

Safety Policies and Procedures

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.47

Policy

The most fundamental responsibility of Head Start is to ensure that children are always safe when in the care of the program. Children's environments are heavily used and continually changing. To ensure safety, environments must be set up correctly and regularly monitored. All staff take responsibility for identifying and correcting any hazardous conditions that are observed. Program response to potentially unsafe situations is preventative and immediate. The follow-through with unsafe situations ensures complete resolution of any unsafe conditions. This policy and procedure address the setup, assessment, and monitoring of the classrooms and playgrounds. Our program has other policies related to illness, food safety, supervision of children, and injuries and accidents.

Safety Training

All classroom staff will complete the *Introduction to Childcare Health and Safety Training (ICCHS)*, *Prevention is Better than Treatment Training (PBTT)*, *Safe Sleep for Oregon's Infants*, *Foundations for Learning*, *Food Handler's*, and the *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect Training (RRCAN)* prior to having unsupervised access to children and functioning in their position (per Oregon state licensing requirements). Additionally, staff will complete Pediatric First Aid and CPR training within 90 days of hire. Staff will complete re-certification of safety training prior to their training expiring.

Other Trainings include:

- The prevention and control of infectious diseases.
- Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent.
- Prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions.
- Building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water and vehicular traffic.
- Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies.
- Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of biocontaminants.
- Appropriate precautions when transporting children.

Setting-Up a Safe Classroom

Classroom setup refers to the initial setup of the learning and care environment. The Teacher sets up the learning environment using two key checklists and completes the checklist information in ChildPlus.

- Environment Setup Checklist
- Health & Safety Checklist

Members of the Head Start Child Development Leadership Team (CDLT) conduct regular monitoring site visits throughout the year and work with classroom staff and supervisors to resolve issues that are identified.

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Forms used for safety planning include:

- Environment Setup Checklist
- Health and Safety Checklist
- Active Supervision and Safety Plan
- Facilities/Playground Checklist
- Bus Evacuation Form
- Bus Monitoring Checklist
- Active Supervision Checklist
- Classroom Compliance Checklist

Consultation will be provided by Human Resources, Facilities, Health Services, and Safety Committee as needed.

Responsibility for Safety and Emergency Readiness

- All Head Start staff present will count heads aloud and agree that all children are accounted for prior to transitioning to a new area of the center. Refer to **Active Supervision Policy and Procedure**.
- The bus driver and bus monitor will follow the **Releasing Child from Classes and Bus Policy and Procedure** whenever children are boarding or disembarking from the bus.
- Regular monitoring of health, safety, and environment issues both in the classroom and on the playground will be conducted, noting any concerns that need to be addressed or that need to be corrected immediately. Findings and follow-up documentation will be entered into ChildPlus.
- Each site must be familiar with the **Community Action Emergency Preparedness Plan** and the emergency procedures for the public-school district that the classroom is located in. All sites will keep copies of these documents in a designated spot in the classroom.
- When leaving the classroom for any reason, staff will take with them the Emergency Forms containing emergency contact information for all children, attendance sheets, classroom sign in and out sheet, red medication backpack walkie-talkies and first aid kit.

Addressing Safety Concerns in Classrooms

- Staff who notice a safety concern are expected to address the concern immediately. If the concern cannot be corrected immediately, staff are expected to take measures to keep children away from the unsafe situation. Safety concerns can be reported in several ways depending on the severity and type of situation.
- If reporting a staff member as an alleged perpetrator of child abuse, first, immediately take all appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child, **including removing the child** from the presence of the staff member. When the child is safe, *make an emergency call* to your direct supervisor to inform them of the incident and follow their instructions. If you do not reach your supervisor, leave a message for them to contact you immediately and call the following individuals in this order *until you are able to speak with someone* to report the incident: Early Childhood Program Manager(s), and Director of Head Start. All witnesses to the incident must complete a Child Abuse report. Areas of emergency, urgent non-compliance, or unsafe conditions will be addressed immediately by keeping children away from unsafe conditions and by placing an immediate call to the Program Manager. The Program Manager will determine whether Facilities staff are needed to address the problem and will follow up.

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- **Injury/Accident Reporting Forms** are used to describe actual injuries or situations where a child was unsafe. If a child is injured or an accident involves a Head Start child, see the **Injury Accident Reporting Policy and Procedure** for guidance on what to do in case of a medical emergency or urgent situation.
- Staff injuries should be reported via the intranet.
- Facilities Work Requests can be submitted through the help desk for situations where facilities staff are needed to help correct a problem.
- In Pre-K classrooms located in elementary schools, school custodians and front office staff must be notified of any safety concerns.

Site Requirements

All sites: The Compliance Supervisor must ensure that an annual fire department inspection and consultation is completed and that any deficiencies are corrected at once. A written report or documentation of feedback from the inspector shall be obtained and stored in the classroom licensing binder, or for non-licensed sites, documents will be filed in a secure location. Each site must install and maintain working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors in locations within the site as advised by the fire department and licensing.

Bus safety requirements are addressed in **Releasing Children from Head Start Classrooms and Buses Policy and Procedure**.

Public School Sites: The Compliance Supervisor verifies annually that the facility meets requirements for safe and effective heating, paint without lead hazard, approved source of water, approved sewage disposal, adequate toilets and handwashing facilities, adequate lighting, and adequate indoor and outdoor square footage as well as following all other licensing requirements. Specific school emergency procedures override Head Start Emergency Preparedness Plan procedures if plans differ.

Non-School Sites where Children are Present: The Compliance Supervisor verifies annually that the facility meets the stated conditions in public school sites including licensing requirements.

Emergency Supplies

Each site must have the following emergency supplies:

- Working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors.
- First aid kits.
- *Emergency procedures* printed in the languages used by staff and families posted at the site. These procedures must include the location(s) of first aid kits, phones, and children's emergency cards. They must also include the phone numbers of the local hospital, poison control center, police and fire departments.
- Access to *Safety Data Sheet (SDS)* with information about all potentially dangerous materials. (These can be accessed on the intranet) If additional items are brought into the classroom for use by staff or children, staff must obtain a SDS and provide it to health services to update the list on the intranet

Emergency Procedures and Training

Each site will have a copy of the **Head Start Emergency Preparedness Plan** which includes procedures for **emergency situations and natural disasters**. In sites located in public elementary schools, staff will follow the school's plan. Staff will be trained during new hire onboarding, and families will be provided with a condensed copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan. Staff will review safety procedures with parents during orientation or when their children begin school.

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Floor plans will be clearly drawn to include rooms, halls, and exits, with a large arrow to indicate the exit path. The floor plan will be posted near the exit door in each room. *EXIT doors* will be clearly marked.

Children will participate in emergency drills each month from September through June (every month in the Full-Year programs). Fire and bus evacuation drills are conducted once per month. Earthquake and Lockdown drills rotate; one is conducted each month. All drills will be recorded on the **Child Care Emergency Drill Record** form and posted in a visible location in the classroom. Please refer to the **Head Start Emergency Preparedness Plan** for specific drill instructions.

All Head Start staff must possess current First Aid and CPR cards. Certifications are monitored by the Compliance Supervisor/Professional Development Supervisor.

Other Emergency Situations

- Any number of emergency situations may possibly occur. It is important to keep the Compliance Supervisor, Program Area Supervisors, and/or Program Managers in the loop of communication.
- The Compliance Supervisor will conduct annual site visits 1-2 times a year. Program Area supervisors and Program Managers are kept in the communication loop when decisions about emergency situations need to be made.
- *Class cancellation.* In an emergency requiring cancellation of class, or early or late dismissal of more than half an hour- refer to **the Center Closures and Delays Policy and Procedure**.
- *Equipment failure.* In the event of equipment failure that significantly impairs the delivery of program services, such as electricity outage, heating/cooling system breakdown, leaking roof, or phone system failure.
- *Parent/Guardian not at home.* In any situation where a child is returned to school (examples: no one is home when the bus arrives, or the parent who transports fails to pick up the child from the center). Refer to the **Releasing Children from Head Start Buses Policy and Procedure**.
- *Child abuse incident.* If a report of child abuse or neglect is made by Head Start staff, the Teacher will make a written **Child Abuse Report**. A copy of the report is sent to the Family Services Supervisor. If Child Protective Services staff visit the site as part of a child abuse investigation, the Teacher will notify the Family Services Supervisor. Refer to the **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy and Procedure**.

Annual Self-Assessment

- During our annual Self-Assessment in October-December each classroom will be visited by members of the Child Development Leadership Team, who will conduct a health and safety review of the class using the **Active Supervision Checklist** form.
- Areas of emergency or urgent noncompliance or unsafe conditions will be addressed immediately.
- Areas of non-emergency noncompliance will become focus areas for the following year.