BENEFITS OF HEAD START?

- Lower teacher to child ratio (2 to 20)
- School supplies are provided
- Safe classrooms and playground areas
- Breakfast, lunch and snack provided at no cost
- Assistance with health, dental, nutrition, wellness, and disabilities
- Classroom staff is certified in First Aid / CPR
- Parent-Teacher meetings (child progress conferences, home visits)
- Family support provided (resources, goal setting)
- Classroom curriculum that supports School Readiness
HEAD START STAFF

- Family Service Associate
- Health, Dental & Nutrition Facilitator
- School Readiness Coach
- Safety or Safety & Transportation Facilitator
- Community & Family Coordinator
- Program Coordinator
- Component Director
Programs work collaboratively with parents/guardians to establish a partnership to work together. Staff provide consistent communication and monthly contact. Parenting education training is offered using the Love & Logic curriculum. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to use the online training modules for topics such as, child discipline, nutrition budgeting, child development, emergency preparedness, nutrition, school bus safety, employment success, family violence, managing your money, and healthy relationships. Parents/Guardians are provided opportunities to be engaged with their child through program sponsored activities, such as home projects/activities and the “Read With Me” program.
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

- Parents/Guardians are kept informed of program activities and events
- Program provides dedicated staff to work with parents/guardians to address needs of families
- Fathers and other male role models are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program
- Parents/Guardians receive referrals to a variety of community agencies
- Parents/Guardians have opportunities to volunteer in the classrooms, parent centers or at the school campus, as per school practice and school district policy
- Persons interested in volunteering must first complete the school district process and Head Start volunteer training
HEALTH SERVICES

• Parents/Guardians provide the program with a current physical exam to include lab results and a renewed physical exam twelve months later to determine if the child needs follow-up services.

• Nurses and/or Head Start staff will conduct a hearing and vision screening within the first 45 days of school to determine if follow-up services are needed.

• If a child has asthma, allergies, or other medical conditions, families provide a physician Action Plan.

• Classroom staff guide children to wash their hands before meals and after toileting to ensure healthy habits are practiced.
Children brush their teeth twice a day at school.

Program provides a new toothbrush every six weeks as well as toothpaste with fluoride.

Parents/Guardians provide the program with a current dental exam and a renewed dental exam twelve months later to determine if the child needs follow-up services.
Head Start staff will conduct growth assessment of children within the first 45 days of school using height/weight data to determine each child’s Body Mass Index (BMI) as well as parent and teacher observational input.

Breakfast and lunch meals follow USDA requirements for portion sizes and nutrition.

During breakfast, lunch and snack time staff encourage conversation and self-help skills.

Special diets due to food allergies or other health conditions can be designed with instructions or an Action Plan from a physician.

Children are encouraged to try new foods, but never forced to eat meals.
EDUCATION SERVICES

- Teachers conduct two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences to discuss the child’s progress.
- Teachers conduct a developmental screening within the first 45 days of school to get a baseline on child’s developmental and learning progress.
- Teachers observe children and document their educational progress through ongoing assessment—Teaching Strategies GOLD.
- Parents/Guardians receive child progress information from the teacher three times during the school year.
- Daily school attendance is important for school success.
- If a child is absent, parents/guardians should contact the program within the first hour of school. A note will be required for the school’s records.
EDUCATION SERVICES

- If a parent/guardian has not reported their child’s absence to the school, front office, classroom teacher or FSA staff within the first hour of school, then the FSA will make attempts to contact the parent/guardian to inquire about the child’s absence and safety.
- Children learn best when they follow a routine schedule
- Children learn through hands on activities in learning centers and outdoor play
- Resting mats are provided for the children, however they may bring a small towel or blanket
- Rules of the classroom are designed to create safe learning environments
- An extra set of clothes should be kept at school so the child can change into dry clothes in case of an accident
Teachers work through the school district to address children’s individual needs.

Teachers individualize instruction for children with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Parents/Guardians who suspect their child has special needs should conference with the child’s teacher to discuss the screening and referral process.

Head Start staff collaborate with the school staff to maximize services and attend the ARD and other meetings with the family, when possible.
WELLNESS SERVICES

- Teachers complete a wellness screening within the first 45 days of school to get a baseline on child’s social / emotional progress—DECA
- The program promotes age appropriate and positive child guidance practices
- Special note should be made that the Head Start Performance Standard 1302.45(a)(1) and 1302.90(c) requires programs to use positive strategies to support children’s well-being and prevent and address challenging behaviors
• Every classroom has two adults to ensure proper monitoring of children for safety
• Classroom staff monitor the classrooms and outdoor play areas each day for any potential safety hazards, which are then reported to the facility maintenance staff for correction
• Children receive bus safety training within the first 30 days of school and evacuation drills are conducted throughout the school year
• Parents/guardians receive Pedestrian & Bus Safety training at initial visit/orientation meeting
The Head Start program does NOT provide transportation services for children to and from school in Bandera, Hondo & Medina Valley ISD.

The Head Start program does provide transportation services for children to and from school in Lytle, Natalia & Devine ISD in partnership with the ISD.

Families are referred to the school district for possible transportation services. The school district determines if children are eligible for transportation to and from school.

Each campus has a designated area for loading and unloading children.

Children will only be released to an authorized person.

Each bus driver will have a list from the parent/guardian of authorized persons to pick-up the child from the bus stop.

If no authorized person is available to pick-up the child at the bus stop, the bus driver will take the child back to the campus. Parents will be contacted to pick-up their child.

Children should be picked up when school is released for the day.

If early pick-up is necessary, parents must go to the office and sign the child out before going to the classroom.
The Head Start program does NOT provide transportation services for children to and from school.

Bexar County Head Start families are referred to the school district for possible transportation services.

If early pick-up is necessary, parents must go to the office and sign the child out before going to the classroom.

Children will only be released to an authorized person with appropriate ID.
PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

- Parents/Guardians have opportunities to participate on the campus Parent Committee.
- Parents and community members can be elected to the Policy Council to represent their school district in making program-wide decisions along with the program management team.
- Mileage reimbursement is provided by the program to and from Policy Council meetings for members who drive themselves to the meetings.
- Childcare reimbursement is available upon request by Policy Council members who attend the meetings.
WELCOME TO HEAD START

- Do you have any questions?

- You can find the Parent Orientation Guide — Overview of Services on the Head Start website at www.esc20.net/headstart in the Community & Family section.

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