

**2022/2023 Program Year**

**Early Head Start/ Head**

**Start/CCP Family Handbook**



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## **WELCOME TO GEMINUS EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START/CCP**

*Head Start Performance Standards 1302.90, 1302.91, 1302.30*

*NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10*

Geminus Corporation's Head Start and Early Head Start program is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Head Start agency in Northwest Indiana, currently funded to serve 1,564 children ages zero to five (including expectant families). The program recruits and enrolls children from all surrounding cities of Lake and Porter counties. Geminus offers various program options: Home-Based, Center-Based and Pre-Natal. We support the needs identified in each of our communities.

This handbook will explain our basic mission, purpose, rules, and policies. Parents are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with all of the enclosed materials. Please read through this handbook, and if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, feel free to contact us. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. We hope your family enjoys their time with us.

Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start is committed to serving eligible families in the Lake and Porter counties. Our programs key features include:

- 1) Highly qualified staff—a Bachelor's level Lead Teacher, An Associate Teacher and a part-time Classroom Aide in every classroom
- 2) Small group size—8 infants/toddlers and two year olds in EHS and 17 preschoolers per class session
- 3) Intentional instruction—based on best practices for teaching and learning
- 4) Continuity of care—the goal is for the children to stay with the same teachers and peers for up to three years to help them develop secure relationships
- 5) Parent-Family and Community Engagement Services
- 6) Reflective supervision and practice model is implemented
- 7) Emphasis on Social-Emotional development and self-regulation skills
- 8) Enhanced focus on Language, Literacy and STEM learning to promote school readiness
- 9) Interdisciplinary Approach for better outcomes for children and families
- 10) Family Life Skills training
- 11) Data collection on service delivery to drive decisions for improved program and child outcomes

In addition to teaching and learning for school readiness, we take pride in serving families. Family Services staff are specially trained to assist families with securing referrals and resources in all areas of need (e.g. housing, nutrition, mental health, etc.). For this reason, Head Start is nationally considered as the premier preschool of choice.

Our Head Start/Early Head Start program is committed to understanding, respecting, reflecting and being responsive to the cultures of all people, but particularly to those of our enrolled children, families and staff. Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start promises to succeed in creating a diverse learning environment that respects, accepts, and includes all children, families, visitors and staff members regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs in order to embrace the diversity of our Head Start/Early Head Start community.

Please keep this guide in a safe and convenient place so you can refer to it throughout the program year. After reviewing this information, if you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your child's Teacher, Program Assistant, Case Manager/Family Advocate, Program Director or the Site Manager. The information contained in this handbook may be modified by changes in federal, state or local regulations. This booklet will be available on the parent board at your center's location and on the Head Start/Early Head Start website.



**PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2022-2023 Program Year

My rights as a Head Start/Early Head Start Parent

- 1) To take part in the major decisions affecting the planning and operations of the program.
- 2) To be welcomed in the classroom.
- 3) To participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
- 4) To be informed regularly about my child's progress.
- 5) To always be treated with respect and dignity.
- 6) To expect guidance for my child from the Head Start Staff.
- 7) To be able to learn about the operation of the program including the budget and the level of education and experiences required to fill various staff positions.
- 8) To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase both personal and professional skills in areas that will improve my well-being.
- 9) To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of any condition in my family life.

My responsibilities as a Head Start/ Early Head Start parent

- 1) To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
- 2) To accept Head Start/Early Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and the lives of my children.
- 3) To be active in my child's classroom, as an observer or a volunteer and to contribute my services in whatever way I can, toward the enrichment of the program.
- 4) To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections to explain the program to other parents and encourage their full participation.
- 5) To welcome teachers and staff into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help with their child's development at home in relation to their school experiences.
- 6) To work with teachers, staff, and other parents in a cooperative way.
- 7) To guide my children with firmness, this is both loving and protective.
- 8) To offer constructive criticism of the program and to defend it against unfair practices.
- 9) To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
- 10) To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education and recreation for all.
- 11) To behave and dress appropriately while on school property.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**2022-2023 COVID-19  
PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT FORM**

Due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start is taking extra precautions with the care of every child including a health history review, provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and enhanced sanitation/disinfecting procedures in compliance with CDC guidance, the Office of Head Start guidance and State licensing guidance. According to CDC, individuals with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

These symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus:**

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Fever                                    | Muscle Pain                |
| Fatigue                                  | Headache                   |
| Cough/Dry Cough                          | Sore Throat                |
| Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing | New loss of Taste or Smell |
| Chills/Repeated Shaking with Chills      | Runny Nose                 |

**Geminus Head Start and Early Head Start will be following the following enhanced procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, as a parent/guardian; I understand and agree to the following:**

I will be required to complete a daily health screening questionnaire and that my child will have his/her temperature taken before being allowed to attend on site each day.

By completing the daily health screening questionnaire, I am stating that no one in my household has any of the above symptoms and that no one in my household is on a mandatory quarantine due to testing positive for COVID-19 or being exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If my child begins to exhibit any of the above symptoms while on-site, my child will be immediately removed to an isolation station under the direct supervision of staff, and I will be required to pick up my child immediately.

**Anyone entering the building, including parents or siblings, will have their temperature taken as well. Anyone with a temperature at or above 100.0 will not be allowed to enter the building.**

I must keep my child at home if they begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. I understand that if my child becomes ill with any of the above symptoms they will be required to have a doctor’s release before returning to the center.

I will notify the director immediately if someone in my household tests positive for COVID-19 or is exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If my child is over the age of two (2), wearing a face mask/face shield on site is optional. If face masks regulations change, notification will be sent to the parent/guardian. Plexi-glass dividers are currently not being utilized but if changes are made notifications will be sent to the parent/guardian.

My child will have their shoes sanitized upon entering the facility using the sanitizing mats.

My child will be required to wash their hands often and use hand sanitizer throughout the day to ensure no transmission of germs to others.

In order for my child to participate in the Head Start program, I must agree to and complete the attached COVID-19 Liability Release Waiver.

Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start cannot be held liable for any exposure or harm due to COVID-19.

**Geminus Head Start and Early Head Start will be following the following enhanced procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19:**

All staff have the option to wear face masks/face shields while on site. If face masks regulations change, notification will be sent to the parent/guardian.

If my child is over the age of two (2), wearing a face mask/face shield on site is optional. If face masks regulations change, notification will be sent to the parent/guardian. Plexi-glass dividers are currently not being utilized but if changes are made notifications will be sent to the parent/guardian.

Children and staff will wash their hands often and use hand sanitizer throughout the day to ensure hands are sanitized.

Children will their have their shoes sanitized upon entering the facility or they will be given rubber soled shoes to be worn on site.

Cleaning and disinfecting will occur in the shared areas of the facility as well as the classrooms, bathrooms and playground throughout the day.

**By signing below, I agree to each statement above and release Geminus Head Start and Early Head Start from any and all liability for exposure or harm due to COVID-19.**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## COVID-19 PARENT LIABILITY RELEASE WAIVER

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been declared a worldwide pandemic. Due to its capacity to transmit from person-to-person through respiratory droplets, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has set recommendations and guidelines, which Geminus Head Start has adopted in its daily practices. In addition, Geminus Head Start has implemented certain additional measures as outlined in the COVID-19 Parent/Guardian Agreement Form.

In consideration of my child's participation in Geminus Head Start programs, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

I am aware of the existence of the risk of my and my child's physical appearance and participation in the activities of Geminus Head Start that may lead to exposure to viruses such as (but not limited to) Influenza, MRSA, or COVID-19—which may cause illness, hospitalization, paralysis, or death.

I am fully and personally responsible for my own personal safety and actions, and decisions regarding the safety and actions of my child. I fully understand and assume the risk that any participation in Geminus Head Start programs or activities may place me and/or my child at risk of contracting COVID-19.

With full knowledge of the risks involved, I hereby release, waive, and discharge Geminus Head Start, its board, officers, independent contractors, affiliates, employees, representatives, successors, and assigns from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever, directly or indirectly arising out of or related to any loss, damage, injury, or death, that may be sustained by me or my child related to COVID-19 while participating in any activity while in, on, or around any Geminus Head Start premises or while using any Geminus Head Start facilities that may lead to exposure or harm due to COVID-19.

I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Geminus Head Start from and against any and all costs, expenses, damages, lawsuits, and/or liabilities or claims arising whether directly or indirectly from or related to any and all claims made by or against any of the released party due to injury, loss, or death from or related to COVID-19.

**By signing below I acknowledge that I have read the foregoing COVID-19 Liability Release Waiver and understand its contents; that I am at least eighteen (18) years old and fully competent to give my consent; that I have been sufficiently informed of the risks involved and give my voluntary consent in signing it as my own free act and deed; that I give my voluntary consent in signing this Liability Release Waiver as my own free act and deed with full intention to be bound by the same, and free from any inducement or representation.**

**This waiver will remain effective until laws and mandates relevant to COVID-19 are lifted.**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## How Geminus Head Start Program Will Address the Levels of Spread of COVID-19

| <p><b>No to Low Spread</b></p> <p>No known active cases onsite or impacting the program.</p> <p><b>TRADITIONAL MODEL</b></p>   | <p><b>High to Substantial Spread</b></p> <p>High/substantial number of active cases in/or affecting the program.</p> <p><b>VIRTUAL MODEL</b></p>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Center Based and Home-Based services are provided through the traditional delivery model.</li> <li>• All HS classes will serve 18 children at the same time, 5 days a week for 6 hours a day.</li> <li>• All EHS classes will serve between 6-8 infants/toddlers at the same time, 5 days a week for 6 hours a day.</li> <li>• All Home-Based families will receive home visits in their home or at a location of their choice.</li> <li>• Family Engagement will be provided in person or virtual.</li> <li>• Monthly site-based Parent Committee meetings and Policy Council meetings will occur in person or virtually.</li> <li>• All staff Professional Development will be provided in person and online.</li> <li>• All staff will work onsite at their program assigned locations.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Center Based and Home-Based services are provided through a virtual delivery model only.</li> <li>• All staff will work remotely to provide virtual services to all enrolled children and families.</li> <li>• Staff will have a program issued mobile electronic devices to conduct remote work effectively and efficiently.</li> <li>• Each family will receive a loaner - an electronic device to support e-learning for children and virtual engagement for parents.</li> <li>• Family Engagement will be provided virtually.</li> <li>• Monthly site-based Parent Committee meetings and Policy Council meetings will occur virtually.</li> <li>• All staff Professional Development will be provided virtually and online.</li> <li>• All staff will work remotely from home.</li> </ul> |
| <p>The <b>Traditional Model</b> will be followed until the program receives guidance from the CDC, state or local health department that the level of Spread requires more stringent actions; such as a <b>Virtual Model</b> of service delivery.</p>  | <p>The <b>Virtual Model</b> will be followed until the program can return to the <b>Traditional Model</b>. The program may receive guidance by the CDC, state or local health department that the level of Spread requires the <b>Virtual Model</b> to stay in place for an undetermined amount of time.</p>  |



## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

### **Equal Opportunity Policy**

In accordance with federal law and the United States Department of Health and Human Services policy, this program is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

### **PPE (*Performance Standard 1302.47*)**

In accordance with the Geminus Corporation COVID19 Health Plan, all Geminus Head Start staff will be provided personal protective equipment for daily use, disposable gloves, and face masks. Hand sanitizer will also be provided, disposable face masks and shoe covers will be provided to all visitors that are cleared for entry. Geminus Head Start will follow the CDC guidelines for social distancing during this COVID19 Pandemic. Your child and each staff member will have a temperature taken before entry to the building can be granted. The temperature must read below 100.4. If the temperature reads higher for any reason the person may not enter the building.

### **Classroom Entry**

In order to enter the classroom/program children must have an up-to-date record of their immunizations signed by a physical (DO or MD), Physical Assistant (PA), Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), or Certified Medical Assistant (CMA). Provisional certificates of immunization and religious/medical exemptions for immunizations will be accepted according to Indiana's immunization law. Geminus Head Start only accepts medical or religious reasons for immunization exemptions. Written documentation must be provided and updated annually.

Each child admitted into the program requires a current (within the past 12 months) and comprehensive well-child physical examination updated annually throughout enrollment. Dental exams will also be required every 6 months for children over 2 years of age.

### **Orientation**

Upon enrollment, and prior to the child's first day in the classroom, families are required to participate in a Head Start orientation. This Family Handbook is presented to each family as a reference for program policies and procedures. A copy is always available on-site for parents and staff to refer to. In addition, a copy of the last page is made for each family to sign as confirmation of the attendance of the presentation and acknowledgement by the family that they will adhere to policies, procedures and their responsibilities. This form is filled out on-site by staff.

### **Child Safety Release Plan (*NAEYC 10B.19*)**

Our program is deeply committed to the safety of the children we serve. For this reason, we will only release a child to his/her parent or legal guardian, or to an adult (18 years of age or older) authorized in writing by the parents or legal guardian to receive the child.

**Authorized persons who are unknown to staff will be asked to show a picture identification before being allowed to pick up a child. NO unauthorized person is permitted to pick up a child under any circumstances.**

We ask that you immediately inform in person the Program Assistant, Family Advocate or Site Manager when you need to make any changes to the list of adults authorized to pick up your child. Unauthorized adults WILL NOT be allowed to pick up a child under any circumstances.

### **Arrival Time**

Children need to arrive on time to class in order to fully benefit from the program which includes a nutritious meal – breakfast/snack for AM classes, lunch/snack for PM classes. If a child is late, parents are responsible for notifying site staff as soon as possible. If there are circumstances that make arriving on time difficult, please contact your child’s Head Start site – together you may be able to find a solution.

*Note: Children are not allowed in the classroom more than five (5) minutes before class start time.*

### **Departure Time**

Children must be picked up no later than 5 minutes after class end time. If a parent is unable to pick up their child on time, it is their responsibility to notify site staff in advance as well as to arrange for someone on the child’s “Authorized Persons List” to pick up the child. If there are circumstances that make picking up the child on time difficult, please contact your child’s Head Start site – together you may be able to find a solution.

*Note: If a child is not picked up within 30 minutes past class close time and no arrangements have been made with site staff to have the child picked up by another authorized person, site staff will contact the Department of Child and Family Services.*

We thank you for your cooperation in this matter, and we know you understand that for the safety and well-being of your children, it is essential that children are picked up on time by the appropriate people and that a responsible adult is available to receive the children from the center. At no time will faculty hold the child responsible for the situation or discuss the issue with the child. If you are having a problem picking up your child on time, please speak with your Family Service staff member.

### **Change in Information**

Whenever there is change in address, phone, emergency contact, health provider, health conditions, work/school schedule, family situation, or other please notify us. You will be asked to update the Emergency contact information form at your site.

### **Confidentiality**

All family information and children’s files are kept strictly confidential. Only authorized Head Start/Early Head Start representatives have access to these files. On occasion, state and federal licensing representatives may also have access. Parents and legal guardians have the right (at any time) to review and or obtain copies of their child’s files upon written request.

### **Employment Opportunities**

Head Start/Early Head Start parents are strongly encouraged to apply for positions posted by Geminus Corporation for which they are qualified. Check the parent board for current listings or visit the site [www.geminus.org](http://www.geminus.org).

### **Accessing Child Records** *(Performance Standard 1303.20)*

Parents and legal guardians who wish to review or obtain copies of their child's file for any reason should contact their Program Assistant/Family Advocate to make the request and to complete necessary paperwork. All requests to access one or more of the following child folders (ERSEA, Education, Health, and Family Services) will be processed within 7 – 14 business days (depending on request). Please note: We adhere to all HIPPA regulations and no records will be released to an outside agency without the expressed written consent of a child's parent and/or guardian.

### **Authorization for the Release of Information** *(Performance Standard 1303.20)*

Parents may be asked to complete an Authorization for the Release of Information Form as needed to share/receive child information with other providers. Examples include: doctor's office, behavioral health provider, disabilities agency, etc.

### **Mandatory Reporter Statement** *(Performance Standard 1302.47)*

All Head Start/Early Head Start staff are Mandatory Reporters and must immediately notify the Department of Child and Family Services with any concern of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental injury, child prostitution, denial of critical care, bestiality in the presence of a child, illegal drug in the child's system, or manufacture of drugs in the child's presence.

### **Weather Related Closing Procedures** *(Performance Standard 1302.47)*

Site staff will contact you directly via a robocall or text if the program is going to be cancelled/closed due to weather. The Emergency Closing Center website ([www.emergencyclosingcenter.com](http://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com)) will also have local school closings listed as well.

### **Smoking**

All Head Start/Early Head Start locations are smoke-free environments. Smoking is not allowed in any Head Start or Early Head Start buildings or on any building grounds, including cars in the parking lot.

### **Emergency Response** *(NAEYC 10B.19) (Performance Standard 1302.47)*

As required by the Federal Performance Standards and state Child Care Licensing, the centers will hold monthly fire drills, bi-annual tornado drills, and post emergency preparedness signage in all classrooms and main entryways. During the evacuation drills, staff will lead children to a safe area. Please do not be alarmed if an evacuation occurs while you are in the school building, simply follow the direction of the staff.

### **Emergency Relocation** *(NAEYC 10B.19) (Performance Standard 1302.47)*

Emergency relocation will be enforced if/when the facility and/or nearby area is deemed unsafe/not suitable for occupancy. Examples of situations that may cause a facility to become unsafe for occupancy include but are not limited to: fire, structural damage, extreme water damage, hazardous indoor environmental, violent disaster, flood, etc.

In the event of a site closure and relocation announcement, children and staff are **not** to remain on the school grounds. You will receive an immediate call regarding the relocation site and instructions for pick-up.

### **Facility Lockdown Procedure** *(NAEYC 10B.19)*

Purpose: to secure building occupants in the event of a violent event/intruder

The decision to lockdown the facility rests with the Site Manager/Management of the site

affected.

A **Lockout** consists of moving all students/staff inside the facility and securing all entrances and denying access to any unauthorized persons.

A **Lockdown** consists of lockout steps in addition to getting all building occupants out of sight from the hallway.

When to lock down:

- 1) When advised by local law enforcement
- 2) Credible threat outside the facility (Call 911)
- 3) Credible threat inside the facility (Call 911)

Internal process:

- 1) Site Manager to issue/order lockdown by using intercom/radios/verbal notification.
- 2) Lock interior/classroom doors
- 3) Cancel outside activities, until all clear has been given.
- 4) Close all windows and close all blinds/curtains
- 5) Keep children away from doors and windows
- 6) Keep children as quiet as possible
- 7) If a gunshot or an explosion is heard, get everyone on the floor and if possible, against a brick wall (take cover).
- 8) DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO BE UNATTENDED AT ANY TIME.
- 9) Conduct frequent counts of all children and immediately report any missing children.
- 10) No unauthorized persons will be allowed in the facility including parents.
- 11) Lockdown is to remain in effect until all clear given by Site Manager/Management/Local Law Enforcement.

**Child Safety: Jewelry** (*Performance Standard 1302.47*)

We ask that you do not send your child to school wearing jewelry—including rings, necklaces, or earrings—as these items can get caught in equipment when children play, increasing the risk of injury. Thank you for your understanding. The center is not responsible for loss or damage of clothes and/or jewelry. If you need assistance with clothing resources, please contact your Case Manager.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Practices** (*Performance Standard 1302.47*)

All classrooms, offices and shared spaces in all Early Head Start and Head Start locations will be cleaned and disinfected daily to reduce the spread of germs and communicable viruses and diseases.

**Bathroom & Toileting** (*Performance Standard 1302.41*)

As a component of our comprehensive early childhood program for children, we work with children who are still in the process of becoming toilet-trained. Teaching teams will be available to assist your child in the Head Start program and will support your child in learning to use the toilet.

**Handwashing** (*Performance Standard 1302.47*)

In an effort to maintain healthy environments, Head Start staff handwashing will occur before and after feeding the child, before and after administering medication, after handling garbage, after cleaning and after toilet learning with the children. Teaching teams will coach children (as developmentally appropriate) on proper hand washing techniques in order for children to wash their hands independently.

**Tooth Brushing** (*Performance Standard 1302.43*)

The program will provide toothbrushes/toothpaste to all enrolled age eligible children for home use and will replace them every (3) three months.

## **ATTENDANCE**

*Head Start Performance Standards 1302.16*

*NAEYC Standards 1, 7*

**Head Start/Early Head Start is a federally funded program requiring a minimum of 85% average daily attendance. This is equivalent to a maximum of about three absences per month per child. Attendance is analyzed on a monthly basis to ensure each child is regularly attending.**

Parents need to ensure that their child attends every day and arrives at the center every day on time. Children who attend our program daily and on time experience better outcomes than those children who attend only occasionally. Staff will monitor attendance every day. Please contact the center as early as possible if your child will be absent or late that day.

If your child is absent, and we have not heard from you within one hour of the start of class, we will call to verify the reason for the absence. If we are unsuccessful in contacting you, your Case Manager/Family Advocate may make a home visit to check with you to see if we can offer any support to ensure your child comes to school on a regular basis.

If a child is unexpectedly absent three consecutive times, the Case Manager/Family Advocate will initiate family support to include home visits or other direct contact with the child's parent/guardian to collaborate on an Attendance Plan. In circumstances where the child cannot establish regular attendance (chronic or repeated sporadic absences) at a center, an alternative program option (home-based) may be discussed. If it does not seem feasible to include the child in either program option, the child will be dropped from the program. In this instance, another child will be given the opportunity to enroll.

If a child is dropped from the program, and the parent wishes to re-enroll, the parent must reapply to the program. The child will then go on the Early Head Start/Head Start waitlist and will be considered for enrollment if and when a vacancy occurs.

If the child will miss school due to an illness or other unplanned circumstance, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the site as soon as possible. If there is a planned absence (appointment, scheduled vacation, etc.) or even an extended emergency absence (hospitalization, etc.), it is the responsibility of the parent to contact their site to discuss the situation in order to establish an expected return date and maintain the child's enrollment. If the child does not attend on the expected return date, the child may be at risk of being dropped from the program.

### **Late Pick-up**

It is essential that parents/guardians pick their children up on time from the Head Start program. If an emergency occurs, parents/guardians should call the center and inform the staff of the emergency and provide a time when a parent/guardian or person from the 'Authorized Persons List' will be able to pick up the child.

## **Transportation Safety**

*NAEYC Standard 5A.25*

Geminus Head Start recognizes the importance of transportation safety for children. For this

reason, during drop off and pick up for all students, parents are asked to adhere to the following policies and procedures:

- Student drop off begins no earlier than 7:55am
- Parents/Guardians should drop off/pick up students using the entrance door to which they are assigned
- Upon arrival all parked vehicles (cars, buses, and service vehicles) should be turned to the off position\*
- Parents/Guardians should remain in their cars until greeted by a Head Start employee who will sign the student in or out

\*In the event of extreme temperatures (heat or cold) only, parked vehicles may idle to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

### **Building security and Access**

*NAEYC Standard 10B.19*

#### **Managing the Security Doors\***

The site office staff is responsible for managing the security doors for regular operations, holiday, and emergency closures. All front doors will remain closed and locked at all times during business hours and will be monitored with a closed-circuit camera.

- All regular site staff will have access to sites with ID Badge access.
- For sites without ID Badge access, keys will be distributed to staff by the Supervisor. Staff without keys will need to ring the buzzer in front of the site.

Visitors will ring the buzzer on the outside of the door to alert staff of their presence. Site staff is responsible for replying to the buzzer as quickly as possible.

**Visitor Handling:** Regular visitors entering to pick up/drop off children must be acknowledged with an appropriate reply such as “Please come in” before unlocking the door. All other visitors, including those who are picking up/dropping off for the first time, should be directed to the office. Office staff will escort all new visitors to the appropriate location.

**Door Concerns:** Should a visitor have trouble responding to the buzzer or the buzzer is not functioning, staff must not buzz visitors in but instead meet the visitor at the door immediately to verify the visitor’s destination and show them how to use the buzzer if it is an anticipated regular visitor.

Security Passes:

- Some Local Education Agency (LEA) sites have security passes assigned by the school district they are housed in. Employees receiving Security passes are expected to follow the key procedure

### **INCLUSION EDUCATION**

*Head Start Performance Standard 1302.33, 1302.60, 1302.61, 1302.62, 1302.63*

*NAEYC Standards 3 & 4*

Children with special needs are always welcome to the program and the Head Start & Early Head  
Expiration Date: 08/31/2023

Start program is committed to providing classroom settings that include all children. All children who attend the program are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of disability. Head Start/Early Head Start strives to meet the individual education needs of every child including those children who enter Head Start/Early Head Start with an Individual Education Plan /Individual Family Support Plan through their school systems' Special Education Department or Part C organizations, such as First Steps. The Disability Manager and Intervention Specialist will work closely with staff and families to make sure the program is well prepared to welcome and nurture all children, especially those with disabilities.

### **Inclusion Education Support**

If you suspect your child may have a developmental, physical, or behavioral issue, please share your concerns with the Disabilities Coordinator who is available to help families:

- 1) Understand their parental rights
- 2) Learn about available special education services
- 3) Make appropriate referrals
- 4) By attending education evaluations
- 5) By attending Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings
- 6) Know their child is reaching individual goals in the classroom
- 7) By assisting in transition plans for children from one program to another, including from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to kindergarten.

### **SCHOOL READINESS (BIRTH TO FIVE APPROACH)**

*Head Start Performance Standards 1302.31, 1302.32, 1302.34*

*NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 3*

Geminus Head Start & Early Head Start activities are designed to build social skills, language development, reinforcement of thinking processes, small and large muscle development and self-help skills. Research shows children learn best through hands-on activities and engaging in structured play. Within these activities children will learn by exploring, experimenting, problem solving, and asking questions. Developmentally appropriate practice requires both meeting children where they are and enabling them to reach goals that are challenging and achievable.

### **How will my child learn?**

Children in Head Start & Early Head Start will be learning skills and behaviors they need to succeed in school. Early Head Start children can either be enrolled in a Home-Based or Center-Based program. Regardless of the program option, all children will be supported in each of learning areas listed below:

- 1) Cognitive: to help children develop learning and thinking skills through curiosity and creativity.
- 2) Social-Emotional: to help children build relationships; develop self-control and independence; gain a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction; and have a positive attitude toward life, others, and themselves.
- 3) Language and Literacy: to help children build early reading, writing, and communication skills.
- 4) Physical- to help children increase their large muscle skills through running, jumping, and climbing; to help children develop their small muscle skills through building, cutting,

stringing, and painting.

- 5) **Mathematics**: to help children understand and explore mathematical concepts such as numbers and shapes.

### **Lending Library (Home-School Connection)**

To promote literacy, create home environments rich with print materials, and to increase opportunities for families to read together, most center-based sites or solicitation locations will have a parent resource room with a lending library for parents to check out and return books.

### **Developmental Screenings** (*Head Start Performance Standard 1302.33, 1302.60, 1302.61, 1302.62 NAEYC Standard 4*)

Your child will receive various screenings while enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start program. These screenings are performed to assess the child's development in the following areas of health and development: vision, hearing, social-emotional and overall cognitive developmental. All of the screenings are completed within the first 45 days of the child's enrollment in the program. Information regarding the screening will be shared with parents at the Parent/Teacher Conference or sooner if there are concerns that need to be addressed. Each child's learning and development is assessed three times during the year for Head Start and three times per year for Early Head Start.

The program staff provides families with a full explanation of confidentiality by:

- 1) Listing the categories of individuals who will have access to individual child screening and assessment results as well as the reasons for their access.
- 2) Sharing regulations governing access to files and familial rights
- 3) Describing the procedures used to keep individual child records confidential
- 4) Explaining how and why children's individual screening results and assessment information will be represented, used, and interpreted.

### **Assessments** (*Head Start Performance Standard 1302.33 NAEYC Standards 4, 7*)

Children in both Head Start and Early Head Start are assessed three times a year using The My Teaching Strategies (MTS) assessment tool. MTS is a valid and reliable observation-based assessment system for children from birth to kindergarten. The primary purpose of MTS is to document children's learning over time, inform instruction, and facilitate communication with families. Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start teachers receive intensive 2- day training from the Geminus Education Team on curriculum and assessments annually as well as refreshers offered throughout the year at monthly professional development workshops. All instructional staff and caregivers must pass the Interrater Reliability test prior to recording observations for the assessment. Families will receive their children's assessment results via the Child's Report Card and be a part of their child's continuing education plan via the Report Cards next steps after each checkpoint at their two parent-teacher conferences and their final home visit.

### **Center-based vs. Home-based**

Children enrolled in Center-Based programs will have teaching staff to scaffold them in learning objectives through discovery and purposeful curriculum plans in a classroom setting. Head Start teaching teams utilize the *Creative Curriculum Systems for Pre School* and *My Teaching Strategies* for the on-going assessment process. Early Head Start teaching teams utilize the *Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's* curriculum as well as *My Teaching Strategies* for the on-going assessment process.



Children enrolled in Home-Based programs will have home visitors who are trained in the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's, which is research based and developmentally appropriate and aligns with My Teaching Strategies for on-going assessment tools. The curriculum places a special emphasis on brain development and social emotional development in the early years, recognizing that a secure attachment between a caregiver and child is crucial. Enrolled home-based families also participate in monthly Socializations\*, in an effort to bring home-based families together for networking, classroom discovery, and child-parent activities.

### **Parent/teacher conferences**

Throughout the school year parents will be given information about what children are learning. At each site meeting, the upcoming topic of study will be introduced by the child's teaching team and parents will have a chance to give ideas about possible classroom activities and field trips. Other information about how and what children are learning will be provided through newsletters and parent workshops. Parents will have times to meet with the teaching team to talk about the child's progress, ways of continued support, and questions or concerns.

### **Field Trips**

Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start believes that classroom learning can be enriched through the inclusion of carefully planned field trips. Firsthand experiences provide our children with useful information and a level of understanding that adds elements to their play, enriches vocabulary and enhances overall learning. Field trips are also an opportunity for all parents to become engaged and enhance their child's learning experiences.

All field trips will be related to the classroom theme, be based on children's interests and within the community. Teaching staff, Case Managers, and parents must be involved in the initial planning of all field trips for children and must be approved in the site meeting minutes the month before the trip is requested. Field Trip requests will be approved based in part on field trip location and cost.

### **Celebrations**

Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start recognizes that families value the ability to celebrate their child's achievements, birthday, and other cultural holidays as part of the classroom community. In an effort to keep the celebration of holidays, birthdays and other milestones developmentally and culturally appropriate, parent committees and staff must follow guidelines in planning for celebrations in the classroom.

Celebrations must be:

- 1) Designed to incorporate parent-child activity interactions and planned primarily by parents with guidance from staff on what is developmentally appropriate and allowable under Head Start policies;
- 2) Approved by respective Director.
- 3) Optional and sensitive for children and families who choose not to participate.
- 4) Reflective of and relevant to the ethnic composition, traditions, culture, and interests of participating children and families

Preschool graduation events with caps and gowns and related activities have strong significance in many communities. However, this kind of graduation event is not allowable under the Head Start federal guidelines. Developmentally appropriate End of Year Celebrations will be organized each year to celebrate children's growth and development.

## **Preparing for your child's first day in a Center-Based classroom**

Coming to Head Start/Early Head Start may be your child's first experience being away from you or your child may already have experience being in a childcare program. If your child has not been in the program before, Head Start/Early Head Start will be a new experience. It is normal for many young children to cry when they have to separate from their parents and try a new experience. Head Start/Early Head Start staff will greet your family at the door and welcome you from home to Head Start/Early Head Start. Instructional staff and caregivers will create a positive and successful experience for both you and your child. Be prepared that this may take some time staff will work with you in helping your child to feel safe and comfortable in his/her new classroom.

### **Parent Surveys** (*Performance Standard 1302.51*)

Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start recognizes the importance of feedback from enrolled families. During the program year parents and guardians will receive surveys to assess the quality of the Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start program. The collaboration between families and Head Start/Early Head Start staff is important and ensures that identified services are relevant to meeting their needs.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

*Head Start Performance Standards 1302.32, 1302.17*

*NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 3, 7*

Staff is prohibited from using any type of physical discipline (spanking...etc.) or harsh verbal reprimand. The program uses Conscious Discipline to support positive guidance. **Conscious discipline** is a social-emotional program that teaches children how to regulate and manage emotions in order to make safe and healthy choices. However, the first focus is on parents. In other words, to help our children in the best way with this approach, we must first carry out the process on ourselves and our own emotions. When Conscious Discipline techniques are used in the classroom, children learn what they can do within the limits of the classroom and how to manage their own behavior. Consistency is the key to positive and successful self-regulation. The goal for each child is to obtain important problem-solving skills and self-regulation skills that will lead to independent problem solving.

The consistent use of the following positive guidance techniques will help children learn what to expect and what they can do

- 1) Clear and positive classroom rules explained to children
- 2) Choices offered
- 3) Logical consequence used. For example, "Sand is for digging and building. You were throwing sand in the faces of your friends, so you will need to get out of the sandbox and find another place on the playground to play."
- 4) Contingencies (when, then statements) used. For example, "When you pick up the blocks, then you can go to the play dough table." When you zip up your coat, then you can go outside."

### **Positive Behavior Support**

Head Start/Early Head Start will use consistent behavior guidance and will not exclude a child from program participation. If atypical behaviors adversely affect a student's participation, we will work with the child, family, and community mental health professionals, if necessary, to provide appropriate services.

If behavior concerns are identified during daily behavior guidance practices:

- 1) Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidence.
- 2) Parent/guardian will be notified verbally, and may also be given written copies of the

incident reports for atypical behaviors.

- 3) Parent/guardian will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior
- 4) Staff and parents will use a variety of strategies to support the child in improving behavior, with the goal of preventing exclusion:
  - a) Provide support and modeling of more appropriate behavior.
  - b) Staff will reassess the classroom environment, supervision, and appropriateness of activities.
  - c) Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
  - d) Praise appropriate behaviors.
  - e) Consistently apply consequences for rules.
  - f) Give verbal reminders.

### **Limitations on Suspensions and Prohibition on Expulsion**

Head Start/Early Head Start cannot expel or un-enroll a child from the program because of a child's behavior. If a child needs to be removed from the classroom due to safety issues, a program must conduct a Team Meeting and engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources.

If a removal from the center is deemed necessary, Head Start/Early Head Start must help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while providing support and ensuring child safety by:

- 1) Continuing to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;
- 2) Developing a written plan to document the action and support needed;
- 3) Providing services that include home visits; and
- 4) Determining whether a referral to behavior specialist or local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.

When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, Head Start/Early Head Start must explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports outline by IDEA and local education agencies.

If, after a program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described in this section, a program, in consultation and agreement with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable) and the mental health consultant. The team will then determine if the child's continued enrollment presents a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines that the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child. If there is a serious safety concern, the program must then work with such entities to facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

*Head Start Performance Standards 1302.33, 1302.45, 1302.46*

*NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8*

To support a program-wide culture that promotes children's mental health, social and emotional

well-being, and overall health, a program must collaborate with parents by:

- 1) Obtaining parental information, observations, and concerns about their child's mental health.
- 2) Sharing staff observations of their child and discussing child's behavior and development, including separation and attachment issues.
- 3) Discussing appropriate responses to their child's behavior.
- 4) Discussing how to strengthen and nurture a supportive environment in the home and in the program.
- 5) Help parents to better understand mental health issues.
- 6) Support parents' participation in any needed mental health interventions.

Contract services with mental health consultants and they assist in:

- 1) Coordination of mental health services for children.
- 2) Provide teachers with suggestions to support children's behavioral and emotional needs.
- 3) Individual child observations arranged with written parental consent.
- 4) Assist parents locating mental health resources for concerns about their child.
- 5) Parent training on ways to support themselves and their child's social and emotional health.

For more information on mental health services, please ask your child's Teacher, Family Support staff or Site Administrator.

## HEALTH

### **Requirements for Preventive Care, Screenings and Immunizations** (*Performance Standard 1302.42*)

School readiness begins with health! The State of Indiana has strict requirements for children enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start program which include that all center based Early Head Start and Head Start children must have a current physical before the start of instruction and updated annually. All center-based age eligible children must have a current dental exam and updated every 6 months.

Health Services will coordinate mobile dental visits and on-site screenings for lead, hemoglobin, or hearing/vision.

### **Toothbrushing** (*Performance Standard 1302.43*)

To establish healthy hygiene practices, classrooms will provide a daily opportunity for children to brush their teeth as developmentally appropriate. Teachers will assist them during the practice. Each child's toothbrush will be labeled and stored in a safe manner to eliminate the spread of germs. Toothbrushes will be replaced every three months and children will also receive a take home dental kit to reinforce oral health hygiene routines.

### **Mental Health/Behavior Guidance** (*Performance Standard 1302.46*)

Head Start/Early Head Start programs are prohibited from using any type of physical discipline (spanking...etc.) or harsh language. Head Start/Early Head Start also cannot expel or un-enroll a child from the program because of a child's behavior. If behavior affects a student's participation, we will work with the child, family, and community mental health professionals, if necessary, to provide appropriate services. For helpful strategies on how to support your child's challenging behaviors please ask your Site Administrator.

### **Lead Awareness** (*Performance Standard 1302.47*)

Lead exposure and poisoning remains a serious environmental health hazard for Head Start children nationwide. Our program will provide opportunities to educate families on the importance

of lead testing and offer free lead screenings to children in need.

**Growth Assessments** (*Performance Standard 1302.33*)

Each Head Start/Early Head Start child’s height and weight will be measured twice a year by staff. The first measurement will be completed during phase-in/orientation and the second measurement will be in March.

**Daily Health Check** (*Performance Standard 1302.42*)

Upon arrival each day at center-based classrooms, all children will be observed by staff for signs of head lice, illness, or injury. If any signs are present, you will be notified immediately.

**Short term exclusion of ill or affected children** (*NAEYC 10B.19*)

Children who become ill or have a fever of **100.4 or above** during school hours will be immediately sent home. The child will be removed from the classroom to a comfortable ventilated space alongside a staff member until you are contacted.

We ask that if your child becomes sick at home that you contact the site immediately. Our program reserves the right to admit or temporarily exclude children with contagious conditions from the program, based on each individual case. See illness criteria chart for returning to school.

| <b>Illness</b>                     | <b>Criteria for Returning to School</b><br><i>Must have a 24-hour symptom free day plus...</i> |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Abdominal pain</b>              | <b>When symptoms are no longer present</b>   |
| <b>Boil, Abscess or Cellulitis</b> | <b>When lesion (s) are covered and drainage is contained in covering/bandage</b>               |
| <b>Chicken Pox (Varicella)</b>     | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Coughing (Severe)</b>           | <b>When symptoms are no longer present</b>   |
| <b>Covid-19 (Coronavirus)</b>      | <b>Follows most up to date CDC guidance at the time of outbreak</b>                            |
| <b>Croup</b>                       | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Cryptosporidiosis (Crypto)</b>  | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Cytomegalovirus</b>             | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Diarrhea</b>                    | <b>24 hours after diarrhea has stopped</b>   |
| <b>Diphtheria</b>                  | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>E. Coli</b>                     | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Fever</b>                       | <b>When a child is fever free for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medicine</b>          |
| <b>Fifth Disease</b>               | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Hand, Foot, Mouth</b>              | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Head Lice or other infestation</b> | <b>When all signs of live lice/nits or other infestations are absent for a period of 24 hours. <i>A free Lice Kit will be provided to the family</i></b> |
| <b>Hepatitis A Virus</b>              | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Hepatitis B Virus</b>              | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Impetigo</b>                       | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Influenza/Flu</b>                  | <b>When fever and symptoms are resolved for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine</b>  |
| <b>Measles</b>                        | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Meningitis</b>                     | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Mononucleosis (Mono)</b>           | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Monkeypox (Poxvirus)</b>           | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>MRSA</b>                           | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Mumps</b>                          | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Norovirus</b>                      | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Pertussis (Whooping Cough)</b>     | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Pneumonia</b>                      | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Pink eye (conjunctivitis)</b>      | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Pinworms</b>                       | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Ringworm</b>                       | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Roseola (Sixth Disease)</b>        | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Rotavirus</b>                      | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>RSV</b>                            | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Rubella</b>                        | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Salmonella</b>                     | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Scabies</b>                        | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Shigella</b>                       | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |
| <b>Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever</b>  | <b>Health Care Provider clearance required</b>   |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Ticks</b>    | <b>When all signs of ticks or other infestations and symptoms are absent for a period of 24 hours. <i>Health Care Provider clearance may be required if symptoms persist beyond 24 hours.</i></b> |
| <b>Vomiting</b> | <b>24 hours after vomiting has stopped</b>  |

**Topical Treatment** (NAEYC 10B.19)

Teaching teams will apply topical creams as needed to your child during school hours. Examples include unscented lotion, diaper ointment, sunscreen, etc.

**Medications** (NAEYC 10B.19)

If medication (prescribed and over the counter such as cough syrup) is necessary for your child during school hours, you will need a doctor’s written order and you will need to fill out a Medication Authorization Form for each individual medication. All medication must be delivered to the site in its original packaging.

Health Services will ensure that staff members administering medications are trained on the instructions. If there is an emergency event during school hours, program staff will take standard emergency precaution by providing CPR/First Aid and contacting 911, as needed.

**NUTRITION**

(Performance Standard 1302.44)

NAEYC Standards 5, 7

**Menus**

The menus for the program follow the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) & Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Menus are posted in classrooms and will be posted on our social media platforms.

**Meal components for menus**

Below shows the USDA & CACFP approved serving sizes provided to children according to age.

**Meal components for ages 1-2 year old**

| <b>Breakfast</b><br>(all 3 components served) | <b>Lunch</b><br>(all 5 components served) | <b>Snack</b><br>(2 of 5 components served) |
|---|---|--|
| 1/2 cup milk (1%)                             | 1/2 cup milk (1%)                         | 1/2 cup milk (1%)                          |
| 1/4 cup vegetable, fruit or both              | 1 oz meat or meat alternative             | 1/2 oz meat or meat alternative            |
| 1/2 cup grain                                 | 1/8 cup vegetables                        | 1/2 cup vegetable                          |
|   | 1/8 cup fruit                             | 1/2 cup fruit                              |
|   | 1/2 oz grain                              | 1/2 oz grain                               |

**Meal components for Ages 3-5 year old**

| <b>Breakfast</b><br>(all 3 components served) | <b>Lunch</b><br>(all 5 components served) | <b>Snack</b><br>(2 of 5 components served) |
|---|---|--|
| 3/4 cup milk (1%)                             | 3/4 cup milk (1%)                         | 1/2 cup milk (1%)                          |
| 1/2 cup vegetable, fruit or both              | 1.5 oz meat or meat alternative           | 1/2 oz meat or meat alternative            |
| 1/2 cup grain                                 | 1/4 cup vegetables                        | 1/2 cup vegetable                          |
|   | 1/4 cup fruit                             | 1/2 cup fruit                              |
|   | 1/2 oz grain                              | 1/2 oz grain                               |

**Special Dietary Needs**



Food substitutions require a doctor's signature. A USDA/CACFP Special Diet Form is available for you to request food substitutions to meet your child's dietary needs for medical and religious reasons. A registered dietician will review all special dietary needs.

### **Bringing home-baked items to School**

USDA/CACFP regulations will not allow for home-baked items to be brought into site locations.

## **PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

*Performance Standards 1302.50, 1302.51, 1302.52, 1302.53, 1302.60*

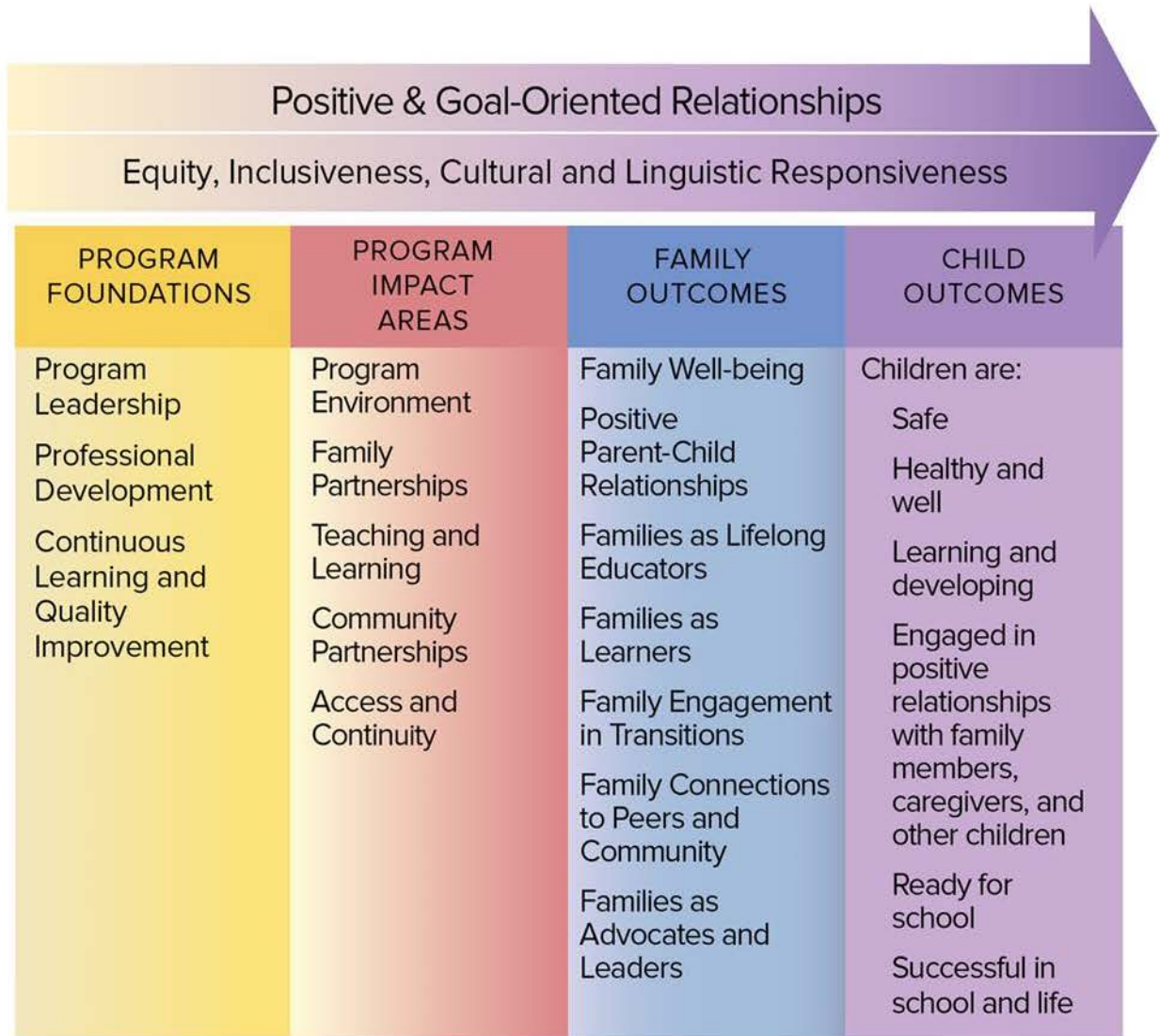
*NAEYC Standards 1, 6, 7, 8*

Parents and community will be integrated into every aspect of the Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start program. Through active engagement, parents especially gain a better understanding of child development and early education as it relates to their children. Head Start's vision is to create and maintain a family partnership with all families with goals to:

- 1) Support parents as primary educators, nurturers, and advocates for their child.
- 2) Provide every family with opportunities for a significant experience in Head Start/Early Head Start.
- 3) Ensure that parents are involved in making policy and program decisions for their Head Start program.

Our Head Start/Early Head Start program reflects this vision through efforts to carry out the following standards:

- 1) **Culture** - All aspects of the program support the cultures of the families and the community in which the program operates.
- 2) **Governance** – Parents have opportunities for participation and shared decision making in every area of the program. Parents, staff and Policy Council members work together and provide leadership to communicate with their community about the interests and needs of Head Start; and assist in strengthening existing services or bringing in new services that are needed.
- 3) **Individualized Family Partnerships** – The staff and program meet the expressed interests and needs of each parent through the on-going process of personal and family goal setting and partnering of activities to meet these goals. Discussions to identify interests, needs, and goals are within the first 30 days of enrollment.
- 4) **Disabilities** – All aspects of the program respond to and support children with disabilities and their families.
- 5) **Community Resources** – Families build the confidence, skill, and knowledge they need to access community resources on their own behalf.
- 6) **Family Engagement Night** - Our program provides monthly opportunities for families to engage with staff, peers and children in means to support school readiness and prevent the achievement gap.
- 7) **Male Involvement** - Our program will make efforts to reach out to and include fathers, supportive male family members, and male caregivers in parent involvement activities, especially those activities involving the development of their children.



**IN-KIND**

*Head Start Performance Standard 1303.4*

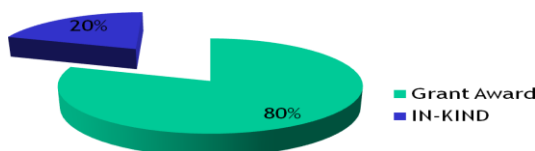
*NAEYC Standard 7*

Volunteer participation is a vital part of our day-to-day success of the program. There are many ways you can share your time and talents with us and the benefits are priceless. Children benefit from the presence of parents and other volunteers who participate in the classroom and with other activities. We count on our parents, family members, and community members to record the various ways in which they have “volunteered”, provided IN-KIND (donated time, space, or materials) for the program. IN-KIND FORMS will always be available to document volunteer hours. Ask your assigned staff for more information.

Geminus Head Start & Early Head Start funds come directly from the federal government. However, the government only provides 80% of the funds necessary to operate our program. The remaining 20% must be generated from in-kind. In-Kind is the donation of time, space or materials used in the program that would otherwise be purchased. A dollar amount is assigned to all

volunteer hours whether in the classroom, at the site or at home.

*Head Start Performance Standard 1303.4 “Federal assistance under the Act for a Head Start program shall not exceed 80 percent of the total costs of a program and the non-Federal share will not be required to exceed 20 percent of the total costs of the program.”*



**In-kind is provided through the category of activities listed below**

|                         |                             |                    |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Classroom Activities | 2. Non-classroom Activities | 3. Home Activities |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|

Volunteers in the classroom setting an average of (8) eight or more hours per month will be asked to complete at minimum a TB screening and background check (at no cost to the enrolled parent or guardian).

Note: The Head Start program does not allow siblings of the Head Start students in any Head Start classroom while parents volunteer in the classroom.

**PARENT AND COMMUNITY COMMENT PROCEDURE**

*1302 Program Management and Quality Improvement  
NAEYC Standard 10B.20*

Geminus Head Start/Early Head Start deeply values feedback provided by parents and community members. In the event of a grievance with the Head Start/Early Head Start staff or program as a whole, each location has a formal process in place to ensure any difficulties or differences that arise between families and program staff are handled appropriately. First option to ensure any concerns are heard and parents have the option to remain anonymous is using the comment box located at each individual Head Start/Early Head Start site. Comment boxes are easily accessible for parents to provide any concerns, suggestions or feedback. If your site does not have a comment box or comment card please notify your Site Manager, whom will notify the Family Services Director immediately.

The steps of this process are as outlined in our Comment Procedure:

Program Monitors:

- 1) Retrieve all Comment cards from each site.
- 2) Deliver to Program Directors immediately.

Program Directors will:

- 1) Receive all comment forms and mark received, provide date and “code type” based on comment type.
- 2) Scan & send an e-mailed copy of the comment form to respective Program Manager/Director.

- 3) File a copy for records.

Respective Program Manager/Director will:

- 1) Provide follow-up to parent and Site Manager within 14 business days via phone, e-mail, conference meeting, or newsletter announcement (if newsletter announcement, must inform Recordkeeping Specialist).
- 2) Sign and mark date of completion.
- 3) File a copy for records.

The second option to ensure any concerns or difficulties parents are having are discussed would be to contact your child's Head Start/Early Head Start Site Manager. The Site Manager will then schedule a meeting with the parents to discuss the difficulty or difference. If the concern is not resolved and further intervention is needed the Site Manager will contact the Program Director. The Program Director will then speak with the parents to address the concern. If the concern is not resolved and further intervention is required, the Program Director will consult with the Vice President for direction.



Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement of Receipt for Training on the Geminus Family Handbook

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have participated in the Family Handbook presentation during Parent Orientation and received training on the policies and procedures included in the Family Handbook on the following date: \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, I agree to notify Head Start/Early Head Start of any changes to phone numbers, primary physician, or name(s) of those who should be contacted in the event of an emergency. In the instance of a medical/dental emergency, I give Head Start personnel permission to take whatever action is deemed necessary, including the activation of emergency medical services to transport and/or treat my child.

My Child's Name is :( **PRINT**) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Phone Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Email Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Program Assistant **PRINT**)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Program Assistant Signature)