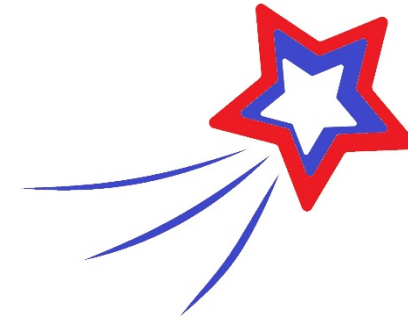


*Stafford Schools Early Childhood Programs provide low income preschool children and those with special needs, as well as their families, with the knowledge and skills to prepare them for success now and in the future - in the classroom, the workplace, and the community. Our commitment is to foster partnerships with family, community, and staff to supply quality comprehensive developmental services for children and families. Implementing this vision requires high expectations in the delivery of children's educational and family literacy programs, health and safety, dental, nutritional, and mental wellness opportunities. Emphasis is placed on family involvement and empowerment which is essential to the success of the child. Stafford Schools Early Childhood secures an array of individualized services and ensures that community resources are used in an efficient manner.*

The Stafford County School Board does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, or disability. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of Stafford County Public Schools, including all educational programs, admission to such programs, activities, and employment. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator/Executive Director of Human Resources, Stafford County Public Schools, 31 Stafford Avenue, Stafford, VA 22554, Phone: (540) 658-6560, Fax: (540)658-5970. Reasonable accommodation upon request.



# **PARENT HANDBOOK 2019-2020**



## **Rising Star Early Childhood Education Center Stafford Schools Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative, Early Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education**

610 Gayle Street  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405  
(540)368-2559 368-1978 (fax) [scps@staffordschools.net](mailto:scps@staffordschools.net)

**STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS  
2019-2020 CALENDAR**

Month	Dates	Activity
July	29-31	Home Visits
August	1-2, 5-7	Home Visits
	7	<b>Parent and Child Orientation Night 5-7 p.m.</b>
	12	FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
	30	NO SCHOOL/Labor Day Break for Students & Staff
September	2	NO SCHOOL/Labor Day Break for Students & Staff
	18	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early) Staff Training
October	11	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Staff Workday
	14	NO SCHOOL/Staff Training
	31	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Staff Training
November	5	NO SCHOOL/Staff Training
	11	NO SCHOOL/Veteran's Day Holiday for Students & Staff
	27-29	NO SCHOOL/Thanksgiving Holiday for Students/Staff
December	20	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Home Visits
	23-31	NO SCHOOL/Winter Break for Students & Staff
January	1-3	NO SCHOOL/Winter Break for Students & Staff
	6	NO SCHOOL/Home Visits
	7	<b>School Reopens</b>
	17	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Staff Training
	20	NO SCHOOL/King Holiday for Students & Staff
	27	NO SCHOOL/Home Visits, Winter GOLD/Objectives
February	14	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Home Visits
	17	NO SCHOOL/President's Day
	27	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Staff Training
March	13	NO SCHOOL/Staff Workday
	16-20	NO SCHOOL/Spring Break for Students & Staff
April	10	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Staff Workday
	13	NO SCHOOL/Easter Monday Holiday for Students & Staff
	28	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)//PLC Presentations
	29	<b>Last Day of School for 160 day Head Start (see schedule below)</b>
May	8	Spring GOLD Objectives
	25	NO SCHOOL/Memorial Day Holiday for Students & Staff
	28 & 29	EARLY RELEASE (2 1/2 hours early)/Staff Workday
	29	<b>Last Day of School for 180 day VPI/HEAD START/ECSE</b>
June	1-2	NO SCHOOL/Teacher Workdays
July	31	<b>Last Day of School for Early Head Start/Summer GOLD Objectives</b>

Snow Days Missed	Last Day for 3 yo Head Start Students
2	April 30
3	May 1
4	May 4
5	May 5
6	May 6

Additional days may be addressed by calendar changes and by School Board calendar changes which may require days past the days listed above

**2019-2020 Rising Star Early Childhood Education Center Staff**

<u>Office Staff</u>	Director	Kathryn Massie
	Assistant Principal	Tiffany Frazier
	Bookkeeper	Shawanna Lugardo
	Administrative Assistant/Data Manager	Joanne Flores-Hite
	Office Clerical/Transportation Coord.	Pam Butler
	Transition Coordinator	Alice Thompson
<u>Parent and Community Partnerships</u>	Coord.	Angel Fobbs
	Family Service Workers	Cynthia Allen, Aracelli Calderon
	Parent Involvement Assistant	Noriko Easley, Norma Morey
	Secretary/Applications & Recruitment	Ashley Terry
<u>Health Services</u>	Health Coordinator/School Nurse	Meh Hussain
	Early Head Start Health Coordinator	Robin Brown, R.N.
	Mental Health Coordinator	Jennifer Holmes, LPN
	Insurance Outreach Facilitator	Elisabeth Stanley
	Nutrition Consultant	Carrie Edwards
	Cafeteria Manager	Faye Krause, R.D.
		Tonya Bond
<u>Instructional Staff</u>		
	Early Childhood Coordinator	Becky McGuire
	Primary Support Teacher	Joan Baker
	Speech Language Pathologist	Tracy Bannon
	Psychologist	TBD
	Literacy Assistant	Connie Holder
	Floating Paraprofessional	Denise Honman
<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Paraprofessionals</u>
	Tina Barnett	Brenda Spencer-Wells
	Lesa Beach	Millissa Anthony
	Leslie Buckley	Deb Crider
	Shoshannah Childs	Juliet Gard, Kimberly Gilbert
	Karen Delvecchio	Lisa Killinger, TBA
	Marion Flick	Jacob Duer, Anne Marie Casello, TBA, TBA
	Beth Galimidi	Samantha Winston
	Melanie Hughes	Bettina Guest, Allison Black, TBA
	Julie Kruse	Kelly McCoy
	Jill Lind	Tracy Bigelow
	Kim Morgan	Rebecca Lynn
	Amy Murrah	Brandy Sanders, Cecille Knicley
	Vikki Partlow	Jordan Weaver
	Valerie Preston	Kathleen Winston
	Elyse Crawford	Nancy Noah, Tara Weppner
	Aileen Richards	Noor Moussa, Sura Abbas
	Kirsten Sandberg-DaSilva	Ghada Gad
	Carole Schreppler	Lori McCarty
	Sue Shafferman	Gloria Galliani
	Jennifer Stearns	Claire Ramirez, Maria Ward, TBA
	Alisa Vason, Chantilly Cross	Noreen Soofi, Marvin Stearns
	Teresa Williams	Alessandra Jenkins
	Andrea Wright	Nancy Long, TBA, TBA
	TBA	Terri Shackelford, TBA
<u>Early Head Start Staff</u>		
	Karen Buckingham, Randi Thomas	Aneela Abbasi, Paraprofessional
	Rebecca Carmody, Home Visitor Teacher	Schelle Langham, Applications/ Attendance
	Marsha Luckett, R.D., Nutrition Consultant	



## **WELCOME TO STAFFORD SCHOOLS EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

It is a privilege to have your child enrolled in our program! Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative, and Early Head Start are preschool readiness programs with curricula that address development in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, mathematics, science and social studies skills. Our Head Start (HS) program is funded to serve 251 children, so some applicants remain on the waiting list. HS serves 68 three year olds and 183 four year olds. The program has been able to add 78 four year old students with Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) funding. The Early Head Start (EHS) program is funded to serve 28 pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Four year olds attend the full school year of 180 days and the three year olds attend 160 days. Early Head Start is a year round program offering full year center based classes for 8 students and center based services during the school year with summer home visiting for another 8. 12 other EHS families are provided full year home visiting services. Eligibility for HS, EHS and VPI are determined by income eligibility and a priority selection process based on need. Breakfast, lunch, and a snack are provided. The children attend Monday through Friday, from 7:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Bus transportation services are provided for all programs except Early Head Start.

Our Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classrooms are language enriched environments that help children develop the skills needed to participate and succeed in school. ECSE staff provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children between the ages of 2 and 5 that have been identified as having a disability. Preschool programs and services are based on the age and individual needs of each child as determined by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. The ECSE program offers a continuum of services to meet the needs of children found eligible for special education. Several of the classrooms include children who serve as peer models. Three and four year olds attend Monday through Thursday, with teachers making home visits on Fridays. AM classes attend 8 to 11 with breakfast and snack times. PM classes attend 11:15 to 2:15 with lunch and snack times. 2 year old student service hours and days are determined by the IEP team.

Stafford Early Childhood programs involve the whole family and community. The services provided include education, health, nutrition, disabilities, parent involvement, social services, family literacy, and

## **COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

Open channels of communication and a cooperative attitude will provide solutions to most problems. Some problems of policy, procedure, or law may not be resolved. Where a question of compliance with pertinent policy, procedure, or law is felt to exist, a written complaint may be filed on a form provided for that purpose. These forms are available in the office.

A completed FAMILY-COMMUNITY COMPLAINT FORM shall be submitted to the Director. The Director shall meet with the person filing the complaint within ten (10) working days after the complaint has been received. The person filing the complaint may be accompanied by a representative, if desired, and shall be permitted to present evidence. A decision resolving the complaint shall be provided to the person filing the complaint within ten (10) working days of the conclusion of the hearing.

The decision may be reviewed by the Policy Council Grievance Committee upon written request by the person filing the original complaint within ten (10) working days of the original decision. The person filing the complaint shall be advised of any proposed solutions, and if not accepted, a final appeal of the Grievance Committee's decision may be made to Policy Council within ten (10) working days prior to the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting.

## SEPARATION PREPARATION

The start of school is an emotional time, full of anticipation of new friends, hopes for playful learning, and fears about your child's adjustment. He or she may experience separation anxiety. This is a feeling of fear and discomfort being separated from familiar people and is a normal reaction that most people feel at one time or another. Children may cry, complain of a tummy ache or headache, or become angry or destructive.

Even though separating from home and becoming attached to new surroundings and people are important parts of becoming independent, children need our support as they face this challenge. We make home visits prior to school so that your child gets to meet the teacher first in the safety of the home. We invite your whole family to Open House/Parent Orientation so that your child becomes familiar with the school, the classroom, and the bus. The first day of school is a big event. Here are some tips to make the process of going to school a little easier for your child, for you, and for the teachers.

- Put your child to bed 5 minutes earlier every night until your child will get a full 10 hours of sleep with the new wake up time. Children behave inappropriately when they are tired.
- Help your child discuss feelings with you and put his or her feelings into words. Teach that it's okay to say: "I'm scared", "I'm nervous", "I'm excited", "I'm sad" or "I'm confused".
- Be prepared to answer questions like:
  - "Will the other kids like me?"
  - "What happens when I have to go to the bathroom?"
  - "Who will meet me after school?"
- Be a good role model - Be positive about this new and exciting experience! Reassure your child that school is safe and fun.

### TIPS for Saying Goodbye

1. Make up a goodbye ritual with your child. Do this special ritual every morning before he or she leaves for school. For example:
  - Sing a silly song.
  - Give each other a hug or secret handshake.
  - Say, "See you after lunch," "See you later, alligator!"
2. Always say goodbye before you leave. Smile 😊
3. Be firm when you say goodbye.
4. Do not linger after you say goodbye. The staff are experts at helping your child feel safe and loved. You can call later to check on your child.

family and community partnerships. Our staff looks forward to the opportunity to provide services to you and your family. As a parent, you are an important member of our team. Through Policy Council parents are involved in program governance, in program design and classroom instruction. Parents are encouraged to be engaged in the program as well as in the classroom, working in advance with the classroom teacher to find the most effective way to volunteer. Parents have opportunities for adult education and G.E.D. classes. Workshops for parents are provided on nutrition, health, safety, parenting skills, child development, mental health, substance abuse, child support enforcement services, community resources, job search training, prenatal care, fire safety, and many other topics of interest.

## DISABILITIES

ECSE serves children determined eligible for special education services, meeting all the requirements of the child's Individual Education Plan. All Head Start, VPI and Early Head Start children are screened at the beginning of the year for hearing, vision, health, dental, nutrition, and mental health concerns. Staff also screen each child for development of self-help, social, motor, language, speech, and cognitive skills. Concerns and referrals are communicated to parents. The school's Student Education Committee considers referrals from any source to determine if further evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services is needed. If you have concerns about your child's learning or development, please contact your teacher, the Director, Assistant Principal, or an Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator. Please reach out to the assistant principal to discuss the eligibility process for a 504 plan as well if you think your child needs extra assistance for a health or other issue.

The Parent Teacher Resource Center provides support, training, and information to parents and teachers of children with special needs, and has many materials to loan on parenting and discipline to all parents, including those of children without special needs. It is also located at the Melchers Complex.

## MENTAL HEALTH

A Mental Health Coordinator is available on-site for screening your child's emotional and behavioral health, advice, parenting information, and referrals for child, family, or marital counseling. Children receive social/emotional instruction in the classroom, which develops social skills and self regulation, problem solving, and initiative. Support groups are held for parents based on issues they identify. 2

## **EDUCATION SERVICES**

The ECSE teachers and Head Start/VPI/EHS teachers collaborate to provide instruction to students in their classrooms. ECSE education services are determined by the IEP team and utilize a variety of curricula to support the students. Stafford County provides a continuum of early childhood special education services in a variety of settings and class sizes based on students' needs.

Head Start and VPI classrooms have 17-19 children with a teacher and paraprofessional teaching assistant. Each Early Head Start teacher has 4 students and there are 2 teachers along with a paraprofessional in each classroom of 8 students. There is an EHS home visiting teacher who visits 12 in their home each week, along with two socialization experiences each month. Every family has a Family Service Worker who can assist you with any questions about the program, with support for your family, or community resources.

Many learning activities are planned each day that are age and developmentally appropriate for your child. The Head Start/VPI curriculum is based on the Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum and addresses all areas of cognitive and developmental growth, including language and literacy, math readiness, science, health and nutrition, social skills, self-help skills, fine and gross motor skills. The children will receive instruction through individual assistance, large group and small group activities. Art, music and outdoor play activities are planned daily. Many opportunities for student choice are presented throughout the day. Young children learn by actively exploring and interacting with their environment. A well-organized classroom, rich in learning materials, supports learning and growth. The space is organized into different centers for learning.

Parents are encouraged to read to their child and are given ideas for fun learning activities at home. If you have input for curriculum ideas or have observations of your child's progress, please contact our teaching staff. For Head Start/VPI and EHS students Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessments are completed in November, February, and May and shared with parents. In addition to these times, Early Head Start assessments also are completed and shared at the end of July. Individual objectives for each child are developed with parents and revised in January/February. Head Start, EHS and VPI parents are expected to meet at least four times a year with their child's teacher. Two of those conferences should be in the child's home, so that the child and the teacher can meet in the most comfortable environment for the child. ECSE teachers provide progress reports on IEP goals every nine weeks. ECSE teachers will schedule parent contacts/visits according to the IEP for each student.

## **PEP CLUB POINTS**

Parents are Educational Partners! Every time you volunteer, read to your child, attend workshops, or donate items you receive PEP Club Points which are redeemable in May at our annual PEP Club Volunteer Raffle. Always sign in when visiting the classroom or attending a workshop, so you can earn your points. The items at the May Raffle are donated from local businesses and individuals, because they know the importance of parent involvement for the success of children in school.

## **SUPPORT YOUR CHILD**

Please check your child's backpack each day when he/she arrives home. Clear backpacks are provided and required for safety reasons, as well as for ease in communication, as notes from school and home are easily seen. Remove and read all notes, as well as any work your child has brought home. Please return all forms promptly. Make sure they are filled out completely and signed. Keep the other papers at home. Mark dates on your calendar. Show your child you are interested in his/her work. Your child will also bring home a bag with a book once a week. This is our program's homework. Please read the books with your child, help him or her draw a picture and write what your child wants to say about the book in the notebook provided. You will earn PEP points for reading to your child, as well as creating a special bond with him/her.

## **GIFTS**

Head Start employees are prohibited from accepting gifts from any person who received services from the Head Start Program. Notes of thanks are always welcomed!

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Volunteers, staff, contractors and consultants will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and will not stereotype on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition.

Volunteers and staff will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members, including personally identifiable information.

No child will be left alone or unsupervised while under our care. No child is left alone with a staff member, contractor or consultant who has not had a full criminal and child protective services background check. No child is left alone with a volunteer.

Volunteers, consultants contractors and staff will use positive methods of child guidance to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior.

- They will not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, will not engage in corporal punishment or physically abuse a child, will not bind or tie a child to restrict movement, or tape a child's mouth.
- They will not use any form of emotional or physical abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring or corrupting a child or humiliation. They will not use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family.
- In addition, they will not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, the use of physical activity or outdoor time as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs. Some students with special needs may require food as a positive reinforcement until another effective method is determined.
- Volunteers, staff, contractors and consultants may not use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child.

**Anyone entering the program site must have a photo id and be screened for sexual offender status.**

## Who to Call

**Kathryn Massie** is the director and program administrator. **Tiffany Frazier** is the program's Assistant Principal and Disabilities Coordinator. Our doors are always open should a family need to talk with one of us or have any concern. The office staff members are more than happy to help you with any questions or concerns. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. If you have a concern about your child you can call your child's teacher. If you have concerns about your child's speech or development, Tiffany Frazier can also help you. **Becky McGuire** coordinates the Early Childhood Special Education program and can help with any concerns related to those program services. If you need family support, call your assigned family service worker. If you are interested in having a volunteer role, working with our Policy Council or Parent Center Committee, please call our parent involvement assistant, **Ashley Terry**, or **Angel Fobbs**, the Coordinator of Family and Community Partnerships. **Robin Brown, RN**, the Head Start Health Coordinator is also our school nurse who can help you with any health or dental issue. **Jennifer Holmes, LPN** works with our pregnant mothers and the Early Head Start students. We have the services of nutritionists, **Faye Krause** for three and four year olds, and **Marsha Luckett** for infants and toddlers. **Carrie Edwards** is our Medical Insurance Facilitator who can help with your application for health insurance. **Elisabeth Stanley**, our mental health coordinator, is a school social worker and can assist you with discipline or counseling needs for your child, a family member, or for family counseling. **Alice Thompson**, the transition coordinator is part of our team and coordinates activities that ensure communication between the elementary schools and our program. She helps families with a smooth transition to kindergarten. **Joann Flores-Hite** will help with your child's records and **Pam Butler** can answer bus transportation questions. We all work together for you, your family and your child, so just call any one of us at 368-2559 and we will connect you with the person or services you need.

### LANGUAGE REQUEST

Please let the office know if you would prefer that staff communicate with you in a language other than English. All notes will be sent home in your preferred language. Translators will be provided for parent/teacher conferences and home visits. A translator will also be provided at any scheduled parent meeting or training, if you give us at least a week's notice.

### REPORTING CHANGES IN PHONE, ADDRESS OR CUSTODY

It is **REQUIRED** that we have a working telephone number where we can reach you and **two** back-up phone numbers for emergency contacts. This is essential for your child's safety. We must be able to reach you if your child needs medical help. If you change your telephone number or address, please call 368-2559 at once.

## CUSTODY PAPERS

If you have sole custody of your child, we need to have a copy of legal papers on file in our office to legally carry out custody arrangements. Parents who do not have custody do have a right to visit the school and obtain records, unless a court order specifically denies this right.

. If custody arrangements change, please notify the office immediately and bring any court documents to the office. Custody arrangements cannot be enforced unless we have a copy of the court documents.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is expected that all students will attend class daily except in the case of illness or special circumstances. If your child has a fever or communicable disease, please do not expose the other children by sending your child to school. We ask you to call the office at 368-2559 to notify the staff if your child will be absent. You will need to send a note when the child returns to school. If we do not hear from you, you will receive a call regarding your child's absence.

Head Start, VPI and EHS students are awarded placement in the program and those placement slots must be well attended to use the program funding as it was intended. **Head Start, VPI and EHS students must be here between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. After 8:00 a.m. your child is tardy.** If your child misses three consecutive days, a family service worker will contact you or make a home visit, if we have not heard why the student is out. If no contact is made after five consecutive days, a letter will be sent to the family. If no answer is received from the family within seven days, then the student will be withdrawn. When students show a history of poor attendance and excessive tardiness, families will need to meet with Head Start staff and develop a plan of action in order to keep an enrollment slot that other children on the waiting list need. The first meeting will be required after 5 days of absence or tardiness, and plans written to address issues affecting attendance and tardiness, with intensive case management after 10 days of absence. **A student may not miss over 15% of the school year, and the enrollment slot will most likely be given to another child on the waiting list. For the 160 day program, that is 24 days, for the 180 day program, that is 27 days, and for the 225 day program that is 34 days.**

5

## COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We welcome volunteers from the community as well as our parents. Some of our volunteers are students from area high schools and middle schools, senior citizens, college and transfer students, area merchants, public services organizations, Marines, and friends of Head Start. Our staff strive to utilize the resources in the community to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. If you have a special talent or donation you would like to share or just give of your time, please call our Family and Community Partnership Coordinator or Parent Involvement Assistant.



Parents are encouraged to volunteer and Head Start parents are expected to volunteer in the classroom. Please contact your child's teacher or family service worker to make arrangements for volunteering opportunities. If you would like to volunteer in a classroom, please contact your child's teacher in advance to determine the most effective way for you to volunteer.

We also need parents as leaders and members to serve on our program's decision making Policy Council. All parents are members of the school's Parent Committee which meets monthly during the school year. This group plans activities for the parents and the school. All Head Start parents are automatically members of the Head Start Parent Center Committee which meets monthly as part of the school's Parent Committee. All parents may attend the Policy Council and School Board meetings. Parents also participate in parenting classes, the Family Literacy Nights on Mondays, the Thanksgiving Family Dinner, the PEP Club Volunteer Raffle, and the many free workshops and seminars we offer just for you. Many of these outstanding opportunities are provided by our community partners. You can learn new things to improve your own parenting skills and broaden your experiences.

As a family member, your support and involvement make the program strong. Each year self-assessment teams, composed of parents, community people and staff, review program operations and propose suggestions for improvements to strengthen the program. Our program brings the family and the community together to improve the quality of life for our children.

If you want to know more about how you can volunteer you may want to attend one of our volunteer training sessions offered several times during the year. Just call the Parent Involvement Assistant for details. All volunteers are screened for TB.

14



## FAMILY SERVICES

The Social Services staff serves as a link between families and community resources. Each Head Start, VPI and EHS family is assigned a Family Service Worker. The primary role of the family service workers in Head Start is to provide support to families as they work to strengthen themselves and improve the quality of their daily lives. Each family completes a Family Partnership Agreement, setting goals for the year to improve the family. The Family Service workers help you meet those goals you want for yourself and your family. If you need a community referral or information about a certain agency our staff can be of assistance. Every family will receive a Community Resource Guide to help you better know our community and what services it offers.

The social services staff are also here to help the ECSE families as well as the Head Start and VPI families. Please call the social services staff if you need help in obtaining financial assistance, medical care, nutrition supplementation, housing, employment, education, training, literacy/language instruction, transportation, or assistance with parenting, mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence. If you need a listening ear, just stop by and see one of our Family Service Workers. Some of the special projects we coordinate are the Salvation Army Shoe program and the Red Cross Letters to Santa. We maintain a free clothing and book room. Each month a variety of workshops for parents are scheduled, including topics on budgeting, nutritious cooking on a budget, and job search assistance.

## FAMILY LITERACY

The program provides families with access to literacy materials. We also provide on-site Adult Basic Education and GED classes in the mornings and evenings, which are free for Head Start families. Family Nights on Monday nights include a free family meal, tutoring for all your children as well as workshops, GED, computer skills and parenting classes for you. Parenting sessions give parents a chance to meet, learn, and share ideas on raising children.

## ACCESS TO YOUR CHILD'S RECORDS

All legal parents and guardians have access to your child's records. Please contact the office for assistance.

## AUTHORIZED PERSONS LIST

You have given us names of emergency/authorized persons to pick up your child. **No one else will be allowed to take your child from school or from the bus unless you call into the office and add his or her name to the emergency/authorized persons list.** Additions should be made forty-eight (48) hours in advance so that all staff, including transportation and your bus driver, will have this information.

## BRINGING OR PICKING UP YOUR CHILD

Written permission from the parent is needed if there is any change in routine of a child being picked up or transported by bus. A follow-up telephone call is a good idea. **Children may not be dropped off before 7:45 a.m. and no later than 8:00 in the morning, and should be picked up between 2:00 and 2:15 p.m. If you do not pick your child up daily then please call the school well in advance of 2:00 to let us know someone is coming, as they may be on a bus going home at 2:15. Children arriving after 8 a.m. will be tardy.** All visitors must bring a picture ID, report to the front desk and sign in. You must sign your child into the school at the front desk. The front desk will then give you a note to take to your child's teacher to verify that your child is signed into the school. This procedure is for your child's safety. To pick your child up from the classroom, you will also need to give the teacher a note from the front desk that you have signed your child out of the school. **Do not leave young children unattended in your car while you are signing your child in or out of the school. This is neglect and illegal.**

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are instructional events. If your child's class is going on a field trip, parents are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones for field trips, but the need for chaperones is limited, so ask your child's teacher right away. All chaperones are required to read and sign chaperone policies. Brothers and sisters and other relatives or friends may not attend field trips. Parents may not follow the bus. You are encouraged to visit field trip sites with your family at another date and time.



## RULES FOR BUS RIDERS

All children must have a parent, guardian, or designated adult at the bus stop, in the morning and in the afternoon. **Stafford Schools Transportation Department requires that you be at the bus stop 10 minutes before the bus is due.**

The bus will not drop off a child unless the parent or designated adult is present. If no authorized adult is at the designated bus stop the child will be returned to the school and you will have to come get your child.

### MORNINGS

Be ready at least 10 minutes **before** pick up time.

Children may not wait **alone** for the bus.

Children may not cross the street alone.

Be at the designated bus stop; the driver **cannot** wait, due to pick up schedule constraints and issues of blocking traffic.

### AFTERNOON

An authorized adult must be waiting, at the designated bus stop, to meet child **10 minutes prior to the drop off time.**

Be at the stop; the bus cannot wait.

Come to the bus door, at your designated stop; state your name and name of child you are meeting. Have your photo ID out to show the driver. The driver may be a substitute and not know you. Ensure that anyone else that is on your approved list to pick up also has an ID at the bus stop, The child will not be released if the adult does not have a photo ID.

If no one is at the designated stop your child will be returned to school, and you will be expected to pick your child up there.

If this happens repeatedly Head Start and VPI students will lose their transportation services.

### CHANGES

A change of address or bus stop may interrupt or delay bus service for your child for 7 – 10 days. Call 368-2559 as soon as you know of a change.

### BEHAVIOR

Please encourage your child to use appropriate behavior on the bus.

Our bus rules are:

Stay in Your Seat

Keep Book bags Zipped

Use Quiet Voices

Keep Hands to Self

Listen and Follow Directions No toys or food are allowed on the bus

## BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT POLICY

Because breastfeeding provides the healthiest start for babies, providing ideal nutrition and a multitude of health benefits for both infant and mother, it is important for the Stafford County Schools Early Head Start program to support and encourage breastfeeding.

We will ensure that:

- We provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment. We invite mothers to come to the center and nurse their babies or express breastmilk at any time during the day, and there is a comfortable place for them to do so. We display culturally appropriate posters of mothers nursing their babies.
- All breastfeeding families are able to properly store and label milk for our staff to use with your infant. There is always refrigerator space available for daily storage of breastmilk. We also provide freezer storage for breastmilk. We have written guidelines that we share with our families, and all milk at our center is properly labeled with the child's name and date of expression.
- All new staff receives training in storage and handling of human milk, developmentally appropriate infant feeding practices, breastfeeding promotion and the support of exclusive breastfeeding.
- We inform women and families about the importance of breastfeeding. We provide families with culturally appropriate information about the risks/benefits of different feeding choices and about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding (no infant formula, water, juice, or solid food is served.) We discuss breastfeeding with potential families and share breastfeeding materials and resources with our families.
- We support breastfeeding employees. Employees have access to a clean, private location to nurse their babies or express milk, and are able to break as needed to do so.
- We develop a feeding plan that supports best feeding practices that will help maintain breastfeeding. This includes nursing on demand when with their babies, responding to feeding cues rather than feeding on schedule, and the developmentally-appropriate introduction of complementary foods.



## FOOD AND NUTRITION

Nutritionally balanced meals are served to our children because of our belief in the importance of physical well-being. VPI and ECSE students may bring their own lunches and snacks, but families are encouraged to use the school cafeteria, and to apply for free and reduced meals, as eligible. All Head Start and Early Head Start students are served free meals and snacks according to the federal requirements. Our cafeteria manager plans well-balanced meals and attempts to introduce a variety of foods that are rich in vitamins, minerals and essential nutrients. Parent input on menus is requested. Children are encouraged but never forced to eat their meals. Please inform the teacher and health coordinator if your child has food allergies or may not eat certain foods because of religious reasons.

There are specific nutrition guidelines that the Head Start program requires and apply to those students. All food served to the Head Start and Early Head Start program students must be on an approved menu. No food can be brought in from home for HS and EHS classes, including food for parties. Parents are encouraged to support birthdays with a special visit to the classroom, reading a book to the class or other arrangement made in advance with the child's teacher. Head Start children receive free breakfast and lunch, served family style, as well as a snack. Head Start participates in the USDA meals program and Early Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The program pays for all Head Start meals not fully reimbursed through USDA or CACFP, including parent volunteers at school that day. Children receive nutrition instruction in the classroom. The Head Start program utilizes the services of a registered dietician to assist with menu planning and the children's nutritional needs. Your child is weighed in the fall and spring. Parents of any child in a growth pattern of concern will be contacted by the Health Coordinator or registered dietician.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

The philosophy of Stafford Schools Early Childhood Programs is that children are not expelled for inappropriate behaviors. Those who are exhibiting undesired behaviors may need more positive relationships, more structure, and more opportunities for control of their environment through making choices. Young children need direct instruction in appropriate replacement behaviors with opportunities to practice those behaviors and receive positive feedback, which is best done in the school setting. All program staff work to build a positive relationship with each child and their family members. Classroom staff use specific strategies to build relationships between staff and peers, to build a sense of a school family, to teach empathy and a feeling of safety and security. Conscious Discipline strategies are used to teach students how to use assertive language to express their needs, to give students positive choices, appropriate natural consequences and to teach student how to demonstrate empathy,

- Classroom best practices strategies are used to minimize or eliminate possible behaviors. Transitions are structured and students are given as many choices as possible. Anticipated times of probable misbehavior or upset are restructured. Students are encouraged to use "AI's Place", a quiet corner, or sensory objects to calm down. Students are given classroom jobs that make them feel valued and responsible for others.
- Children are given direct instruction on appropriate behaviors utilizing the AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices, the Second Step, and the Conscious Discipline curricula. Practice in implementing skills/behaviors are provided with positive feedback. Children are taught to use breathing, counting and sensory objects to calm themselves.

If behaviors are more significant (kicking, punching, hitting, biting, spitting, or any other type of aggressive behavior), for the safety of the students and staff the child will be removed from the classroom until the parent can come to school and meet with the Mental Health Coordinator, the classroom Teacher, and Director and/or the Assistant Principal to address the inappropriate behavior with a plan of strategies to implement at home and in the classroom. If inappropriate or aggressive behaviors continue it is very important that the parents and staff work in partnership and stay in regular contact, reconvening meetings and rewriting plans as needed to address the child's needs for behavior support. This intensive effort on the part of parents and staff provides an excellent opportunity now to make positive changes that will help children be successful in the future in school and at home.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Under Virginia law, school teachers and principals are required to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. Teachers must be alert to signs of abuse and report any suspicions to the assistant principal or director.

According to Virginia law, an abused or neglected child is any child under 18 years of age whose parents or caregiver:

1. causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
2. neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing or health care;
3. abandons the child;
4. neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development; or
5. commits, or allows to be committed, any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

We are here to help you with any and all parenting issues. Please call the mental health school social worker if you are having issues with your child's behavior. Call your family service worker if you are having trouble providing adequate care or supervision for your child. Visit the Parent Teacher Resource Center if you want help understanding your child's disability or want a contact for a support group. We want to help you.

## CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable wash-and-wear clothing to school. Art activities at this age are frequent and messy. Children will be participating in much active play, such as running, jumping, climbing and we want them to be comfortable. Tennis shoes are recommended. Please do not send your child with sandals, clogs, flip flops, etc. These shoes can be unsafe during active play. On cool and cold days, send children in coats, hats, gloves, and/or boots. Children go outside every day except in rain or very cold weather. If you need help getting clothing for your child, please call. We also have a free clothing closet onsite. CLEAR BACKPACKS are required for safety and communication, and will be provided free to all students. Save the cute ones for kindergarten.

9



## HEALTH, DENTAL, AND SAFETY

The school nurse also serves as the Health Coordinator and maintains health records on all students, assists parents in meeting Head Start requirements for physical and dental evaluation, and helps parents in obtaining appropriate follow-up care for children. The Health Coordinator is responsible for health, dental, nutrition, and safety aspects of the program.

### Medications

Medications must be **brought in by the parent**, not sent on the bus. A medication administration form must be completed by the doctor and the medicine must be in the original prescription container. If a child is on long term medications a Parent Communication Notebook will be used to communicate daily on any medication effects, and as a record for the doctor.

### Health Care Requirements and Annual Screenings

#### Physicals

Complete examination and TB risk assessment. A hemoglobin or hematocrit, and lead screening are also required for Head Start/VPI.

#### Immunizations

A record of DPT, OPV, MMR, HIB, HBV, VAR must be up to date and on file. Hep A is also required for Head Start and VPI.

#### Dental Examination – (Head Start/VPI students only)

Cleaning and fluoride treatment, Follow-up treatment for any caries 6 month check up

#### Developmental Screening – Dial (Head Start/VPI only)

Children are screened for developmental concerns. If the screening indicates a concern, the child will be rescreened or referred to the Student Education Committee (which includes the parents) for consideration of further testing and diagnosis.

#### Hearing and Vision Screening

Children are screened by the school nurse, Lions Club and/or volunteer physicians and their staff. Referrals are made as needed to appropriate agencies or physicians.

#### Height and Weight

Recorded by the school nurse. Concerns are shared with families and referrals may be made to the appropriate agencies, physicians, and/or registered dietician.

#### Nutrition(Head Start/VPI only)

Body Mass Indices are calculated for every child and a nutrition screening on each child's record is conducted by a registered dietician. Individual menus are designed or approved by the Registered Dietician if required by a physician.

Any concerns or difficulties in obtaining these may be addressed to the nurse or program administrators and coordinators.

10