

Lesson Plans-Center Based

Head Start Performance Standard

§ 1302.31

§ 1302.32

Policy

Community Action Head Start uses **The Creative Curriculum** to develop lesson plans to nurture children's curiosity by providing opportunities for discovery and learning, encouraging active exploration and investigations, and asking questions to promote thinking. Weekly plans are developmentally appropriate and based on the individual interests, strengths and needs of the children in the class. Lesson plans will reflect the educational philosophy of our program (see **Head Start Birth-Five School Readiness Goals**). See **Curriculum and Classroom Environment Policy and Procedure**. Plans will include high quality and all developmental domains (language, literacy, math, cognitive, motor skills and social/emotional). Plans will reflect the individual interests, strengths and developmental needs of the children in the class. Lesson Plans for the following week will be created in **SmartTeach™** and submitted to the Program Area Supervisor and the Education Services Supervisor at the end of each week. Teachers may submit them to the Education Specialist supporting their class as part of a coaching plan or when requesting feedback.

Parent/guardian (s)/guardian(s) are the child's first teacher with valuable insight into their child's strengths and needs. Therefore, digital Lesson Plans will be shared with parent/guardian (s)/guardian(s) through **SmartTeach™** and parent/guardian (s)/guardian(s) will be invited to give input into the development of weekly lesson plans.

Procedure

Lesson plans reflect the intentions for the coming week and are subject to change due to the emergent needs of the children in the class, as well as input from parents/guardians. Changes made to lessons will be written directly on the lesson plan posted on the parent board on or before the day the changes are implemented. Parent/guardian suggestions will be noted as such.

Lesson plans will be completed by the teacher or designee by noon Friday or as required by the supervisor. A printed copy of the current lesson plan for the week will be posted on the parent board in the classroom, so it is accessible to staff and families.

Formal whole group activities are not developmentally appropriate for **Early Head Start** classrooms and therefore are not permitted. Some or all children may spontaneously gather when they see something interesting to them, such as music and movement or a book. When these gatherings naturally occur in the course any one day, children **will not** be required or redirected to join or stay in any activity. Group activities will **not** be included in the Daily Schedule (see **Daily Schedule Policy and Procedure**) and activities will not be planned listed on the weekly lesson plans.

Teachers will include the following items in lesson plans:

- A minimum of one **Mighty Minutes™** or **Mega Minutos™** and at least one **Intentional Teaching Experience (ITE)** will be included in the plans for each day. These may be used in large groups, small groups, free choice, outside, or during transitions.
- Teachers will use the guidance provided for each **ITE** to facilitate the activity. The **ITE** includes information about scaffolding the learning to support the individual needs of each child and space for writing observations. Staff should have a printed copy of the **ITE** to support their facilitation of the activity.

Forms Referenced:

[Head Start Birth-Five School Readiness Goals, Child Care Weather Watch,
EHS FY Duration Lesson Plan Feedback Checklist, Preschool Lesson Plan Feedback Checklist]

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Read Aloud: At least 2 planned read-aloud per day. Reading books with children is best done in small groups, where children can interact with the books, with each other and with the adults. While it *may* be done in large groups, reading for smaller groups is recommended..

Outdoors is an extension of the classroom and will offer planned experiences to engage all children. See the **Center Based Curriculum and Classroom Environments Policy and Procedure** for examples of materials and equipment.

Duration sites will plan a minimum of 60 minutes daily outdoor time. This time may be cumulative, so 30 minutes for one outside period and one or two additional 15 minute outside times is permissible.

- If scheduling a total of 60 minutes outside is not possible, Teachers will plan at least 15 minutes of vigorous indoor activity either in the classroom in the school gym, if available.
- Indoor play in gyms or other indoor play spaces, where available, **may not replace** outdoor play, except in the case of weather extremes. See **Child Care Weather Watch** in the Health Folder on the Intranet for guidance in adapting outside time in response to weather extremes. Staff will be informed through email, Microsoft Teams and/or phone calls if outside time is not advised due to poor air quality. See **Daily Schedule Policy and Procedure** for more information about the use of indoor play spaces.
- **Transitions:** Transitions are planned, short activities to support and engage children moving smoothly from one activity to another or from place to place. **Mighty Minutes™** and **Mega Minutes™** are provided for ideas to support transition activities. Staff must include the lesson plan suggestion for the daily Mighty Minutes as one of the engagement activity options for transitions during the day.
- **Environmental Changes:** Teachers will plan changes to at least one interest area each week in response to the interests and needs of the children. Changes are necessary to reflect the skills growth, when children are over- or under-utilizing the area of the classroom or misusing the materials within the area. Changes may include adding or replacing some of the materials, expanding or reducing the size of the area to accommodate more children in this or another area of the classroom. **Preschool and Twos classes only:** Any area of the classroom may be adapted to support the current study.

EHS lesson plans will include:

- Completed weekly lesson plans on the Weekly Template
 - **Individual Care Plans** as well as the weekly lesson plans. Individual Care Plans include Hellos/Goodbyes, Diapering and Toileting, Earing and Mealtimes, Naptime and Getting Dressed. Each plan for each child will be updated at least monthly and when the needs of the child change.
- **Two's room only:**
 - Staff will include one of the 10 **Teaching Guides** in the weekly lesson plans.
 - Staff may choose to repeat days or extend activities to extend the teaching guides up to four weeks
 - Staff may choose one or two favorite studies later in the program year to extend the studies throughout the program year.
- **Reflection:** Teachers will reflect on the previous lesson plans to inform future planning.
 - Staff may reflect daily, answering the prompts given on the lesson plans that align with the study or simply reflect on what popped up for them that day.
 - **Or** staff may write one reflection at the end of the week, reflecting on the entire week. Again, staff may choose to respond to the prompts given on the lesson plan or reflect using the prompts given on the **Preschool Lesson Plan Feedback** form.

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- PAS's and/or the Education Services Supervisor will review lesson plans at least once every quarter for required content and developmentally appropriate practices and complete the **EHS FY Duration Lesson Plan Feedback Checklist**. A copy of the Checklist, with written comments will be provided to the Teacher.

Preschool Lesson Plans will also include:

Preschool teachers will use the **First 6 Weeks** teaching guide beginning on the first day of class through the end of the guide. Teachers then choose another teaching guide to implement the following week. In the event a teaching guide ends less than 4 weeks before winter break, spring break or the end of the program year, teachers may choose mini investigations before beginning a new teaching guide. For periods of less than two weeks, teachers may choose to repeat activities/days from the guide or create new activities to extend the study/learning until the break. Teachers will implement a new teaching guide following the break.

Environmental Changes: Teachers will plan changes to at least one interest area each week in response to the interests and needs of the children. Changes are necessary when children are over- or under-utilizing the area of the classroom or misusing the materials within the area. Changes may include adding or replacing some of the materials, expanding or reducing the size of the area to accommodate more children in this or another area of the classroom or to reflect the skills growth. Any area of the classroom may be adapted to support the current study.

Sand and Water table will be open every day. Staff may choose to add additional tactile experiences if space and materials for such activities are available.

- Food may **not** be used for play or tactile activities, except in extraordinary circumstances without written permission from the Education Services Supervisor or Program Manager.

Second Step: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning curriculum will be included in the lesson plans **at least once** per week. The inclusion of **Second Steps** while implementing the **First Six Weeks Teaching Guide** is optional. **Second Steps** must be included in Lesson Plans after completing the First Six Weeks Teaching Guide.

Individualizing: Beginning in November, plans will include experiences to support at least one educational goal for each child each week and each goal at least twice a month. See **Individualizing Policy and Procedure** for details.

- One activity may be used to meet multiple requirements of the lesson plan. In example, a beading activity could be used to meet fine motor skills, math skills, and cognitive skills, individual education goals and as a planned small group activity.

Following the First 6 weeks of curriculum, each preschool classroom will implement a new teaching guide. A **Web of Investigation** or **Know, Want to Learn, Learned (KWL)** chart will be posted in the classroom, and here will be evidence of ongoing use, through additional wonderings or the addition of new knowledge

Large Groups: A time for the whole group to gather for community building and reflections. Children will be actively engaged for the majority of the whole group time. Teachers will make acceptable alternative activities available for children who need other options.

- The large group must include opening routine, song, movement or game, discussion and shared writing. It may also include time to introduce new study or new materials in the classroom. Teachers may also use this time to review the **Web of Investigation** or **KWL chart** for additions.
 - Teachers may assign jobs before class, or the children may choose their jobs as either a transition activity or as an activity before the whole group begins.
- The Large Group Roundup is a time for reflection about that day and building excitement for the next day. Use the lesson plans for guidance. **Second Steps** lessons may be included here or as part of a small group.

Forms Referenced:

[Head Start Birth-Five School Readiness Goals, Child Care Weather Watch,
EHS FY Duration Lesson Plan Feedback Checklist, Preschool Lesson Plan Feedback Checklist]

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A **Question of the Day** will be posted daily.

Child-Initiated Free Choice Time: Children will be given at least 60 minutes of free choice (see **Daily Class Schedule Policy and Procedure**), 80 minutes if small groups are integrated into choice time. Adults will guide children in selecting where they want to start and what they want to do.

Small Group: children will have the opportunity to engage in small group activities to support individual educational goals, target specific skills development or further their learning in the study topic through facilitated adult-child interactions. If one or more adults are in the room, you may conduct two or more small groups at once. Children who do not want to participate in small groups may choose an appropriate alternative activity. Teachers will follow the curriculum expectations, and lesson plan to support small group time each day. Small groups are from 10-20 minutes.

- Small groups **must** be facilitated by an adult, who engages in interactions with the children to scaffold their learning or gain a better understanding of what the child knows, can do, wants, or needs to learn. Follow the lesson plan for more information on specific small group instruction.
- Each child has the autonomy to decide how long to stay at the activity and to determine when they are finished.
- In the event more support for content or appropriate practices are needed, monitoring may be done more frequently. More frequent monitoring may be done by the Education Services Supervisor, PAS, or the Education Specialist, depending on who is providing the ongoing support. Classrooms receiving Prevention and Intervention Team Support (PITS) may also get weekly Lesson Plan support as part of the support plan.

Parent/guardian (s)/Guardian(s) Input

After the first assessment cycle, Teachers may begin sending activities related to a child's educational goals, developmental needs, or interests to the family at least once a month. Lesson Plans may also be sent electronically via the **SmartTeach™** app, email, or Remind, depending on the family's preference for communication.

Staff may also solicit ideas from parents/guardians for planning the environment and activities during their regular communications with them, such as phone calls, pick up and drop off, family well-being checks, home visits, meetings, or conferences. Opportunities for parents/guardians to actively participate in their child's classroom experiences include communicating ideas through **SmartTeach™**, donating or lending CDs with children's music or activities in their home language, recording of songs or books in the home language, or making videos of culturally relevant children's games for Teachers to learn and do with the children. To document parent/guardian contributions to the curriculum, whether it is activity suggestions, materials or pieces for the environment, the Teacher will:

- Create a new event in the Education tab of ChildPlus.
- Select **Parent Engagement in Curriculum**.
- Enter the date when the activity was suggested or when the materials were provided and the name of the teacher or FST who received it/them.
- In the notes section, describe the contribution and note when it will be added to the classroom and/or implemented on the lesson plans.
- Staff will include parent/guardian suggestions for developmentally appropriate activities in their lesson plans for the upcoming weeks by simply adding the note "Suggested by a parent/guardian" to the activity plan.