staff will maintain a medication log that documents the child's name who received the medication; staff member's name who administered the medicine; type and dosage of the medication; time and date the medication was administered.

Temporary Exclusion Policy for Illness

Our program follows the guidelines of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA),

Wayne County Health Department. Children are to remain home from school if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever/temperature that is 100.4 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea or vomiting two or more times in a 3-hour period (unless a licensed healthcare provider determined it is non-contagious)
- Body rash with fever or change in behavior
- Weeping skin sores on an exposed area that cannot be covered with waterproof covering
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough (for children with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Difficulty breathing (for children with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- New onset severe headache, especially with fever
- Severely lethargic (exhaustion)
- Sleep deprived

If your child becomes ill at school with any of the symptoms listed above, is not able to participate in the day's activities due to lack of sleep or not feeling well; you will be notified to pick the child up immediately.

COVID-19 Evidence-Based Mitigation Policy

On January 6, 2023, the Office of Head Start (OHS) officially removed the masking mandate for all Head Start Programs. On June 26, 2023, OHS also removed the COVID-19 vaccination mandate and testing requirement for unvaccinated staff. The following information and strategies will be used in our program to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Current strategies for prevention of COVID-19:
 - Vaccination
 - Handwashing
 - Respiratory etiquette (cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing)
 - Staying home when ill
- COVID-19 symptoms include:
 - Fever 100.4 Fahrenheit or greater and chills
 - New onset of cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- If you or your child test positive for COVID-19, you must:
 - Notify the site leader or family service worker of the illness
 - Stay home and isolate for a minimum of 5 days
 - Be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and all other symptoms must be improved before returning to the classroom
 - Wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days
 - Consider day zero as the first day of exhibiting symptoms or receiving a positive test result. Count 10 days and remove the mask on day 11

Early Head Start Classroom Daily Report

In our Early Head Start center-based program, the following will be documented on a daily basis and discussed or shared with families in writing:

- Food intake (time, type of food and amount eaten)
- Sleeping patterns (when and how long the child slept)
- Elimination patterns (bowel movements; consistency and frequency)
- Developmental milestones
- Changes in the child's usual behaviors

Our Kaymbu software enables teachers to send electronic daily sheets directly to each family. Each day, you will receive a message via the Kaymbu for Families app, text and/or email with a clear, itemized log of your child's daily activities. (for more information see the HighScope section above).

Parent Notification Plan

In the course of the day, a child may experience a minor accident, injury or illness. When this does occur, a parent/legal guardian will be notified with an "Ouch Note". Medications or chemicals will never be used to treat injuries or illnesses. In the event of a serious accident, these steps will be followed:

- If necessary, 911 will be called. Basic First Aid and comfort will be given to the child.
- You will be contacted. If we are unable to reach you, the emergency person listed on the Child Information Card will be called.

Nutrition Services

Children attending the full-day Early Head Start/Head Start program receive approximately 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs. Meals meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines that focus on providing healthy foods and beverages that are low in fat, salt and sugar, but are high in nutrients. We will accommodate special dietary needs with approval from your child's physician.

All our sites are "Nut Free Zones" (peanuts, cashews, walnuts, etc.). Our program recognizes that all nut-based products represent a health and safety hazard for children with nut allergies and may result in an anaphylaxis reaction. The serving of outside food made or purchased by parents or staff is prohibited and not to be consumed by children.



Behavioral/Mental Health

Behavioral/Mental Health Observations & Screenings

All classrooms provide opportunities to promote positive behavioral/mental health and social emotional development in children. Observations of every site will be scheduled throughout the school year. Parent input is valued and the Behavioral/Mental Health Specialist is available to assist parents and staff.

ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 screening tools are used by parents and teachers to assist in identifying developmental progression or regression in children (for more information, see the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2) Screenings). The Child Observation Record, COR, has a domain focused on the child's Social and Emotional Development.

Second Step

Second Step is a social-emotional curriculum that develops positive social skills in children. It complements HighScope in promoting empathy, emotion management, friendship skills and problem solving. The teachers will utilize the activities, ideas, techniques and strategies in this curriculum daily in their classrooms with

your children. Ask your child's teacher if you would like to "practice" some of these same activities to develop your child's skills at home!

Behavioral/Mental Health Services

Behavioral/Mental Health Services include a three-tiered intervention tool that focuses on addressing a child's challenging behavior in the classroom. Informed consent will be obtained from the parent/legal guardian to conduct an individual child observation by the Behavioral/Mental Health Specialist in the classroom setting. Based on this observation, if needed, the child will be referred to the school district, Early On, TGC's Bridges Program and/or other community service agency with parental input and written consent.



Special Education Services for Children with Disabilities

Special Education Services for Children

Ten percent (10%) of our Early Head Start and Head Start funded enrollment is federally mandated to provide an inclusive setting for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and/or special needs. Our program provides:

- An inclusive general education program. All children receive instruction in the same classroom environment.
- Advocacy services to families/parents/legal guardians for their children provided at all points in the special education process including: the referral, evaluation and/or special education eligibility process.
- Collaboration with the Local Education Agency (LEA)/School Districts (Part B Providers), who provide special education services to preschoolers. These services may include: speech therapy which could be provided on-site or off-site. The services may be individual or in a small group with a Speech Therapist.
- Collaboration with Early On or Teach Our Toddlers Early (TOTE) (Part C Providers), who provide early intervention, special education services to infants and toddlers. These services may include: speech, occupational or physical therapy, teacher consultation, nursing or social work services, typically in the child's home.
- Integration of the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals into the child's Early Head Start or Head Start Individualized Learning Plan (ILP).

Special Education Referrals & Evaluations

- An initial referral will occur with a score of "concern" on the parent completed ASQ-3 or ASQ: SE-2 and/or concerns noted by the classroom teacher with signed and written parental consent.
- An initial referral will occur with a recommendation and/or "script" from the child's Pediatrician.
- An evaluation will be completed by the school district or Early On to determine if the child **is eligible** for special education services. The school district has thirty (30) school days to complete the child's evaluation.

Determining Eligibility for Special Education Services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) & the State of Michigan's Child Find

- A team of qualified professionals, typically a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a Speech Therapist, Social Worker, and an OT, Occupational Therapist or a PT, Physical Therapist and the child's parents/legal guardians will determine if the child has a disability (as related to his/her education). The child's eligibility will be written into the IEP or IFSP noting the child's special education services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This federal law mandates services and the child's access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

- A team including the child’s parents will decide on the services needed to support the child to make progress in the Early Head Start or Head Start classroom using the goals written into the child’s IEP or IFSP. This progress will be documented on a quarterly progress note(s) from the LEA or Early On.
- The team will identify the child’s educational needs and discuss special education services and the placement of the child with an Early On or the LEA early childhood special education preschool program (ECP).
- The school district or Early On will provide the parent with a copy of the evaluation report, the MET (Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation Team Report) and the documentation of the child’s eligibility, within the IEP or IFSP. This is a legal written plan. Lastly, the parent will give written consent and agree to the services that their child is eligible to receive.
- The State of Michigan uses Child Find, as a required service to “find” and determine special education eligibility for any child, who may require the services.

IMPORTANT DATES

2023-2024 Calendar Summary

1 st Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, August 25, 2023
1 st Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, September 1, 2023
Labor Day (No Classes)	Monday, September 4, 2023
1 st Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, September 8, 2023
1 st Day of Classes	Monday, September 11, 2023
Professional Development Day (No Classes)	Tuesday, November 7, 2023
Thanksgiving Recess (No Classes)	Thursday, November 23rd – Friday, November 24, 2023
All Classes Resume	Monday, November 27, 2023
1 st Parent Teacher Conferences All Sessions (No Classes)	Friday, December 8, 2023
1 st Parent Teacher Conferences All Sessions (No Classes)	Friday, December 15, 2023
Winter Recess (No Classes)	Friday, December 22, 2023 – Friday, January 5, 2024
All Classes Resume	Monday, January 8, 2024
Martin Luther King Day (No Classes)	Monday, January 15, 2024
Professional Development Day (No Classes)	Monday, February 19, 2024
2 nd Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, March 1, 2024
2 nd Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, March 8, 2024
2 nd Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, March 15, 2024
2 nd Home Visits All Session (No Classes)	Friday, March 22, 2024
Spring Recess (No Classes)	Monday, March 25 th – Friday, March 29, 2024
All Classes Resume	Monday, April 1, 2024
2 nd Parent Teacher Conferences All Sessions (No Classes)	Friday, May 17, 2024
2 nd Parent Teacher Conferences All Sessions (No Classes)	Friday, May 24, 2024
2 nd Parent Teacher Conferences All Sessions (No Classes)	Friday, May 31, 2024
2 nd Parent Teacher Conferences All Sessions (No Classes)	Friday, June 7, 2024
Memorial Day (No Classes)	Monday, May 27, 2024
Juneteenth (No Classes)	Wednesday, June 19, 2024
Last Day for Head Start Classes (tentative)	Monday, June 24, 2024
4 th of July Holiday (No Early Head Start)	Monday, July 1 st – Friday, July 5, 2024
Last Day for Early Head Start Classes	Thursday, August 15, 2024

The Guidance Center Early Head Start/Head Start Site Locations & Contact Information

Belleville-Owen Site Owen Intermediate School 45201 Owen Street Belleville, MI 48111 (734) 785-7708 M-F 8:00am-4:00pm	River Rouge Site Walter White School 550 Eaton River Rouge, MI 48218 (313) 928-6200 M-F 8:00am-4:00pm	Taylor-Fischer Site Fischer Elementary School 8882 Beech Daly Road Taylor, MI 48180 (734) 785-7720 M-F 8:00am-4:00pm
Lincoln Park Site Calvary Lutheran Church 3320 Electric Avenue Lincoln Park, MI 48146 (313) 381-0976 M-F 8:00am-4:00pm	Romulus Site Cory Elementary 35200 Smith Road Romulus, MI 48174 (734) 785-7792 M-F 8:00am-4:00pm	Taylor-New Hope Site New Hope Baptist Church of Taylor 8850 Pardee Road Taylor, MI 48180 (734) 785-7713 M-F 8:00am-4:00pm

The Guidance Center Early Head Start/Head Start Administrative Office
18800 Walnut, Southgate, MI 48195
(734) 785-7702

Available Program Options:

- *Head Start Full Day Option:* Offers 7 hours of classroom time, 4 days per week.
- *Head Start Part Day Option:* Offers 3.5 hours of classroom time for 3 and/or 4-year-old children, 4 days per week in either an AM or PM session.
- *Early Head Start Center-Based Option:* Offers infants and toddlers 6 weeks old to 2 ½ years old, 7 hours, 4 days per week, of a year round classroom setting.
- *Early Head Start Home-Based Option:* Offers pregnant women and newborns up to 2 ½ years old, a 1 ½ hour home visit once per week and a parent/child socialization virtually or on-site twice per month.