



**Mission Statement:**

*“Better preparing young children and their families for life experiences now and in the future.”*



**2024-2025 FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Drake University Head Start  
3800 Merle Hay Rd. Suite 323, Des Moines, IA 50310  
Tel (515) 271-1854 Fax (515) 635-0716  
[www.drakeheadstart.org](http://www.drakeheadstart.org)

# Important Information & Phone Numbers



My child attends the \_\_\_\_\_  
Head Start/Early Head Start program.

**In case of bad weather, my child's program follows the closures of \_\_\_\_\_ School District.**

**\*For more information on closings, please see page 5.**

Program Address \_\_\_\_\_.

Program/Teacher Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_.

My child's Teacher/Home Visitor is \_\_\_\_\_.

The Teacher Associate is \_\_\_\_\_.

The days of my child's program are \_\_\_\_\_  
and hours are \_\_\_\_\_.

The Nurse for this program is \_\_\_\_\_.

The Coordinator for this program is \_\_\_\_\_.

Email: \_\_\_\_\_.

Central Office Phone: \_515-271-1854 or 1-800-44-Drake ext. 1854\_.

The Family Engagement Specialist is \_\_\_\_\_.

Phone and email: \_\_\_\_\_.

Each day your child will be late, absent or miss a visit, please call teaching staff or your home visitor **before 8:00 a.m.** You can leave a voicemail at your program any time, day or night. If you have any questions at any time, please call the Central Office at **515-271-1854 or 1-800-44-DRAKE, Ext. 1854.** The hours at the Central Office are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.



# Welcome to Drake University Head Start!

We are so glad you chose our program. We are very excited to begin this new program year with you and your child.

Your participation in the Head Start program is important to us. **You are your child's most valuable teacher.** We encourage you to be active in the program and you are always welcome to join activities.

This handbook is yours to keep. Please use it all year. You can use it to look up information about any questions you may have. Use it to keep copies of Head Start forms you fill out.

We look forward to a great program year for you and your child.

Sincerely,

*Kassandra Gordon*

Kassandra Gordon  
Policy Council Chairperson



*Lisa Proctor*

Lisa Proctor  
Head Start Director



**Drive** – ***fierce*** commitment to serving families

**Seeker** – *Creatively* pursuing effectiveness, efficiency and excellence

**People-First** – **YOU** matter

**Dedicated** – Your **Dreams**, Our **Passion**

**WE ARE DRAKE UNIVERSITY HEAD START**



## Health Information for the 2024-2025 school year.

Drake University Head Start wants to keep children and staff safe. **We need your help!!!**  
There are still rules we need to follow to have your child safely come to school.

COVID-19 and respiratory illnesses are not going away, so there are still rules we need to follow to have your child safely come to school. We have made more updates as your child returns to school.

1. Drake University Head Start (DUHS) will be following the guidance of the Iowa Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of Head Start (OHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Drake University (DU) when making decisions for the program.
2. Your child's classroom may be closed more often and for longer periods of time to ensure a safe environment.
3. You **MUST** monitor the health of your child and family daily at home.
4. You **MUST** be honest with us about your child's health! If you are not honest, you risk exposing the classroom/home visitor to illness.
5. **DO NOT** bring your child to school if he/she is sick. If you will not be bringing your child to school, you must call the classroom by 8:00 am.
6. **DO NOT** bring your child to school if they can not fully participate in the school day.
7. We must have a working phone number for us to be in contact with you at all times.
8. We will be using the "***Guide to Childhood Illness***" document as a guide for illness for your child. (A copy is provided in your handbook).
9. You should have a back up plan for your child if school is canceled.
10. Please keep your child up to date on their well child visits and vaccinations.

### **DROP OFF:**

- One adult may come to the door when dropping off and picking up your child and one adult will be allowed in the classroom with the child at a time.
- Program staff will assess your child's health before the adult dropping off the child leaves.

**This information may change during the school year and when changes are made, we will pass the information along to you.**



If you have questions please contact,  
Heidi J. Ball, RN, Health & Nutrition Manager,  
Drake University Head Start 515-271-3771.

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All aspects of this program are subject to change at any time and will follow the guidance of local, state, and federal agencies.

# Drake University Head Start Handbook Terms

In this handbook, the term “*Head Start*” refers to the following programs:

- Early Head Start Home Visiting Program
- Early Head Start Toddler Program
- Head Start 3-4 Year Old Preschool Program
- Head Start 3-4 Year Old Home Visiting Program

In this handbook, and during participation in the Head Start program, the term “*family*” refers to all of the people that may play a parenting role with HS/EHS staff. This includes fathers, mothers, grandparents, kith and kin caregivers, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, and questioning) parents, guardians, expectant parents, teen parents, and families with diverse structures that include multiple relationships and significant others.

## Notice of Non-Discrimination

The principles of equal access and equal opportunity require that all interactions within the University be free from invidious discrimination. Drake University Head Start therefore prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any characteristic protected by law in its educational programs and activities, admissions, or employment.



## What is Head Start?



**The Head Start program is a program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.** It provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent engagement services for eligible children and their families.

There are Head Start Program Performance Standards that tell us how to provide services for children and families. They are the law that we are required to follow.

Head Start has provided education, health, and social services for nearly 30 million children between the ages of birth to five years since the program started. It serves almost one million children and their families each year in urban and rural areas across the United States.

**Program Assessment:** The federal government monitors each Head Start program multiple times over a five-year period. Teams are sent to each program to review and audit the entire program. The teams visit program sites to ensure teachers are providing quality instruction and safety in the classrooms. They make sure that children's health assessments are up to date and that families are included in their child's program.

Teams review finances and policies and procedures to ensure requirements are met. In addition, the monitoring team interviews a variety of people such as Policy Council members, Teachers/Home Visitors, Family Engagement Specialists, the Director and others.

Drake University Head Start had a monitoring visit in March 2022. The federal team acknowledged all the wonderful things that are happening to help children and families be successful!

# Program Information

# Attendance Policy

## Drake University Head Start Attendance Policy

Every minute of the program is important to your child's learning. Research tells us that children with many absences, even starting in pre-school, have lower reading scores and their success may be impacted even in later grades. Help your child succeed in school; build the habit of good attendance early.

### Absences

- All children are expected to arrive and depart on time each day or complete a weekly home visit for Home Based programs. If your child is going to be absent, please contact your program or the Central Office before 8:00 a.m., or at least 2 hours prior to your scheduled home visit. Head Start can then cancel your child's lunch. The Central Office phone numbers are below. If your child will be absent for more than two days in a row for reasons other than illness, please talk with staff.
- Because attendance is so important for school success, families will be contacted for the following attendance concerns:
  - \*No call/no show. Every day that your child is absent and you do not call to inform the program, staff will follow-up with a **safety** phone call/text.
  - \*More than two consecutive unexcused absences or four consecutive excused absences.
  - \*Increased or chronic at-risk levels of absences are occurring. If your child is chronically absent, staff will work with you to address barriers. If your child is not able to attend on a consistent basis, he or she may lose their spot in the program.
- If your child is absent without notice or communication from you, a return deadline will be set by the program. If your child does not return to school or visits by that date, he/she will be placed in the application pool and will lose their spot in the program.

**Please contact your teacher, specialist, or home visitor before 8:00 a.m. each day your child will be late, absent, or miss a visit.** You can leave a voicemail at your program any time, **day or night.** Staff will contact you if they have not heard from you in the first hour of class. You may also call **1-800-44-DRAKE, ext. 1854 or 515-271-1854 from 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.,** Monday through Friday.

# Cancellations at Head Start & Early Head Start

## Weather Closings

- Weather closings are announced on local television and radio stations.
- If your school district closes due to bad weather, Head Start classrooms will be closed and home visits will not occur.
- If your school district closes on a day because of heat and our classroom is air-conditioned, we will still have school.
- Please refer to first page of this manual, *Information and Phone Numbers*, for the District name.

## Television Stations

WOI Channel 5 <http://www.weareiowa.com/>  
KCCI Channel 8 <http://www.kcci.com/>  
WHO Channel 13 <http://www.whotv.com/>

You may register at the links below to receive weather email alerts:  
<http://www.weareiowa.com/weather>  
<http://www.kcci.com/weather/closings>  
<http://whotv.com/weather/weather-email-alerts/>



## Radio Stations

KJY 92.5 FM West Des Moines, IA  
KIOA 93.3 FM Des Moines, IA  
KGGO 94.9 FM Des Moines, IA  
KDRB 100.3 FM Des Moines, IA  
KMYR 104.1 FM Ames, IA

KDLS 105.5 FM  
KDXA 106.3 FM  
KRNT 1350 AM  
WHO 1040 AM  
KBGG 1700 AM  
KNIA 92.1 FM  
KCOB 95.9 FM

Perry, IA (Spanish)  
Ankeny, IA  
Des Moines, IA  
Des Moines, IA  
Des Moines, IA (Spanish)  
Knoxville  
Newton

## Notification of Closures

- If your program closes due to weather, or for any other reason, you will receive a text and/or e-mail from **School Message**. Please be sure **you have 'opted in' to receive text messages and that Head Start has two working phone numbers at all times** where you can be reached and messages can be left. Home Visitors will contact you if you are in the Home Visiting Program.
- It is important to have other child care plans in place when this happens.
- If a program closes, a make-up day or home visit may be scheduled at a later date.

# School Readiness Goals & Classroom Curriculum

Drake University Head Start's primary goal is to better prepare children for school success upon completing the program. Head Start uses child assessment data to measure progress toward this goal. Children's development is assessed in the following areas:

1. Social-Emotional Development
2. Physical Development
3. Approaches to Learning
4. Language and Literacy
5. Cognition and General Knowledge

\*see next page for more information



## Classroom Curriculum

Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms use a research-based curriculum called *Creative Curriculum* that includes large group instruction, small group instruction, centers and outdoor play. The curriculum outlines skills children need in order to be ready for kindergarten. Teaching staff use the curriculum to plan lessons that will help your child acquire those skills. (See Classroom Programs section on page 9 for more information.)

## Social-Emotional Curriculum

To help children develop social-emotional skills, Drake University Head Start uses *Second Step* curriculum in Head Start classrooms only. *Second Step* teaches children the skills that help them make friends, manage their feelings and solve problems.

Information about all these curricula can be found in the parent libraries at your center. Teaching staff can also answer any questions.

# Child Assessment

Teaching Strategies GOLD is a research-based tool our teaching staff and Home Visitors use to assess your child's learning and development using the following objective areas outlined in *Creative Curriculum*.

When children meet these learning objectives, they are showing they have the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten.

## **Social-Emotional**

- Manages feelings and behaviors
- Establishes and sustains positive relationships
- Shares, takes turns, problem solves with others



## **Physical**

- Crawls, walks, runs, skips
- Jumps, hops (balancing)
- Demonstrates throwing, catching, kicking
- Demonstrates pencil grasping, writing and cutting

## **Language**

- Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
- Uses language to express thoughts and needs
- Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills

## **Cognitive**



- Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
- Remembers and connects experiences
- Uses classification skills
- Uses symbols and images to represent something not present

## **Literacy**

- Demonstrates phonological awareness (letter and word sounds)
- Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
- Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
- Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
- Demonstrates emergent writing skills

# Child Assessment (continued)

## **Mathematics**

- Uses number concepts & operations
- Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
- Compares and measures
- Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

*For Dual Language Learners:*

## **English Language Acquisition**

- Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- Demonstrates progress in speaking English

During your child's conferences, teaching staff and home visitors will share reports with you that show your child's progress toward meeting these objectives. Please feel free to ask questions about the objectives.

Drake University Head Start encourages families to continue to use their home language with their children. Speaking more than one language activates growth in children's brains and helps them think more creatively and solve problems more easily.

### ***Ideas to help children reach these goals at home!***

- ◆ **Read with your child at least fifteen minutes every day.** Let your child choose which book to read. Sometimes children like to read the same book over and over.
- ◆ **Talk about what you read or what happens during the day.** Describe what you are doing when you cook or take a walk together. Give your child time to respond to you. Sometimes it takes 10-30 seconds.
- ◆ **Count with your child.** Count everyday objects, such as forks or spoons, when your child is setting the table. Describe things using the number of items. Ex. "Could you hand me those three spoons, please?"
- ◆ **Let your child know the work they do at school is very important.** Tell them how important their learning is and how important it is to be on time and in school every day.
- ◆ **Enjoy your child.** Let your child know he/she is loved, cherished, and protected. They grow up quickly and will never be this age again!
- ◆ **Make sure your child gets exercise and plays outside.** Physical activity is necessary for the development and health of your child at all ages. Make outside time a learning time and have fun!
- ◆ **Establish a bedtime routine.** Ensuring your child is getting enough sleep helps your child to be best prepared to learn.

# Classroom Programs

A typical schedule in a classroom may include:

- Welcome/Greeting
- Large Group: All the children come together to read a story, discuss plans or sing songs for a short time.
- Center Time: Children choose the interest area where they want to play and learn.
- Outdoor Time: Teachers plan 20-30 minutes of outdoor learning activities for children that may include running, jumping and climbing.
- Small Group Time: A few children are grouped together for a short time. They may talk about new ideas and learn new skills.



**The classrooms are planned so children learn every minute of the day. Interest areas include:**

- \* Blocks
- \* Art
- \* Toys and games
- \* Dramatic play
- \* Library
- \* Music and movement
- \* Discovery
- \* Technology
- \* Cooking experiences offered

- Children feel more confident when things are their size. The tables, chairs and cubbies in the room are child size. The pitchers they use to pour milk are also child size.
- It is important for children to learn to be independent. Toys are put on low shelves so children can reach them. Picture labels help children know where materials belong so they can help clean up after center time.
- The same schedule is followed each day so that children develop a consistent routine and know what will happen next. This helps children feel comfortable and secure.
- Children benefit from using these ideas at home too.

# Home Visiting Programs

**Drake University Head Start and Early Head Start offer the following Home Visiting Programs:**

- The **Early Head Start Home Visiting program** serves children ages birth to three years and their families in *Polk County* year round.
- The **Head Start Home Visiting program** serves children ages three to five years and their families in *Polk County* for 9 months of the year.
- Home Visiting Programs utilize Parents as Teachers (PAT) Curriculum.

## **What does it mean to be in a Home Visiting Program?**

- \* Home visits occur weekly with a Home Visitor for 1½ hours.
- \* During the visit, staff and families work together on the child's developmental goals and family goals.
- \* Staff and families will work together to identify needs and locate resources available to support them. Parent education information will also be discussed.
- \* The Home Visitor will visit each family the same time every week when possible.
- \* The last available time for a visit to begin is at 4:00 p.m.

## **How to get the most out of a Home Visit:**

- \* Be ready to begin when the Home Visitor arrives.
- \* Everybody is prepared to participate during the visit.
- \* Try to minimize distractions, such as phones, pets, and television, during a visit so everyone can focus on learning.
- \* If a visit needs to be canceled, please notify the Home Visitor as soon as possible. This will help the program better serve other children and families.

## **Language Interpretation**

- \* Head Start provides interpreters when needed at no cost to the family.
- \* Head Start and Early Head Start pay for interpreters. (This costs approximately \$65/hr.)
- \* If the visit needs to be canceled, please call staff **at least 24 hours prior** to the visit. If not, Head Start must pay for the interpretation. **Canceling early helps Head Start save money!**



# Program Information

## **Early Head Start (EHS) & Head Start (HS) Home Visiting**

- \* EHS is a year-round program serving Polk County only.
- \* Home-based HS is a 9-month program serving Polk County only.
- \* Education Specialists/Home Visitors see each family weekly in the home.
- \* Child and parent playtimes or socializations are held twice a month.



### **EHS & HS Classrooms**

- \* Families enrolled in EHS and HS Classrooms work with a Family Engagement Specialist throughout the school year.
- \* Families enrolled in EHS and HS classrooms receive a home visit from the Teaching staff two times per year.
- \* Parents attend two conferences per year with their child's Teacher.

### **EHS Toddler Classrooms Only**

- \* EHS Toddler Classrooms serve families in Polk County only.
- \* EHS Toddler Classrooms are year-round programs.

**Drake University Head Start is not responsible for lost or missing items brought into Head Start or Early Head Start classrooms, programs, or events.**

# Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Children must be signed in and out by an adult each day.

Persons picking up a child **must** be listed on the *Emergency and Pick Up Permission Form*. **They must be over 18 years old and have a photo I.D.**

**If a location has their own pick-up and drop-off procedures, we will follow those.** Notify staff immediately with any changes or updates to emergency contact information (phone numbers and/or addresses).

It is important to pick up children on time, and if staff call you to pick your child up. If a child is not picked up on time staff will call:

- 1) Parent(s) using the phone numbers on file. **Please be sure that Head Start has at least two working phone numbers at all times where you can be reached and messages can be left.**
- 2) Persons listed on the *Emergency and Pick -Up Permission Form*.

**If these are unsuccessful, after 30 minutes staff may call:**

- \* **The Department of Health and Human Services or Local Police**

If a child is picked up late, a plan will be developed to prevent it from happening again. If your child is picked up by a child care program, a *Child Care Addendum* needs to be filled out. This form lists people who have permission to pick up a child.

If a person is NOT allowed to pick up your child:

- A copy of the court order must be on file.
- Head Start will follow that order.

## Safety of Children when Dropping Off and Picking Up

Please drive slowly and hold your child's hand while in parking areas. The safety of you and your child is Head Start's priority.

Remember to **NEVER** leave any child alone in the car. This includes younger or older siblings when dropping off or picking up a child at Head Start. Our staff is required to call IHHS if children are left alone in the car while dropping off and picking up at Head Start.

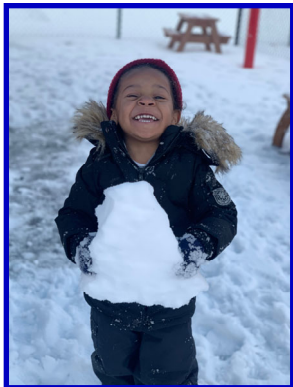
All Drake University Head Start locations are smoke, fire arm and weapon free. If you or someone in your home needs help to quit smoking call the Iowa Smoke-Free Air Act Helpline: 1-888-944-2247.



# Clothing Policy & Outdoor Play

**It is important for children to be safe and comfortable while at Head Start & Early Head Start.**

- Please send your child to Head Start in comfortable shoes, socks, and clothes that can get dirty.
- It is recommended that your child have an extra set of clothing, (including socks and underwear), at school daily.
- For the children's safety, please make sure your child wears sneakers or rubber-sole shoes. Children wearing flip-flops or croc-like shoes will not be able to play on playground equipment.
- Neck strings from hoods should be removed from all children's outerwear, including jackets and sweatshirts. These strings are a strangulation hazard for young children.
- Drawstrings on the waist or bottom of garments should not extend more than 3 inches.



## COLD WEATHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Hats & mittens:** Mid-October and through the winter

**Snow pants and boots:** Please bring them if there is snow on the ground. If your child does not bring boots, he/she may not be able to play in certain areas.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

- All children play outside each day if the weather allows. Fresh air is good for children and helps cut down on illness.
- Outdoor play is a required part of the Head Start program.
- Too much sunlight could damage children's skin no matter their ethnicity. You will be asked to complete a *Parent/Legal Guardian Permission to Apply Sunscreen to Child* so our staff can apply **Equate Kid's Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50** to your child May through September when he or she will be playing outside.
- You may be asked to apply sunscreen to your child upon arrival at the program.
- When the temperature or the wind chill is 21° F or - 6° C or below, we will not go outdoors.



# Nutrition

## Meals

Each classroom offers 2 to 3 meals each day depending on the hours.

For example:

- Classroom programs provide breakfast and lunch, lunch and snack, or breakfast, lunch and snack.
- Snacks are also provided for families during home-based program playtimes and socializations.
- **Remember: NO OUTSIDE FOOD is allowed in classrooms.**
- If your child's classroom has a late start, please feed your child breakfast at home.

## The Iowa Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Drake University Head Start Program follows **CACFP** (Child and Adult Care Food Program) guidelines. Families receive a CACFP flyer called "Building for the Future" with more information.

## Menus

Lunch menus are provided to our program from local school districts or child care centers. We work with them to make sure your child is offered a healthy meal, low in fat and sodium. Breakfast and snack menus are presented to Policy Council for review each fall. We are always interested in parent suggestions to make the meals we offer more appealing and culturally appropriate for children.

\*Ideas for healthy recipes and snacks will be provided to parents also.

### **Help Head Start Save Money on Uneaten Lunches!**

If your child is absent and you do not call in **before 8:00 a.m.**, a lunch will be ordered for your child. You can help Head Start save money on uneaten lunches by calling in your child's absence. This is money that can be used on other items for children in the classroom.

*Each ordered lunch costs Head Start **\$4.06 per child, per day.**  
The cost of all lunches for one school year for  
our program = **\$190,551.90!***

**Drake University Head Start  
Child and Adult Care Food Program  
(CACFP)**

**USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. **Fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** [Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

**IOWA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.6, 216.7, and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E 14th St, Des Moines, IA 50319-1004; phone number 515-281-4121 or 800-457-4416; website: <https://icrc.iowa.gov/>.

# More to Know about Head Start & Early Head Start

## Fees and Supplies

**Head Start is a program provided to you at no cost.** This includes all supplies needed for the program. To understand what you can do to be more involved in your child's program, please see **Head Start Components Section**.

- Diapers, Pull-ups and wipes will be provided for children in the program, but we do not provide cloth diapers or use them in our program.

## Holiday and Birthday Information

Head Start welcomes families from all cultures and provides an inclusive program. This means that Head Start does not celebrate holidays, including birthdays.

## Field Trips

Field trips are not part of the Drake University Head Start program. Staff may plan for program enhancement events in the classroom. Staff may also take children for walks during the year.

## Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

\*Please see the brochure included in the front pocket of this handbook for more information on PBIS.

All Drake University Head Start staff, volunteers, and visitors use Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) and Conscious Discipline.

Some examples include:

- Providing choices & good examples, giving praise and encouragement, and redirecting children
- Teaching calm-down techniques
- The Positive Solutions for Families parenting curriculum is also offered to support families
- For more information on PBIS, Conscious Discipline, and tools for families, visit the Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning ([csefel.vanderbilt.edu](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu) or [pbis.org](http://pbis.org)).



Rules and guidelines are taught with these expectations in mind:

- We are Safe
- We are Healthy
- We are Kind
- We are Responsible

# Open Door / Access Policy

**Parents may observe their child in the classroom at any time.**

If you would like to talk with Teaching staff, please set a time to meet with them when they are not with children. When classrooms are in session, Teaching staff are busy working with children.

Drake University Head Start follows Iowa Child Care Licensing Standards and uses their Access Policy as a guide. Drake University Head Start is responsible for ensuring the safety of children in center/school-based programs and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the center/school. Parents may observe their child in the classroom at any time **unless prohibited by a court order.**

1. Any person in the Head Start center who is not a staff member, Substitute, or subcontracted staff **shall not** have “**unrestricted access**” to any child unless they are the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child. They will not be counted in the staff-to-child ratio.
  - A. “Unrestricted access” means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for that child’s care.
  - B. It is imperative that Head Start programs not allow people who have not had a record check to assume the care of a child or be alone with children. This directly relates both to child safety and program liability.
2. Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct **supervision** and **monitoring** of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any responsibilities related to the care of the child. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the teacher unless he/she delegates it to the teacher associate when necessary.
  - A. **Supervision** means to be in charge of an individual engaged with children in an activity or task and ensure that they perform it correctly.
  - B. **Monitoring** means to be in charge of ensuring proper conduct of others.

*(continued on next page)*

## Open Door/Access Policy (continued)

3. Center/school staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center/school without their knowledge to find out the purpose of their visit. If staff is unsure about the reason, the Program Coordinator or Director will be contacted to approve the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the Emergency Plan “INTRUDER” procedures. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc. will be monitored by paid staff and will not be allowed to interact with the children on premise.
4. A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (Iowa Code 692A):
  - A) Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a subcontractor or volunteer at the center/school.
  - B) Shall not be on the property of the center/school without the written permission of the Head Start Director.
    - i. The Head Start Director is not obligated to provide written permission and must consult with their IHHS licensing consultant and the contracted location partner.
    - ii. If written permission is granted, it shall include the conditions under which the sex offender may be present, including:
      - 1) The precise location in the center/school where the sex offender may be present.
      - 2) The reason for the sex offender’s presence at the center/school.
      - 3) The duration of the sex offender’s presence.
      - 4) Description of how the center/school staff will supervise the sex offender to ensure that the sex offender is not left alone with a child.
      - 5) The written permission shall be signed and dated by the Director and sex offender and kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.

\*All aspects of this program are subject to change at anytime. We follow the guidance of local, state and federal agencies.

# Drake University Head Start

## Biting Policy

Biting is quite common in early childhood. Children bite for different reasons, including teething, exploration, and most commonly as a way of communicating when they don't have the words or tools. When biting occurs, it can be scary and very frustrating for children, parents, and teachers. The biting policy below is used throughout the Drake University Head Start program. Staff will:

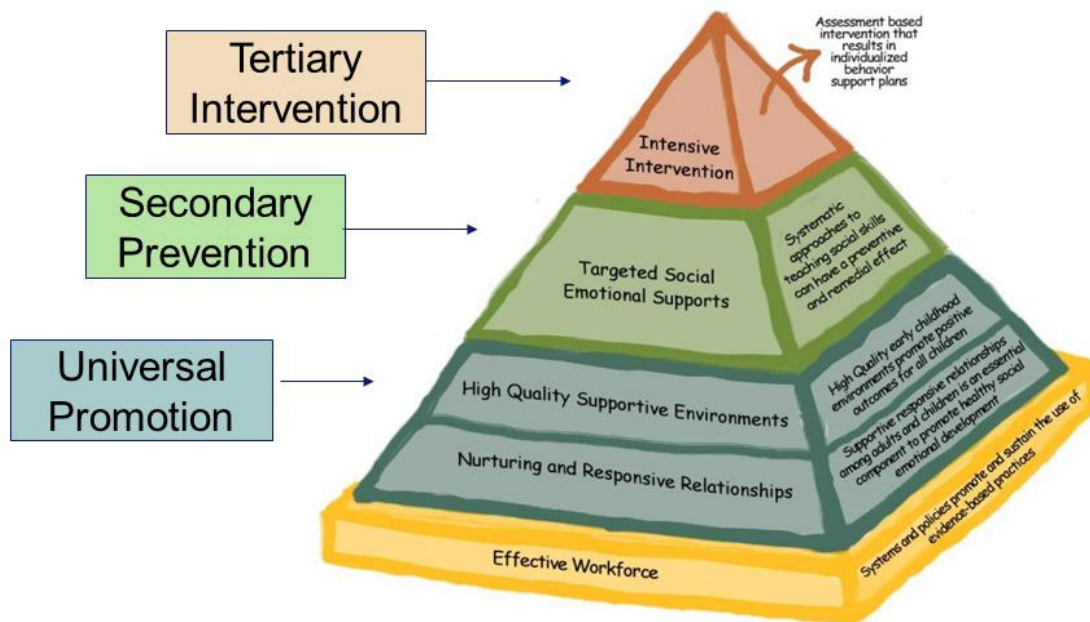
- Respond right away to look at the child's injury.
- Separate the children involved.
- Give first aid to the child (following universal precautions) and comfort the child.
- Use a non-threatening voice and response with the child who bit. If the child who bit is acting in a forceful or angry manner, they will be moved away from other children until they calm down. They will be re-directed to other play.
- Staff will review data for patterns of biting or other factors that may lead to biting. This information will be reviewed with the Program Coordinator. Factors found to contribute to the biting will be removed or changed.
- An Incident Report will be filled out for both children. The report will be shared with the parents of the children involved.  
Confidentiality will be maintained on all reports.
- Staff may seek additional professional assistance with parent's/legal guardian's permission and Program Coordinator approval.

# Guidance Policy

Family engagement is crucial to children having a positive experience during Drake University Head Start activities.

The Drake University Head Start Guidance Philosophy follows the research-based principles of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Building positive relationships with children and families is the foundation of supporting children's social/emotional development. No physical, verbal, or emotional abuse or humiliation will be allowed. Discipline methods that involve corporal punishment including but not limited to spanking, hitting, and hand slapping will not be permitted. Children may not be threatened with abandonment, loss of adult affection or denial of any basic needs like food, rest and physical comfort. Food may not be used as a punishment or a reward.

## Pyramid Model



7

# Parent Rights

Your rights as a Head Start parent are published in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which can be found at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>.

As a parent/legal guardian of a child enrolled in the Drake University Head Start (DUHS) program, you have the right to:

- Access your child's classroom during school hours
- Volunteer in your child's classroom or during your child's class activities
- Help set the schedule for your home visits within DUHS home visiting hours
- Attend Policy Council meetings, even if you are not elected to the Policy Council
- Provide input on the preschool curriculum (program of study)
- Ask questions about the health support services DUHS provides to your child
- Ask staff to explain Head Start screening results and provide referrals for treatment
- Ask program staff about the disability referral process
- Seek help from program staff in getting support, education and advocacy services if your child has a disability
- Help program staff create a plan that works for your child when he or she is moving up from Early Head Start to Head Start or from Head Start to Kindergarten
- Inspect your child's Head Start/Early Head Start records
- Request a free copy of your child's Head Start/Early Head Start records
- Request that incorrect information in your child's record be changed
- Decide if you provide consent for your child's personally identifiable information or Head Start/Early Head Start records to be released outside of Drake University Head Start
  - ◊ Parent permission is not needed to release child information to:
    - Contractors for DUHS that provide data management services for the agency or direct service to your family or your child, such as interpretation or nursing services
    - Third-party (outside) agencies or individuals contracted to audit or evaluate DUHS
    - State or federal agencies that monitor DUHS to ensure compliance with state and federal rules and regulations (including CACFP)
    - State, federal, or third-party (outside) agencies or individuals conducting studies to improve child and family outcomes
    - Building or school district staff in the event of a disaster or health/safety emergency
    - Comply with a legal subpoena (court-ordered request for information) that: a) does not require the parent's consent for release of information; and/or b) prevents DUHS from releasing information about the subpoena or the information requested
    - Child welfare caseworkers or representatives while a child is in foster care
    - Authorities requesting information related to a child abuse or neglect investigation
- Request a free copy of your child's records that have been released, except in the case where the record was released by subpoena with instructions that prevent DUHS from releasing information about the subpoena or the information that was provided
- Review DUHS third-party agreements with agencies that maintain child information (example: DUHS uses Teaching Strategies GOLD, a third-party agency, for child assessment)    1-800-44-DRAKE ext.1854 or 515-271-1854    [www.drakeheadstart.org](http://www.drakeheadstart.org)

# Head Start Components

# Family Engagement

Parents are their child's first, most important, and life-long teachers. Head Start has always encouraged parent involvement in many ways, but now we are taking it a step further. Research shows that strong family engagement makes children more successful in Head Start and in the future. We will partner with families to increase their engagement with their child, the development of their child, and the Head Start program.

Being engaged means partnering with staff to teach skills at home. It means having an open mind and trying new ideas. It also means that Drake University Head Start staff and families work together and share ideas to meet goals. This will help your family and child be more prepared for today and the future.

We will work together to increase family engagement and child success by:

- Developing family and child goals together and sharing your child's and family's strengths.
- Finding strategies to achieve your goals together.
- Celebrating achievements together!
- Discovering new ways for parents to teach their children at home and be involved in their child's program.
- Providing volunteer opportunities for parent involvement.



For more information about Head Start and Family Engagement, please visit: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement>

# Guidelines & Expectations

## **How can Parents be Leaders at Head Start?**

- Keep in contact with the Teacher or Specialist working with your child.
- Participate in home visits, playtimes and socializations.
- Work with Teaching staff, Home Visitors and Family Engagement Specialists to set goals.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Attend monthly PACT time or socializations.
- Read to your child every day.
- **Get involved with your Parent Committee and/or Policy Council.**
- Participate in polls and surveys.
- Participate on advisory committees, i.e. Health Advisory and ERSEA Committee.
- Inform family and friends how to be a volunteer.

## **What are the guidelines for Head Start parents?**

- All adults set good examples in the programs, hallways, Head Start Parking lots and grounds, and at all Head Start-sponsored events.
- All adults model appropriate language and behavior with staff and each other. Adult matters are not discussed while children are present.
- Head Start staff and families share a professional relationship.
- Cell phones are NOT used in Head Start classrooms, programs or events.
- Review information from the program (texts, emails, papers sent home, etc.) This would include program updates as well as valuable tips and resources.
- Firearms or any other weapons are not allowed on the premises at any time.
- Head Start is a non-smoking zone. No smoking on the premises at any time.

## **As a parent, what are my responsibilities at agency events?**

- Parents provide transportation to and from events.
- Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children at all times during agency events.
- All families of enrolled children may attend. Some of the events are free for the entire family, while others require entrance fees for a second adult or other family members.

**Note: Due to State of Iowa licensing requirements, no brothers or sisters are allowed in the classrooms while parents are visiting, volunteering, or participating in Head Start activities, (such as PACT time, etc.) Thank you for your cooperation.**

# Become a PARENT LEADER

## SHARE YOUR PARENT VOICE!

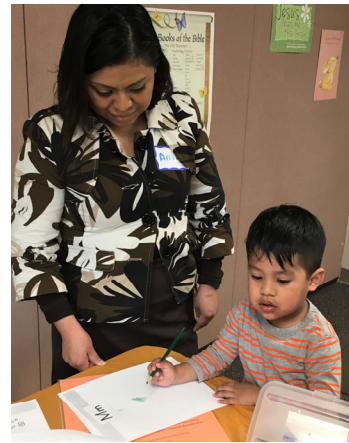
**Parent Committee** – Every parent with a child in Head Start or Early Head Start is a member of the Parent Committee.

Parent Committees provide parent voices to:

- Gather ideas from families to meet their needs through groups, polling and surveys.
- Plan activities for their programs and provide input to program planning.
- Elect parents to Policy Council.

### **Policy Council**

- Works on planning, developing, and setting the direction of the Head Start program.
- Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday evening of each month from 6-8pm.
- Members are elected by each Parent Committee/ Program.
- Head Start returning parents and alumni are strongly encouraged to run for Policy Council!



# *Volunteering = Family Engagement*

## What is IN-KIND?

We have to raise over **\$2,500,000 of In-Kind** contributions every year in order to meet federal guidelines! When you volunteer, you help us get closer to our goal!

### *How?*

Every volunteer hour equals **20.85** for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. If you volunteer 3 hours, you earn **3 x \$20.85 = \$62.55 of In-Kind for Head Start!**

### *Interested in getting involved?*

Please talk with Head Start staff to find out how to participate.



## Volunteer to help your child learn and help Head Start with *In-Kind!*

By volunteering with the Drake University Head Start program, you learn more about your child's program, help your child learn, and have more time together! Every minute of your time helps our program.

Here are some ways you can help!

- Volunteer to help in your child's program (Ex. Read a story or eat lunch!)
- Work on child's goals at home and report time on calendars all year long!
- Serve on:
  - Parent Committees
  - Health Advisory Board
  - ERSEA Committee  
(Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance)
  - Policy Council



## **WHAT IS AN IN-KIND CALENDAR?**

In-kind calendars track the time you spend working with your child on their educational goals at home and in the community.

**These are volunteer hours.**

Volunteering in the program, attending school-related events or appointments, serving on committees, and signing-up for volunteer duties are also tracked through sign-in sheets.

## **WHY IS THE CALENDAR & VOLUNTEERING IMPORTANT?**

Head Start knows you are the most important teacher, spending the most time with your child. Your time spent volunteering and teaching through play at home & in the community increases your child's success in school.

You will always play an important role in their learning.

Your child learns more when intentional learning time is added to your daily routines. Head Start can count your volunteer time spent working on education goals from your In-Kind calendars to meet the required match for the program. The required match is 20% of our total funding which adds up to over **\$2,500,000**. **Your volunteer time counts as \$19.84 per hour** toward our matching dollars requirement.

## **HOW DO I COMPLETE THE CALENDAR?**

You may ask staff for a sample calendar if there isn't one posted at your center. Calendars have ideas on the back with school readiness goals and objectives listed. Document time spent daily on goals/objectives and list the number that describes it best. You will receive a variety of ideas to try at home through Teachers, Newsletters, Get Moving Calendars, In-Kind activity suggestions, books at the lending library, websites and more!

**Turn in calendars MONTHLY TO STAFF.**

**Late calendars can be turned in until the last day of the school year!**

# Mandatory Reporting

All Head Start staff members are trained Mandatory Reporters. This means they are responsible for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Health and Human Services.

## *What is suspected child abuse?*

### Suspected child abuse reports may come from:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, etc.
- Lack of cleanliness, lack of medical care, or lack of warm clothing for the weather.
- Age-inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual behavior.
- Abuse or neglect reported by the child.
- Leaving a child alone in a vehicle.
- Any child not in a car seat that meets State of Iowa Law.

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Reports are always confidential and made with the child's safety in mind. Anyone may report suspected child abuse by calling the Department of Health and Human Services at **1-800-362-2178**.

## **How can families be sure their child is safe with Head Start staff members?**

- Every staff member is screened for a criminal record, including child and dependent abuse checks and sex offender registry checks.
- Staff maintain ratio and supervise children at all times.
- Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid, and every program has a first aid kit.
- Staff complete daily, weekly, and monthly safety checks for their program.

# Communication

*When families have concerns, they can talk to someone at Head Start.*

## Concerns about...

## Who to talk to...

My child's application, transfer, community resources, finances, housing, or parenting.

⇒ Talk with your Family Engagement Specialist or Home Visitor about these concerns. They help families find resources and information to help with these challenges.

My child's health, such as an illness.

⇒ Talk to the Head Start/Early Head Start Nurse for your child's program about concerns with your child's health.

My child's education.

⇒ Always start with your child's Teacher or Home Visitor. A scheduled meeting is usually best. Most concerns can be solved in this way.

⇒ If after a meeting you are not satisfied, talk with the Head Start Coordinator of your program. If you still have concerns, talk with the Head Start Director. It is important to follow these steps for resolving any concerns.

My child's nutrition, such as their diet.

⇒ Talk to the Head Start/Early Head Start Nurse for your child's program about concerns with your child's nutrition.

Personal information about children and families is kept confidential. Parents and staff sign confidentiality statements to make sure this happens. Parents are asked to keep information about other children and families private.

# Health

# Health Requirements for Children

When your child goes to Head Start or Early Head Start, they can come in contact with germs that can cause illness or disease. The best way to protect your child is to make sure they are up to date on their childhood immunizations. The program Nurse will work with you to make sure your child has all of their shots and exams. **It is a requirement of the Drake University Head Start Program that you take your child to ALL of their well child visits.**

<b>Schedule for Health Exams and Immunizations</b>													
<b>Physical Exams/Well Child Visits Health History</b>	First Week	1 mo.	2 mo.	4 mo.	6 mo.	9 mo.	12 mo.	15 mo.	18 mo.	24 mo.	30 mo.	3 yr.	4 yr. & 5 yr.
<b>Dental Exams/Oral Health</b>							12 mo.			24 mo.		3 yr.	4 & 5 yr.
<b>Immunizations Due</b>	Birth		2 mo.	4 mo.	6 mo.		12 mo. &/or 15 or 18 mo.					3 yr.	4 & 5 yr.
<b>Starting at age 6 months and then yearly, you and your child should get a flu shot. Talk with your healthcare provider about getting one!</b>													
It is your responsibility as a parent/legal guardian of a child to take them to all required well child visits. Please provide all completed health and dental paper work from your child's well child visits to your child's Teacher, Family Engagement Specialist or Nurse. It is a requirement of the Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-CCP program that your child go to <b>ALL</b> well child visits and to supply us with a copy of the documentation from the visit.													

## **Physical Exam**

Your child needs to be seen by your family doctor and have a physical exam yearly, and more often from birth to age 1.

## **Dental Exam**

Your child needs to have a dental check-up every year starting at age 1.

## **Tuberculosis**

Your child will be screened annually for Tuberculosis. If your child is found to be at high risk, you will be asked to take your child to be seen by a health care provider for further screening and possible testing. It is at the discretion of your child's health care provider to complete a Mantoux test.

## **Hemoglobin/Hematocrit Test**

Your child should have a hemoglobin (blood test) done during their doctor's visit. Low hemoglobin can cause health problems with learning, behavior, and growth.

## **Lead Test**

Lead poisoning can cause life-long health problems with learning, behavior, speech, and hearing. You should have your child tested at ages 1 and 2, and more often for some children. Your family doctor will do a screening to see if your child should be tested more often.

# General Health Information

## Medical & Dental

If you do not have a family doctor or dentist, your program Nurse, Home Visitor or Family Engagement Specialist can help you find one. It is important for your child to have regular medical and dental check-ups. Let us help you find a medical and dental home.

## Medicine

All medicines should be given at home. If a medicine needs to be given in the classroom, the parent/legal guardian will need to:

- 1) Have a written Doctor's order on a ***Medication Administration Form***, signed by the doctor and parent. The ***Medication Administration Form*** is located in the Family Handbook.
- 2) Bring the medicine in the original bottle with the pharmacy label.
  - \* The medicine must be left in the classroom for the days the medicine is to be given.
  - \* Ask for one for at home and one for school. The drugstore will put medicines in two containers when parents ask.

## Food Allergies

If there is an allergy or intolerance to a specific food, a Doctor must complete a Drake University Head Start form before your child attends Head Start. This is to ensure the offending food is not served to your child.

- \* The form is called a ***Food Substitution Request Form***.
- \* Request this form from staff and return it to the Teacher, Nurse or staff.
- \* Families asking for food substitutions for religious or personal reasons must also complete a ***Food Substitution Request Form*** before their child attends Head Start.
- \* Please keep in mind that restricting what your child can eat at school will greatly limit what they will be served!

### **Injury**

If a child is hurt during program activities, an ***Incident Report*** will be given to parents. If there is a head injury:

- \* A list of signs and symptoms to watch for will be included with the Incident Report.
- \* Head injury symptoms may not show up for several hours.

### **Family Emergency/ Medical Needs**

- \* If persons participating in a program activity need emergency medical help, staff will call 911 and parents.
- \* Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid and will conduct CPR and First Aid, but are not able to provide transportation for medical care.

# Oral Health, Vision, and Hearing Screenings

Children brush their teeth each day in class and at each playtime/ socialization.

## Children age one and over or when their first tooth erupts:

Children brush their teeth with a soft bristled toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. This stays on the teeth to help strengthen them.

- Parents should brush their child's teeth for them until the age of 7 or 8 years. Be a good role model and brush your teeth while your child brushes theirs.



## Infants under the age of one:

Staff will teach parents oral care for their infant. This includes gently wiping the infant's gums with a gauze pad or soft cloth.



## I-Smile

I-Smile™ uses the idea of a dental home to make sure that Iowa's children have access to treatment and early prevention. For more information on the I-Smile™ Dental Home Initiative, please contact the Iowa Department of Public Health Bureau of Oral Health and Delivery Systems at 1-866-528-4020.

## Hearing Screening

A Head Start Nurse will also test your child's hearing using an Automatic Otoacoustic Emissions system (OAE). With parent permission, children ages birth to 3 will have their hearing results reported to Iowa's Early Hearing Intervention and Detection Program in accordance with Iowa Law (Iowa Code section 135.131)



## Vision Screening

A Head Start Nurse will use a special camera (SPOT screener) to take a picture of your child's eyes.

# FREE Voluntary Drake University Head Start Health Programs & Sunscreen

## Iowa KidSight Program (Photovision)

\*This is a FREE vision screening for young children to detect eye and vision problems.



The Nurse at your child's program works with trained, local Lions Club volunteers to use a special camera to take pictures of your child's eyes to look for problems. You will receive your child's results. If a problem is detected, you will also be given a letter for your child with a list of eye doctors in your area.

## Fluoride Varnish Program

This is a FREE program provided at Drake University Head Start. A dental hygienist will visit your child's Head Start classroom and teach your child how to care for his/her teeth. With parent permission, the hygienist will also apply fluoride varnish. If there are any concerns about your child's teeth, you will be notified by Head Start.



## Sunscreen!

Children play outside often at Head Start and sunlight could do damage to your child's skin. During the months of May through September Head Start will provide sunscreen for your child to wear while they are at school.



Drake University Head Start/Early Head Start  
3800 Merle Hay Rd. Suite 323, Des Moines, IA 50310  
Phone: (515) 271-1854 Fax: (515) 635-0716

### Medication Administration Order

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication/Dose: \_\_\_\_\_

Date medication is to start: \_\_\_\_\_ and complete: \_\_\_\_\_

Any special instructions for medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential adverse reactions which would need to be reported: \_\_\_\_\_

Health Care Practitioner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

[Health care practitioner must be one of the following: medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO), physician's assistant (PA), or advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP)].

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### Medication Administration - Parent Authorization

Only those medications that are necessary for a student's medical care will be administered at school. Most medications that are needed even up to three times a day can be given at home and should not be sent to school. Medication that is needed for known emergencies, such as asthma or serious allergic reactions, may be stored at school.

- I request the above student be given this medication while in school according to the prescription or nonprescription instructions. The student has experienced no side effects from the medication. Prescription medication must be in its original prescription bottle including a pharmacy label. Other medication should be in the original container and labeled with the student's name.
- I understand the law provides that there shall be no liability for civil damages as a result of the administration of medication/health care where the person administering the medication/procedure acts as an ordinarily reasonably prudent person would under the same or similar circumstances. I agree to pick up remaining medication or it will be properly destroyed.
- **I agree that the Head Start Nurse may contact the prescribing medication provider as needed and that medication information may be shared with school personnel who need to know.**
- I understand I must sign a new *Medication Administration Order* form each time a new prescription is brought in.
- I understand the medication must remain in the center for the duration of time the medication is to be given.

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Signature of parent/legal guardian

Signature of Witness

Date

Original- Child's File

Copies- Medication Box, Teacher Subfolder, TA Sub folder, Nurse

# **MY DRAKE UNIVERSITY** **HEAD START INFORMATION**

This section of the Drake University Head Start Handbook may be used for filing the following information:

- \* Forms
- \* Newsletters
- \* Reminders from Staff
- \* Meeting/Event Notes
- \* Family Partnership Agreements
- \* Parent Education Information
- \* Other Resources

*Remember to have your  
Drake University Head Start Handbook with you  
at home visits and meetings.*

# IOWA WIC INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

## IOWA WIC INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

The table below lists the WIC income guidelines that are effective for

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Applicants with a gross income less than and including the amounts listed are income eligible for WIC services. If you qualify for Head Start you qualify for WIC.

Household Size	Annual Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$519
2	\$36,482	\$3,041	\$702
3	\$45,991	\$3,833	\$885
4	\$55,500	\$4,625	\$1,068
5	\$65,009	\$5,418	\$1,251
6	\$74,518	\$6,210	\$1,434
7	\$84,027	\$7,003	\$1,616
8	\$93,536	\$7,795	\$1,799
9	\$103,045	\$8,588	\$1,982
10	\$112,554	\$9,380	\$2,165
Each Additional Family Member Add	+\$9,509	+\$793	+\$183

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/food-assistance/wic-lowawic-locations>

# SNAP Income Guidelines 2023

## Iowa Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) OCT. 1, 2022 THROUGH SEPT. 30, 2024

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, provides food benefits, access to a healthy diet, and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households. Recipients spend their benefits (provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM card) to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores.

SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) works with state agencies, nutrition educators, and neighborhood and faith-based organizations to ensure that those eligible for nutrition assistance can make informed decisions about applying for the program and can access benefits. SNAP is the Federal name for the program. State programs may have different names.

For this benefit program, you must be a resident of the state of Iowa.  
In order to apply you must have an annual household income (before taxes) that is below the following amounts:

### Who Qualifies?

If your gross household income falls below a certain, range you may be eligible for SNAP assistance. Check the chart below to see if you qualify.

Household Size	Max Gross Monthly Income	Max Net Monthly Income
1	\$1,473	\$1,133
2	\$1,984	\$1,526
3	\$2,495	\$1,920
4	\$3,007	\$2,313
5	\$3,518	\$2,706
6	\$4,029	\$3,100
7	\$4,541	\$3,493
8	\$5,052	\$3,886

### How to Apply?

The SNAP Hotline can help you determine whether you qualify for SNAP, and help with your application for SNAP benefits. You can access the hotline by phone at 1-855-944-FOOD (3663) is open 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday with additional assistance provided after hours on high volume call day or at <https://www.iowafbfa.org/snap-outreach>

You can also apply for SNAP and other helpful programs on the State of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services website at [https://hsservices.iowa.gov/apspspp/spp.portal\\_or](https://hsservices.iowa.gov/apspspp/spp.portal_or)

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/food-assistance/snap>