Red Lake Nation
Head Start
Parent Handbook

2015-2016

Revised August 2015
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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Red Lake Head Start program! Our partnerships in early education allow us to offer an expanded range of services to children and families on the Red Lake reservation. This handbook provides you with important information to begin your Head Start family experience. Please take time to read through the handbook carefully! If you have questions, we are here to help you understand how the program works.

There are many opportunities for your family to benefit from the wide range of services offered through the programs. Services for you and your children include education, nutrition and health, mental wellness, and services for children with disabilities. We strive to meet the individual needs of each family enrolled.

Our preschool program is first and foremost a family oriented educational partnership. We value and respect the primary role you play in your child’s healthy development. Therefore, we encourage you to take an active part with us in your child’s education by becoming involved at his or her center. Perhaps you will share your skills as a classroom volunteer. Maybe you can work in the office, or take part in the decision making process of curriculum development. The policy council, parent committee, and support groups are eagerly waiting for your ideas and participation! Family partnerships in education make a real difference in the quality of education your child experiences. Join us and find out why our preschool is a great place to meet people, be supported, and make friends.

Red Lake Head Start is a wonderful place for personal growth. While your child is encouraged to grow and stretch his or her developmental horizons, our adult referral and support services can help you reach your own lifetime goals. For example, we can assist you to obtain a General Education Diploma, or enroll in college. Our adult programs can help you become a more confident individual, a stronger advocate for your child, and a more effective member of your community. We look forward to a very successful partnership with you in education.

Sincerely,

Red Lake Head Start Staff
SECTION I

Red Lake Head Start Statement of Purpose
Red Lake Head Start Mission Statement
Office and Staff Directory

Red Lake Nation Head Start
Statement of Purpose

- To help individuals on the Red Lake reservation to become more self-sufficient;

- To assist local residents to become involved and own a stake in their community;

- To promote family and other supportive environments so that children, youth, and elders can achieve their maximum potential.

- To form partnerships and collaborations within the community to meet these needs.

RED LAKE HEAD START MISSION STATEMENT
Developed by Head Start Staff and Policy Council

The mission of Red Lake Nation Head Start Program is to demonstrate a commitment to young children and their families to assure they have resources and opportunities to succeed. This is accomplished in a positive learning environment in which they can be creative as well as develop a sense of cultural identity. Our staff will promote the development of academic, social, emotional, and physical skills.
Red Lake and Ponemah Head Start Staff

Administrative Staff:
Director – Bev King
FCP/Health Asst. – Cheryl Holthusen
Data Entry/Receptionist – Maelyn Strong
Ponemah Center Manager/Teacher – Shirley Rosebear
FCP Coordinator – Dawn Barrett
Education/Disabilities Coordinator – Karen Martin
Mental Health Coordinator – (Provided by Comp. Health)
Health Coordinator – (Provided by Comp. Health)

Kitchen Staff:
Head Cook – Felicia Barron
Assistant Cook – Darchelle Strong
Assistant Cook – Rhonda May
Head Cook Ponemah Site – Glendoris Kingbird

Maintenance Staff:
William (Barry) King
Quentin Nelson – Ponemah Site

Classroom Staff:
Marten Room
Anita Kingbird – Teacher
Starr Jourdain – Teacher Aide

Wabooz Room (3 year olds)
Ellen Lussier – Teacher
Alecia Lussier – Teacher Aide
Sharon Garrigan – Teacher Aide

Kingfisher Room
Lisa Thomas – Teacher
Lynette Tyler – Teacher
Randi Jo White – Teacher Aide

Wolf Room (3 year olds)
Jackie Defoe – Teacher
Bambi King – Teacher Aide

Bullhead Room
Alberta Spears – Teacher
Sabrina McGregor – Teacher Aide

Eagle Room
Gail Stillday – Teacher
Brittany Kingbird – Teacher Aide

Immersion Room I
Marcus Tyler – Teacher
Trudy Jourdain – Teacher

Immersion Room II
Zachariah Miteness – Teacher
Benjamin Bonga – Teacher

Mang Room
Teana Clark – Teacher
Brenda Johnson – Teacher Aide

Migiizi Room
Esther Spears – Teacher
Shirley Rosebear – Teacher

Bus Drivers (Red Lake):
Gerald May, James Oakgrove, Phillip Smith, Wayne Johnson, Charles Colhoff

Bus Drivers (Ponemah):
Jeff Kingbird, Alfred Thomas

Phone Numbers
Red lake 679-3396
679-3358
679-2923 – Fax

Ponemah 554-7331
554-7340
554-7386 – Fax

Program Hours: 7:30-4:00 Tuesday - Friday
SECTION II

Program Design and Management

Center Based Program
Full Day Year Round
General Childcare
Curriculum
Education and Early Childhood Services
Eligibility and Admission
Program Governance

Tell your children how terrific they are, and that you trust them.
PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Red Lake Head Start operates on a non-discriminatory basis affording equal treatment and access to services, including the Child Care Food program. The agency does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children are served. The agency welcomes children with disabilities and will make reasonable accommodations for such children.

Eligibility and Admission Policies
Eligibility for enrollment in a Head Start Center follows federal age, income, and eligibility requirements. Each eligible child is prioritized for placement according to Head Start selection criteria. Children must have a current immunization record, birth certificate, and meet income guidelines. A physical exam that occurred up to 12 months prior to the date the child starts the program is acceptable. Children must be 3 or 4 years of age by Sept. 3 (or the first day of school for the school district).

Each year the parent policy council reviews and makes changes if necessary to the criteria for scoring applications.

Although Head Start serves children between the ages of three and five, priority is given to specific groups based on the following criteria which was set and approved by the Head Start Policy Council:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Eligibility Scoring System for Red Lake Head Start:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed Disability                                         75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age for Head Start – 4 years old                             60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years old                                                  200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Public Assistance/Unemployment Benefits             40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lake Tribal member                                        15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descendant/other Tribe                                        10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Child/Guardianship                                    80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Relatives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless                                                      40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single or Teen Parent                                         50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working parents/Parent in school                              30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has serious health issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol/drug abuse in child's family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Families receiving public assistance (MFIP, food support) are automatically considered income eligible. Family must show letter indicating current benefits. Children in Foster care are automatically eligible as well, regardless of foster family income.

- The program is allowed to enroll children from families with income above the federal guidelines. A Head Start operated by an Indian Tribe may enroll up to 49% of its children from families whose income exceeds the low-income guidelines.

**Religious Activities**
The Red Lake Head Start will refrain from religious practices at the centers; however, the children are free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and will be considered excused for that time period.

**Unlimited access**
Parents/Guardians have unlimited access to their children while they are in the Head Start.

**Center Based Program**
Red Lake Head Start sites are center-based. Red Lake Head Start children attend 4 days per week, 6 to 8.5 hours per day (Full Day). Children may be
dropped off beginning at 7:45. The buses leave to pick up children at 8:15 each morning. They arrive at Head Start approximately 9:15. Class time schedules vary according to the needs of parents and children. Please check with individual classrooms for class schedules.

Children attending Head Start receive breakfast and lunch. Full day students receive breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. A maximum of 20 students may be enrolled in a Head Start classroom. The maximum number of students that may be enrolled in a 3 year old classroom is 17. We follow the public school system in taking holidays, vacations, and some teacher workdays off.

**Full Day/Full Year Center**
The Red Lake Head Start Centers offer full day, full year programs. Full year runs from September through July. Children attend 4 days per week. Parents must be working, in job training, attending school, homeless; parents incapacitated or have a referral from Child Welfare Services to be eligible for full day, full year program. Parents need to provide transportation home. Children must be picked up by 4:00 p.m.

**Childcare**
Childcare is not offered at the Red Lake Head Start. To be eligible for full day Head Start, parents must be working, in job training, attending school, homeless; parents incapacitated or have a referral from Child Welfare Services.

**Curriculum**
The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. We take a very creative, hands-on approach to planning educational and social activities that promote healthy learning habits. Each child is encouraged to learn at his/her own pace so that he/she can develop a strong, positive sense of self. We actively promote your child’s enthusiasm for learning. Our job is to help your child learn *how* to learn not just for preschool and the transition into kindergarten, but also for learning challenges throughout his/her lifetime.

**Confidentiality/Concerns**
All staff and volunteers sign a Confidentiality and Ethics statement in order to insure that confidentiality is maintained for all children and families. Furthermore, all children’s records are considered confidential. Records are filed in a locked file cabinet located at each Center. No child’s record will be left on a desk while staff is not present in the office. Records will not be released to any agency or person without the written permission from the parent or guardian of the child. Parents and guardians have access to their child’s records upon request.
If you have a concern about another person (parent or staff), please go directly to that person first. Discuss your concerns with them so the issue may be resolved immediately. If your concern is not resolved, then speak with one of the other classroom staff members. He/she may be able to offer suggestions to assist in resolving the situation. If your concern involves our preschool program, please speak with one of the classroom staff. He/she will be able to answer your questions, direct you to the appropriate person to help you, or provide you with helpful written information.

**Parent and Community Complaint Procedure**

A. Complaints are to be directed in writing to: 1) The chairperson of the Center Parent Committee of the class in question and 2) the Director prior to a regularly scheduled Center Parent Committee meeting. Parents will hear the complaint, and the Director’s recommendation at a regularly scheduled Parent Committee meeting. The Parent Committee will attempt to resolve the complaint within 30 days after receiving the complaint. Personnel issues will not be discussed at parent meetings. All personnel issues will be referred to the Classroom Teacher or Management team staff.

B. All community complaints not resolved at the Parent Committee level shall be brought, in writing, to the attention of the Policy Council (PC) Chairperson and the Director by the individual/group concerned at the next regularly scheduled PC meeting.

C. The PC will hear the complaint, the Director’s recommendation, and the Parent Committee’s input. An attempt will be made to resolve the problem at the PC level.

D. If the problem is not solved at the PC level, the complaint will be forwarded to the Director and then follow the Community Complaint Procedure.

**Education and Early Childhood Services**

Program activities facilitate social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Our focus is on providing children with essential learning skills and preparing them for transition into kindergarten. We update our school readiness goals yearly with the input from our parents and schools in the area.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

- To promote physical, cognitive, social & emotional growth of preschoolers and prepare them for future growth and development.
To support families as they achieve their personal goals for parenting, self-sufficiency and cultural identification.
To collaborate with existing community agencies in supporting the comprehensive needs of families with young children.
To develop highly trained and caring staff because the quality of staff and their relationship with parents and children is critical to achieving their goals.
Construct an efficient program management system that assures the delivery of high quality services.

PROGRAM BENEFITS
- Parents are supported in their role as their child’s primary teacher and advocate.
- Children are socially ready and committed to learn when they enter school.
- Personal and family relationships are enhanced through socializations.
- Parents acquire the education and skills they want to become self-sufficient.
- Families have access to consistent quality health care services and health education.
- Families develop an extended network of caring professionals who help them access comprehensive family support services.
- Parents have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the program and to network with other parents.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES
- Preschoolers are current with their immunizations.
- Children have received appropriate early intervention services.
- Families have gained problem solving skills and the ability to advocate for themselves in existing systems.
- Family relationships have improved.
- Families have greater knowledge of community services and resources.

Fatherhood Committee:
- To encourage fathers and father figures to participate in classroom and other activities
- To welcome mothers and fathers as equal partners in their child’s life
- To provide a father figure friendly environment
- To encourage father and father figures to become a member of the Fatherhood Committee
- To provide activities that will be meaningful to both fathers and mothers
Program Governance
Head Start/Child Care/State preschool has a formal structure through which parents can participate in the policymaking and program design process. Parents are automatically members of the Parent Committee. This committee makes recommendations to the Parent Policy Council and oversees center based parent activities. One parent from each class is elected by secret ballot to chair the Parent Committee and to act as a class representative on the Parent Policy Council. The PC is made up of the elected representative from each class, a member appointed by the PC, and three to five members from the community. The Policy Council works cooperatively with the Head Start Director and the staff in making program and budget decisions.

Your family is your treasure.
SECTION III
Children with Special Needs
Education
Health/Dental & Mental Wellness
Nutrition
Resources and Referrals/Socialization
Handouts/Networking
Family Partnerships
Parent/Classroom Volunteers
Committees and Councils
Parent Involvement
In Kind
SERVICES

Children With Special Needs:
Red Lake Head Start welcomes children with special needs into the program. Appropriate specialized educational services will be provided to children with special needs. The staff works closely with parents and outside agencies to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child with special needs. Our staff encourages acceptance and consideration of all children with special needs.

General Childcare Definition of Children With Exceptional Needs:
Children who have been determined eligible for special education and related services by an Individualized Education Program team, and who meet Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) General Childcare eligibility criteria are defined as Children with Exceptional Needs. These children may be developmentally disabled, hard of hearing, deaf, speech Impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, deaf-blind, multi-handicapped, or children with specific learning disabilities who require the special attention of adults in a child care setting.
Education
Each child will be assessed and evaluated by staff to determine his/her educational and developmental progress and levels of achievement. Individual learning plans will be developed for each child to outline specific goals, concerns, and levels of success.

Health
A core value of the Early Childhood Services program is that all children need to be healthy. To ensure children are healthy the program provides dental, vision and hearing screenings and healthy meals for children.

Physical Exam
For the safety of your child State Law requires a complete physical exam which includes the results of anemia and lead test. We ask that this exam be completed prior to your child’s enrollment in Head Start.

Daily Health Check
When your child arrives at school each day he/she will receive a health check by the classroom teachers.

Dental Screening
By preschool age all children need to be visiting the dentist on a regular basis. This should include discussing oral fluoride supplements for your child. A dental screening must be completed within 90 days of your child’s enrollment in Head Start.

TB Tests
Children are assessed for TB risk at the time of the physical examination. Your doctor or clinic will determine if the child should have a TB test.

Mental Wellness
Our goal is to nurture feelings of self-respect and self-worth in each child. An important part of our mental wellness service is early intervention and identification of problems that interfere with a child’s healthy mental development. We encourage family involvement in identifying and dealing with areas of concern and progress.

Mental Health Professionals
Mental Health Professionals from the community are available to provide special care to children with emotional, behavioral, or developmental needs. They are available to do individual observations on children with parent consent. The consultants also do classroom observations to help staff identify ways to improve the learning environment, and provide educational information on mental wellness issues. Group or individual information sessions are available to parents and staff members.
**Nutrition**
Good nutrition is important for developing healthy eating habits and improving mental and physical growth. We provide nutritious meals and snacks in a social, relaxed, family-style-eating environment and meals and snacks are low in sugar, salt and fat.

**Nutrition Program**
The food program is funded by the USDA through the CACFP - Child and Adult Food Care Program. We follow their nutritional guidelines.

Good nutrition is important for developing healthy eating habits and improving mental and physical growth. We provide nutritious meals and snacks in a social, relaxed, family-style-eating environment. Children are encouraged to taste everything, even those foods that may be new to them. No child is forced to eat any food item. Parents will receive a menu each month. You are invited to discuss menu concerns with staff.

Food safety is a primary concern. Our foods are prepared according to food service requirements. Any person preparing food must have clean hands, wear kitchen prep gloves, and use a hairnet.

At the Head Start, we serve the children breakfast when they get to the Head Start, a hot lunch, and a snack in the afternoon. The Public Health Nutritionist approves the Head Start menus, and they must meet the following requirements:

**Breakfast**
- Bread or bread alternate (including cereal)
- Juice or fruit or vegetable
- Milk, fluid

**Lunch**
- 1-1 1/2 oz. Meat or cheese
- 2-1/4 cups serving of fruit or vegetables
- Bread/butter
- Milk ¾ cup

We encourage our children to set the table, serve themselves, and talk and enjoy themselves just like they do at home.

**Nondiscrimination statement:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital
status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Parent/Child Socialization
Special socializations involving food (such as birthdays, holidays, parent meetings and cultural events) must be discussed with your child’s teacher. The nutritional needs of all children/families enrolled are considered. Cakes, cupcakes, (candles not permitted), candy and highly sugared foods are discouraged at the center classrooms, parent meetings or home base socializations.

Meals
Balanced meals and snacks are provided to all children as part of the Child Care Food Program. Special meals are provided to children with disabilities, food allergies, or other special nutrition needs with written certification by the child’s medical professional. Children are encouraged to taste everything, even those foods that may be new to them. No child is forced to eat any food item. Parents receive a menu each month and are also encouraged to provide input in planning it. You are invited to discuss menu concerns with staff.

Food Safety
Food safety is a primary concern. Our meals are prepared according to commercial food service requirements. Any person preparing food must be
healthy, free from TB, have clean hands, wear kitchen prep gloves, and use a hairnet. Parents may not serve themselves from the food cart that is used to serve children.

**Nutrition Workshops**
Nutrition workshops are offered to parents in collaboration with the WIC program. Nutrition counseling is available to any parent who requests it.

**Sugar**
Cakes, pastries, doughnuts, and highly processed foods should not be brought to the classroom or school sponsored events. Candy and gum are not allowed in the classroom. Staff does not use candy or highly sugared foods in cooking projects.

**Resources and Referrals**
Some of the many resource and referral services available are described below. Check with staff members for any special needs your family has.

**Employment Opportunities** - Parents are encouraged to apply for job vacancies within the Head Start program for which they are qualified.

**Parent Education**
Each year parents and staff members will plan parent education classes and/or workshops. CPR, First Aid, Safety, Nutrition, Mental Health, and Child Development are just a few of the classes that may be offered. We recommend that you attend the parent education classes and workshops. These classes are informative, fun, and a great way to meet other parents.

**Handouts**
Important printed information is sent home frequently. All parents receive a Parent Handbook, as well as monthly newsletters, calendars, and monthly meal menus. Notes are sent home with the children. Parents should check daily to see if your child has brought home a note. The staff will gladly help you if you have any questions or need help understanding the handouts.

**Networking**
The Red Lake Head Start staff works with many local family service agencies. We are happy to help you find the resources and community assistance your family needs.
Family Partnerships

Partnerships in education, in family life, and in community service can make a difference in the quality of your family’s life. The Red Lake Head Start program works in partnership with parents and guardians to provide quality educational services. We rely on the vast knowledge you have of your child to develop a teaching strategy that best suits him or her. Parents can also improve the quality of their family’s life by working closely with our staff to identify areas of strength and areas of family life that may need improvement. Finally, you and your children benefit from your involvement in the community. When you volunteer in the community you can make a difference in the quality of local government and the environment your family lives in.

Classroom Volunteers
Your child benefits the most from the time and skill you invest in the Head Start program. All parents/guardians have an equal opportunity to volunteer at the Head Start centers.

Volunteers are especially needed to help in the classroom. Parents and guardians perform a variety of essential tasks such as plan activities, provide input on curriculum and lesson plans, help at mealtimes, prepare cooking projects, and supervise hand washing and teeth brushing. These are just a few of the ways you will be helping to make your child’s classroom experience the very best it can be, and you can use your volunteer experience on your resume when you look for work.

Parent Committees and Councils
You can be a vital part of the Head Start programs planning process. Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role on the Parent Policy Council. A description of what each council and committee does is listed on the following page.

Parent Policy Council
The Policy Council works with the director and is responsible for program development and management. They help set goals, policies and assist in budget preparation.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is crucial to the success of the Head Start Program.
There are many ways in which you as a parent can participate in your child's education and development while he/she is in the Head Start Program. You can begin by being here on Parent Orientation Day, becoming a volunteer, attending parent meetings, coming to the Head Start to have lunch with your child, and site visiting as often as possible.

**Parent Participation in the Head Start Program is:**
- Participation in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program.
- Participation in the classroom as a volunteer and observer.
- Activities for parents, which they have helped to develop.
- Attending parent committee meetings. ALL HEAD START PARENTS ARE MEMBERS OF THE HEAD START PARENT COMMITTEE. (Parents will be notified of meetings by memos that will be sent home with your child.)

Making a good Head Start calls for many people to work together, sharing their talents, knowledge and energy so that the children can receive the greatest benefit. The more knowledge and energy parents and staff invest in the program, the better the program will be.

**What you can do as a parent:**
1. Talk to your child
2. Read to your child, and then have him/her tell you what the story was about
3. Have your child share his/her toys
4. Play with your child
5. Remember that you as a parent are your child's first and most important teacher.

**Head Start In-Kind Donations**
Our federal grant requires that local matching funds be equal to 20% of our Head Start funding. Matching funds can be in the form of cash, or in-kind donations.

There are many ways parents and community members can be in-kind donors. During home visits the use of space in your home is considered a donation to our program. Goods you donate, such as rice for the rice table, books, art materials, or scrap lumber for carpentry can also be listed on the in-kind form as a donation. All donations are tax deductible.

Volunteers must sign an in-kind sign-in sheet each time they volunteer time, space, or goods to the program.
In-kind sign-in sheets are kept in a binder in each classroom. **It is important that you sign an in-kind sheet everyday that you volunteer!** In-kind forms are tallied and sent to main office at the end of each month.

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**Section IV**

Policies and Procedures

- Attendance and Absences
- Authority to Release Your Child
- Behavior
- Discipline
- Transportation
- Accident/Emergency Evacuation
- Head Lice
- Illness/Medications
- Kindergarten Transition
- Records and Documentation
- Mandated Reporting Requirements
Policies and Procedures

Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child
Your child must be signed in and out for the day when he/she is dropped off or picked up from class. Parents/Guardians must sign in with their full signature and record the times of arrival and departure each day. Please spend a few minutes with your child's teacher each day before you sign him/her out so that you can learn how he/she spent the day.

Head Start Late Pick-Up Policy
Child Protective Services will be called anytime you are more than 30 minutes late and have not contacted the school about an emergency or an unavoidable situation. If the teacher is unable to reach Child Protective Services, the Police Department will be called to pick up your child.

Although we do not usually have these kinds of problems, we believe all children should be treated fairly and consistently. It is in the best interest of the children to take these precautions. Thank you for understanding our policy and helping us ensure the safety of the children.

Please make sure children are dropped off and picked up at their designated time. Chronic tardiness or late pick up will be referred to the Family Service Manager.

Attendance
Attendance is not mandatory but we do need some method of maintaining the required average daily attendance. More importantly, we do not want to set up a casual attitude regarding regular attendance that may carry over into elementary school. The teachers will follow up on unexcused absences. If your child is absent three (3) days in a row a phone call or home visit will be made. A call or note should be made to excuse any child’s absence.

According to the Federal Register, the following is considered to be an excused absence:
1. A child is hospitalized
2. A child is incapacitated due to injury or illness
3. A child contacts a communicable disease
4. A child has other health ailments, which temporarily prevents attendance (such as asthma)
5. There is a death in the family
6. The child's attendance is affected by a family situation
7. Weather conditions
8. Transportation, water and heat problems that may necessitate closing the Head Start.

The goal for Head Start is for children to attend 100% of the time unless they are sick or have an excused reason to be absent. The Family Service Manager or designee will analyze causes for absenteeism. All actions taken to remedy absenteeism will be documented. Teachers, Teacher Aides, or Family Advocates will assist you with attendance issues. Attendance records shall document and verify all excused absences.

**Reporting Absences**
Please call your child’s center before the start of class when your child is going to be absent. Please give us the exact reason your child is missing school.

Parents will receive a phone call from the staff each day his/her child is absent if the parent does not call the school.

**Emergency Contact and Consent for Emergency Treatment Form**
To ensure children’s safety the staff will not release the child to any one not listed on the child’s emergency contact and consent for emergency treatment form. We are not permitted to release children to anyone under the age of 16. Please make sure the teacher has the current names and phone numbers of two people (over 16 years of age) who could pick up your child from school in an emergency. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child we will ask the person for picture identification.

To insure the safety of the children, we will not release children to persons behaving in a way that poses a risk to the children or to the facility. The appropriate agency will be called if this situation arises.

**Adult Behavior**
The Red Lake Head Start program is a chemical-free environment. The use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol are not permitted anywhere on or near the center grounds or at sponsored events and activities. School grounds include the school parking lot and/or all areas on school property within the sight of the students. 

*The use of profanity or corporal punishment by any parent attending the preschool program or activities is prohibited.*

Center staff and Family Advocates visiting in the home promote a tobacco, drug, and alcohol free home environment.

**Behavior Guidance**
Our program promotes positive, respectful and considerate behavior in children. When a child behaves in a way that poses a threat to him/her or other children or
staff, the parent or designee may be required to spend time with the child at the site or take the child home for the remainder of the day.

**Positive Approach**
Parents are encouraged to use a positive approach when talking to and interacting with their children. Tell your child what he/she needs to do. Avoid words such as “don’t” or “no”. Discard words like “good”, “bad”, “nice”, “baby”, “naughty”, and “big” from your vocabulary. Praise the act, not the child. Use phrases like, “That was a good job”, “That’s fantastic!” or “I liked the way you tried.” Be generous with your use of “please” and “thank you”. Praise your child often to recognize his/her achievements.

**Discipline**
Discipline refers to action(s) taken by adults when assisting children to control their own inappropriate behavior. Adults help children understand the consequences of acceptable and unacceptable behavior by modeling, redirection, and oral communication. Discipline and punishment are not the same. Punishment refers to actions taken by adults to change a child’s behavior by making the child suffer emotionally or physically. Children are not punished for their behavior at Head Start, but they may be disciplined.

It is very important that parents teach their child at home to listen and follow instructions given by their teachers, assistants and bus drivers. Physical punishment is not permitted in the Head Start program. The Head Start program uses the Time-Out method for handling misbehavior. If the child is continually misbehaving, the teacher or assistant may place the child in Time-Out. Time-Out is a designated quiet place where the child will not be able to participate in any activities for a set period of time, usually one minute for each year of the child’s age. The teachers and assistants appreciate your cooperation in helping us make Time-Out an effective disciplinary tool. A behavior report will be sent home to parents/guardians when necessary.

**Aggressive Behavior**: is defined as deliberate, repeated and uncontrolled attacks on others physically or verbally.

**Severe Behavior**: is defined as, but is not limited to the following examples:
- Excessive Swearing (repeatedly swearing, other children begin to swear)
- Physical Aggression (hitting, biting, kicking, etc.)
- Violent Threats

In cases where a child’s aggressive or severe behavior becomes a consistent problem and disrupts the classroom, the Head Start staff will document the behavior and place it in the child’s file and the following procedure will occur:
1. A parent-teacher conference will be scheduled to address the aggressive behavior problem.
2. The Head Start Director will be notified.
3. The child’s parent/guardian may be required to pick up the child from the center. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the center may utilize the authorized list of persons submitted by the parent/guardian.
4. In order for your child to remain enrolled, he/she may be required to attend counseling.
5. If the child’s behavior continues to be a problem, you or another adult may be required to accompany the child in the classroom and/or on special activities such as field trips.

**Birthdays**
Make arrangements with your child’s teacher if you plan to celebrate his/her birthday at school. Birthday candles and sugary foods are discouraged.

**Clothing**
Children’s clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for the weather. Students participate in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities each day. Please dress your child for playing! *Also, please send your child in closed toed shoes or shoes that are securely strapped. Children cannot run in flip flops!*

Clothing for adults, staff, and children may not promote or advertise alcohol, drugs, or tobacco. Clothing with unacceptable language or pictures is not permitted. Adult volunteers should wear clothing that is comfortable and conservative. Clothing that overly exposes any adult’s body to the students is not permitted. For example, adult clothing that is too tight, too high, or too low cut is inappropriate.

**Soiled Clothing**
Parents should provide a complete change of clothes in case of accidents. When a child has an accident requiring a change of clothes he/she is taken by one of the teaching staff to the bathroom. Staff will assist child in removing the soiled clothes, getting cleaned up, and, if needed, with dressing him/herself.

**Diapering**
Our programs adopt sanitation and hygiene procedures for diapering that adequately protect the health and safety of children served by the program and staff. Soiled diapers are kept out of children’s reach at all times. Plastic bags containing soiled diapers are stored placed in lined receptacle with a lid. Parents supply wipes and diapers as needed.

**Natural Disasters & Emergencies**
Periodically we may have to start late or close early because of natural disasters such as snow, cold, or seasonal storm. Listen to your local radio station for
information regarding any of these conditions. Call your center for class schedule changes due to natural disasters.

**Siblings**
If you bring your infant or toddler with you to the classroom when you volunteer/visit, you must supervise him/her at all times. We are licensed to provide care for preschool age children only. We also suggest you bring a snack for your toddler or infant. Food served at the preschool is for enrolled children only and staff or adult classroom volunteers.

**Weather**
The buses will not pick up children and the Head Start will not have classes if temperatures are -15 degrees (with or without wind chill) or colder by 7:30 AM. If the road conditions are hazardous for safety reasons the school will be closed. Please make sure children are appropriately dressed for all weather conditions.

**Transportation**
Red Lake Head Start offers transportation to all enrolled children.

**Bus rules and transportation guidelines:**

1. Head Start children will be returned to the place they were picked up, unless the parent notifies the Head Start of a change before 1:00 pm.
2. Parents should notify the Head Start when a child will not be attending class or riding the bus.
3. Children should be dressed and ready when the bus arrives. If your child misses the bus, it is your responsibility to bring your child to school. The driver or bus monitor will not come to the door. The sound of the horn will be used to announce the bus arrival. Due to time restraints, the driver will wait a maximum of 3 minutes before leaving. If the child misses the bus it is the parent’s responsibility to bring the child to the Head Start. Bus drivers will not back track to pick up your child.
4. When a child is delivered home, the parent or adult should let the driver know there is someone home by waving out the window or door.
5. ONLY HEAD START CHILDREN AND VOLUNTEERS will ride the bus to and from the Head Start.
6. There will be three (3) adults on the bus at all times. (Bus driver and two bus aides.)
7. Toys/food should not be sent with the children to the Head Start.
8. Parents who transport their child to the Head Start must accompany their child into the building and sign them in at the front office.
9. If the bus riders feel they are in danger due to the presence of a dog, they are not required to get off the bus to pick up or drop off a child. It is the parents responsibility to escort their child to and from the bus.
10. Head Start mandates that all children transported will be in a height and weight appropriate safety restraint. Safety restraints will be used on all Head Start buses. All children are required to use this restraint.
11. If there is any change in the place your child will be picked up, please call the Head Start no later than 8:00 am. If there is a change in the place they are to be let off after school you MUST notify the Head Start before 1:00 pm. If there is no one at home at the time of drop off, the child will be returned to the Head Start and the parent will be required to come and pick up the child.

12. To ensure the safety of the child, parents and monitors will help the child get on and off the bus. If the driver or monitor were injured or incapacitated and unable to perform their duties during the route, the uninjured person would call for help and remain at that location until assistance arrives. Head Start will be contacted immediately. Head Start will arrange alternate transportation, if necessary, for the children or replace the injured worker to continue the route.

13. If no one is home or at the designate drop off point and time, the driver will return the child to the Head Start. It will become the responsibility of the parent or emergency contact person to pick up and take the child home. If the child is not picked up from the center within one hour, and all efforts to contact the parent and emergency contact person are fruitless, the teacher will contact Family & Children Services. The child will be turned over to the care of social workers. The parent must contact the Head Start to arrange a conference with the Head Start teacher and Director in order to begin bus service again. [Please note: We do recognize that emergency situations occur.]

14. It is the responsibility of the bus driver and monitor to ensure that no child is left unattended in the vehicle or at the child’s home.

Procedure:
Head Start dismisses the same time each day unless parents are notified otherwise. The buses run on a regular schedule if everyone cooperates. Please make sure someone is home to receive your child at drop off time or make other arrangements. The children should not be left at the Head Start after 4:00 pm. The procedure for non-compliance follows.

First Incident: Parent will receive a verbal warning from HS Administrative Staff.

Second Incident: Parent will receive a written notice from the HS Director.

Third Incident: The incident will be reported to Family & Children Services
**Accident Report** If a child gets hurt a written injury report is sent home. A copy of the report is placed into the child’s file. If a child hurts another child the teacher will complete an incident report and give to both sets of parents. The name of the child hurting another child will be kept confidential.

**Emergency Evacuations**
In the case of a major disaster (i.e. fire, flood, and tornado) staff takes all children to a pre-arranged location. An evacuation plan and map are posted in each center indicating where children are taken. Your child’s teacher has further information on emergency procedures. Both centers practice monthly evacuation/fire drills.

Emergency lock down drills will be conducted according to the local elementary school schedule and/or during the months of September, November, February and April. The lock-down drills are to protect the children if there was an intruder on campus or another emergency that requires the children to be locked inside the classroom.

**First Aid Kits**
First Aid kits are well supplied and readily available at each center.

**Gloves**
Non-porous gloves are available and must be worn under certain circumstances. The staff is trained on the appropriate use of non-porous gloves. Please ask a staff member if you need information about the use of non-porous gloves.

**Hand Washing** Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent illness. Everyone must wash his/her hands before food preparation, eating, or any other food-related activity and after toilet use and diapering. We encourage parents/guardians to wash hands with their children when they arrive at the center. This will help maintain a germ free environment and allows parents/guardians to role model the importance of hand washing to their children.

**Head Lice**
Children must not come to school with head lice or nits. On the first day of each week all children are screened for head lice and nits. If your child has an infestation, you will need to take him/her home. Staff has information on the treatment of head lice and nits. (See Head Lice Policy)

**Illness**
Children may not come to school when contagious or sick. Health checks are done daily. If your child becomes ill at school you will be called and asked to come pick him/her up.
**Immunizations**
Parent must provide a written record of his/her child’s immunizations before he/she can enter the head start program. Immunizations must be complete and up-to-date.

**Medications**
It is preferable that your child take any needed medications before and after school. If medication is needed during school hours, you must have a Medication form completed and signed by your doctor before medication is permitted at the center. All medications are kept in a locked box out of students’ reach.

**Teeth Brushing**
Children brush their teeth daily at the head start. Teachers show children how to brush their teeth correctly. Our dental program provides a toothbrush and toothpaste for each child.

**Kindergarten Transition**
The Head Start program prepares you and your child for a smooth transition into Kindergarten. When your child leaves Head Start, he/she will have the basic skills necessary to be successful in the more academic Kindergarten setting. However as an informed parent or guardian, you will be your child’s best advocate while he/she transitions from preschool into elementary school. The staff will provide you with information on your rights in the public school setting so that you will be able to help your child adapt to new school regulations.

**Records, Reports, and Documentation**
Parents and legal guardians are responsible for: 1) providing the head start program with required information and 2) notifying the program of any changes in family income, family size, or need for child care and development services.

Staff member will assist you if you have questions or need help completing the necessary forms and documentation.

**Custody Papers and Restraining Orders**
In order for staff to prevent a non-custodial parent from picking up a child, current custody papers or restraining orders must be on file at the center. You will help our staff provide the protection your child needs by filing these documents promptly.

**Emergency Contact and Consent for Emergency Treatment**
Emergency information are kept for every child so we can call the parent/guardian in case of illness, injury, or other emergency. Please help us
keep our records up-to-date. Notify the staff promptly of any change to telephone numbers and addresses.

**Family Data Files**
Files containing basic data, required records, and legal documents, will be maintained for each family/child enrolled. *Parents have reasonable access to their child's file upon request. All records are stored for five years and after that date they will be destroyed.*

**Background Checks**
All staff members have background checks through the Tribal Law Enforcement agency prior to the time they are hired.

**Medical History**
A complete medical history is kept on each child. Please let the staff know if your child’s health changes or he/she needs medication.

**Parent / Teacher Conferences**
All families have two home visits and 2 parent/teacher conferences scheduled each year. Teachers and parents use these opportunities to discuss and document the progress, concerns, and goals of each child and family.

**Developmental Profile**
A record of each child’s physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development is completed by staff upon enrollment, and updated every 3 months. Teacher and parent observations are part of the child’s developmental profile.

**Mandated Reporting Requirement**
All staff is mandated by the State of Minnesota to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Mandated Reporters (any staff member) must report known or suspected abuse immediately to Child Welfare Services by telephone and send a written report to Child Welfare Services. A mandated reporter who fails to report an instance of known or suspected child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor which is punishable by jail time and/or a fine. All reports are confidential.

*Thank you for letting us be a part of your child’s life..*