

NEMCSA

Early Childhood Services



Volunteer Handbook

In our attempt to keep everyone safe we ask that you speak with the classroom staff about their health and safety procedures.

This Handbook shares the many ways that are available to volunteer outside of the classroom and be engaged in your child's education.

**Educate the child,
Strengthen the family,
Build the community!**

Welcome to the Head Start/Great Start Readiness Programs!

**Thank you for being involved in your
NEMCSA Head Start/Great Start Readiness (GSRP) programs.**

The staff of the _____
Head Start/GSRP Program want to welcome you to a year of fun and excitement. With your
involvement in your child's education, together we can build an experience for children that will last them
a lifetime.

The information on the following pages will hopefully aid you in being involved in your child's education.
Please feel free to talk to any staff member about questions or suggestions you may have. We want to
hear from you!

Staff Names and Numbers

Teaching Staff

Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Family Services Coordinator

Name _____ Telephone _____

Area Manager

Name _____ Telephone _____

Mental Health Staff

Name _____ Telephone _____

Parents work together with all staff to determine the kinds of learning experiences they want their children to have.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of NEMCSA Early Childhood Services is to provide high quality learning experiences and support for children and families to promote their future success.

NEMCSA Head Start/GSRP Beliefs

- ◆ The relationship between parent and child is the foundation for growth and learning
- ◆ Experiences and opportunities support growth and independence
- ◆ Time and energy invested in children impacts our future
- ◆ Life-long learning is essential for the growth of children and families
- ◆ Children, families, and staff have individual strengths and deserve respect
- ◆ Families are essential partners and integral to the success of Head Start/GSRP
- ◆ Communication between families and staff builds relationships
- ◆ Diversity is an asset and an opportunity
- ◆ Community partnerships support families in their development
- ◆ Strong families strengthen communities

NEMCSA Head Start provides services within 21 counties in Michigan: Alcona, Alpena, Arenac, Bay, Cheboygan, Clare, Crawford, Gladwin, Huron, Iosco, Lapeer, Mecosta, Midland, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Sanilac, and Tuscola.

Great Start Readiness Programs are offered in the following counties: Alcona, Alpena, Arenac, Bay, Cheboygan, Huron, Iosco, Lapeer, Mecosta, Midland, Montmorency, Oscoda, Osceola, Otsego, Sanilac, and Tuscola.

The NEMCSA Head Start/GSRP Program is committed to implementing a child-centered curriculum covering development across all domains. The curriculum is based on recognized National and State of Michigan Standards of Developmentally Appropriate Practice for the education of young children. These basic standards include the Head Start Program Performance Standards, NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices, and the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality. NEMCSA has chosen *The Creative Curriculum* for Preschool as its written curriculum.

WAYS TO VOLUNTEER AND BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

There are many ways to volunteer, talk with your teaching staff to review all the options available.

- Contribute to child assessment by providing comments, photos, or videos to your teacher of your child's participation in activities or as requested by staff
- Participate as much as you are able in your program
- Do activities with your child at home
- Help plan the curriculum/share ideas for classroom activities with your teachers to aid in making the activities individualized for your child
- Attend all Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Attend Classroom-to-Home Connections Meeting to aid in making program decisions
- Make telephone calls for the program from your home
- Help provide information and ideas for Classroom-to-Home Connections Meetings
- Repair outdoor playground equipment
- Complete required physicals, dental exams, and immunizations
- Share your heritage, family customs, talents, and interests to become a part of the curriculum
- Recruit new families for the program
- Record story narration
- Put posters up in the community



POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATION

Children are often numb to adult direction.

Many teachers and professionals in child development are learning that it is important to direct children by saying “How to” rather than “How not to.” Adults may be surprised at how effective some of the following examples are:

| Please Say: | | Please Do Not Say: |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| Sit down when you slide. | vs. | Don't stand up when you slide. |
| Dig in the sand. | vs. | Don't throw sand. |
| Sit on the swing. | vs. | You'll fall if you don't watch out. |
| Use both hands when you climb. | vs. | You'll fall if you don't watch out. |
| Climb down the ladder. | vs. | Don't jump off. |
| It is time to brush your teeth now. | vs. | Do you want to brush your teeth? |
| Keep the puzzle on the table. | vs. | Don't dump puzzle pieces on the floor. |
| Turn the pages carefully. | vs. | Don't tear the book. |
| Talk in a quiet voice. | vs. | Don't shout. |
| Wipe your hands on the paper towel. | vs. | Don't put your hands on anything. |
| Be sure the ladder is safe. | vs. | Be careful. Don't fall off the ladder. |
| Walk around the swing. | vs. | Be careful. The swing might hit you. |
| Drink your milk. | vs. | Don't you want to drink your milk? |

Practice these at home with your child and let your teaching staff know what you think about how they worked.

FEDERAL SHARE “IN-KIND” FOR HEAD START

Head Start is a federally funded program, free to families who qualify. However, we are required to match the \$11,208.62 per child that we receive from the federal government with 25% In-kind. So, for every \$1.00 given to the program, we need .25 worth of In-kind. In other words: we need to generate \$2,802.16 worth of volunteer time and donations for each Head Start child.

Your time is very valuable to your child and to your Head Start Program. When you participate in your child’s education with Head Start, such as program planning at Parent Leadership Meetings; your time is worth \$13.20 per hour.

Another way of collecting In-kind would be to participate in the Individualized School Readiness Activities

The staff in your program will be sending home an activity that you (or another adult) and your child can do at home. It will be related to the activities happening in the classroom and individualized to your child. Use the activity as a way to extend the activities you observed your child doing in the classroom. Along with the activity will be a form for you to record the time you spent with your child. You may also record this time by accessing our Parent/Volunteer Portal at ecs.nemcsa.org.



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

NEMCSA Head Start/GSRP offers parents opportunities and support for growth, so they can identify their own strengths, needs and interests. The objective of Head Start Performance Standard 1302.52 is to support family well-being, support child learning and development, provide services and supports for children with disabilities and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote early learning and development of their children.



Family Partnerships

The Family Partnership process begins when applying for the program. Families and staff work together to identify interests, needs and efforts toward any goal families want to achieve. Staff work with each family to learn about resources in their communities.

School Success Practices

School Success Practices help children prepare and succeed in hopes to close the achievement gap and promote school readiness. These include promoting positive discipline, establishing family routines, providing language-rich environments, and reading or engaging in other literacy-based activities with your child.



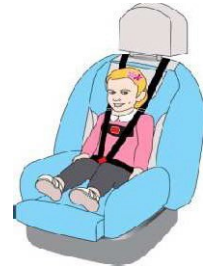
Community Partnering

The active involvement of parents within their community is encouraged. By partnering with other community members in advocacy and activities, parents can make a difference and help community service agencies to be more aware of community concerns and needs.



CAR SAFETY

Air bags, car seats and your child's safety



Seatbelts and air bags help prevent injuries to drivers and passengers in cars involved in accidents. They work well enough that the government insists that they are included as mandatory equipment on new cars. And there are laws that require motorists to use them.

When children are riding in a car, they must be secured in a car seat or always strapped in with a seatbelt. Children under age 8 or not yet 4'9" must be in a child safety seat or booster seat.

But car safety equipment must be used properly. Infants and young children need to use a car seat, properly secured, instead of seatbelts. Older children should use booster seats or seatbelts.

Children under the age of 12 should not sit where an air bag can be activated. When triggered, an air bag can result in serious injury to a young child or death.

The safest place for all infants and children under the age of 12 years is in the back seat. But remember, even riding in the back seat requires them to be in a car seat, a booster seat, or to be secured by a seat belt.

It is up to you, as a parent, to make sure your child is using all appropriate car safety equipment and is using it properly. If your child is at least 40 pounds, he or she has outgrown a child car seat. Use a booster seat, instead.

Check to see if the back seat of your car has seat belts with shoulder straps or only lap belts. Then, get a booster seat for that kind of seat belt.

The following pages were taken from a publication of the University of Pittsburgh Office Of Child Development made possible with help from the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund for Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education.

For more Parenting Guides and other information, visit <http://www.safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-midmichigan>

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AIR BAG SAFETY

An air bag can save your life. But air bags and children do not mix. Following a few simple rules will help you keep your child safe in a car with air bags. Keep infants out of the range of an air bag. Never put an infant under 1 year of age in the front seat of a car with an air bag. In an accident, air fills the bag in a split-second, and it explodes outward with great force to form a protective cushion for the passenger.

But the force of an air bag can seriously injure or kill a young child, particularly an infant. Several infant deaths have been reportedly caused by air bags.

If your car has an air bag...

- ♦ Plan ahead so that you do not have to drive with more children than can be safely restrained in the back seat.
- ♦ Only children 12 years or older should ride in the front seat of a car that has airbags, and even then, only when necessary.
- ♦ If an older child must ride in the front, move the seat back as far as it can go, away from the air bag.
- ♦ In some models, air bags can be switched to the 'off' mode when necessary.

CAR SEAT SAFETY

Seat belts do no good if they are not worn, and even the safest car seat can fail your child if it is not used properly. Take a minute to check your child before driving. Follow a few simple safety rules:

Secure all children

All children must be properly secured in car safety seats, booster seats, or shoulder/lap belts that are correctly matched to their size.

Check the instructions for the car seat

Follow all instructions. Be sure your child matches the recommended age and weight for the car seat.

Is your child facing the right way?

Infants ride in rear-facing car seats in the back seat until they are at least 20 pounds and 1 year old. A child who weighs more than 20 pounds and is older than 1 year faces forward in the car seat, which is still secured in the back seat of the car.

Now, before you start your car...

Check to make sure the car seat harness is snug against your child.

Make sure the seat belt holding the child safety seat is fastened around the child car seat correctly and is pulled tight.

NEVER LEAVE A CHILD ALONE IN A CAR - EVEN FOR A MINUTE!

Children should never be left alone in a vehicle, not even to run a quick errand. Plan ahead to use drive-thru services where available, such as pharmacies and banks. Plan extra time into your drop-off/pick-up routine to bring all children inside with you. Believe it or not, routines and distractions have caused people to mistakenly leave children behind in vehicles. Place your cell phone, purse, left shoe, etc. on the floor of the back seat. This will help remind you to open the back door and see that your child is in the car.

If you see an unattended child inside a vehicle, dial 911 immediately!

CROSSING THE STREET – PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

HOW TO TEACH YOUR CHILD TO CROSS SAFELY

The street is a dangerous place for young children. They are used to running wherever they want to. And they don't really understand the harm that can come to them if they run into the street.

It takes time to teach young children how to safely cross the street – many years in fact, before they really understand the danger and become responsible enough to cross on their own.

But you must teach them, for their own safety and for your peace of mind.

The best way to teach your child to cross safely is to do it slowly, step by step. Don't hurry your child and don't expect too much of him or her too soon.

And because the street is so dangerous, you need to be very firm about not allowing your child to go into the street.



KEEP VERY YOUNG CHILDREN OUT OF THE STREET

Very young children – children under 4 years old – should never go into the street at all, unless you are carrying them or holding their hand.

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 4 & 6, START TEACHING THEM HOW TO CROSS

Teach in a way that is clear to children. For example:

- ♦ Stand on the edge of the street, hold your child's hand, and say, "First we look and listen this way. Any cars coming? Then we look and listen this way. Any cars coming?"
- ♦ If a car is coming, say, "Car coming. We have to wait." Then start the look-and-listen process all over again.

INSIST ON CROSSING THE STREET WITH YOUR CHILD WHILE HOLDING HIS OR HER HAND

Don't let your child cross the street alone, even if you are watching. It is hard for children to understand when it is okay to cross alone and when it is not okay. Set a simple rule – "You never go into the street alone."

TEACH YOUR CHILD NOT TO CHASE A BALL INTO THE STREET

Even a child who seems to be learning how to cross the street is likely to forget and chase a ball or follow a friend into the street.

If a ball rolls into the street, let it go. Tell your child to stay on the side of the road while you walk – not run – to get it. Look and listen both ways before going into the street to get the ball



WHEN YOUR CHILD IS READY TO CROSS ALONE, PRACTICE TOGETHER

Between the ages of 6 and 8, your child may be ready to cross the street alone if you have trained him or her. Practice together.

- ♦ Stand at the side of the street. This time don't hold your child's hand.
- ♦ Let your child go through the crossing routine, looking and listening up and down the street.
- ♦ Watch your child walk across the street. Be sure he or she doesn't run.
- ♦ For a long time, the rule should be that your child can only cross when you are watching.
- ♦ Practice many times before allowing your child to cross without you being around to watch.

BREAKING THE RULES

If your child breaks a rule, stop him or her; say what was wrong about what he or she did, and practice the right way.

You might even bring your child into the house for a while and say, "You can't play outside unless you obey the rules."

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE RULES YOURSELF WHEN YOUR CHILD IS WATCHING

When you cross the street and your child is with you, look both ways and even say out loud, "No cars coming this way, no cars coming that way." If you don't, your child will not understand why it's okay for you not to look and listen before crossing.

*Thank you for being
involved in the education
of your child*

NEMCSA HEAD START

A Tuition Free Preschool Program for 3–5-year-olds

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

A State Funded Preschool Program for 4-year-olds

