



Head Start Family Handbook



ADVOCAP's Mission: To create opportunities for people and communities to reduce poverty and increase self sufficiency.

2021-2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to ADVOCAP’s Head Start Program	1
ADVOCAP’s Head Start Position Statement	2
Center Program Philosophy	3
Administrative Staff Directory	4
Rights and Responsibilities	5
Confidentiality	5
Curriculum	6
Outdoor Play Policy/Clothing Attire	7
Parent Staff Communication	8
Family Services	8
Parent Engagement	9
Supplies	9
Reimbursements	9
Visitors & Volunteers	10
Policy Council	10
In-Kind	10
Classroom & Child Management	11
Attendance	12
Services to Children with Disabilities	13
School Cancellations	13
Emergency Preparedness	13
Health Services & Policies	14
Exclusion/COVID Policy	16
Mental Health Services	16
Suspicion of Child Abuse & Neglect	17
Nutrition Services	17
Transportation (Self-Transport & Busing)	19
Smoking Policy	21
Participant Grievance Procedure	21



Welcome to the Head Start Program of ADVOCAP!

Dear Families,

Welcome to Head Start! This handbook was prepared by ADVOCAP's Head Start Program to help you become more familiar with our program, policies, and procedures.

Head Start is a federally funded program that began in 1965 with the goal of making comprehensive preschool programming available to all children. It is our mission to reach children regardless of economic, physical, or developmental barriers. For over fifty years, Head Start has represented our nation's commitment to young children, increased our understanding of the importance of learning in the early years, and demonstrated the vital importance of parents in the growth and development of their children. The building blocks of the Head Start logo (above) symbolizes the development and growth of children through the partnership of Head Start families and their community. The red and white stripes represent the American flag, and the arrow, printed on a blue background, symbolizes upward movement for families.

The first priority here at Head Start is the same as yours, your children. We know that you as parents are your child's first and best teacher, which is why we want to partner with you as we provide your child with activities that help him or her grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. We welcome your involvement in Head Start activities and look forward to partnering with you to help your child progress.

The staff at Head Start is also focused on the growth and well-being of your entire family. Throughout the year, a wide range of opportunities will be made available to families so that they can develop skills, increase knowledge, and have fun together.

I invite you to come check out your child's classroom as a visitor or volunteer. Your involvement is a valuable investment in our program, in your child, and in all children involved in Head Start. I look forward to seeing you often!

On behalf of the entire Head Start staff, welcome to ADVOCAP's Head Start Program!

Beth Zachwieja
ADVOCAP's Head Start Director
bethz@advocap.org



ADVOCAP is a Community Action Agency offering solutions to poverty in Fond du Lac, Winnebago and Green Lake Counties in Wisconsin.

ADVOCAP's Head Start Program Position Statement:

The families, Policy Council, and staff of ADVOCAP's Head Start Program are committed to:

- Providing comprehensive family and child development services that support school readiness and self-sufficiency to eligible families in Fond du Lac and Green Lake Counties.
- Maintaining qualified and nurturing staff, community partnerships, the involvement of parents, and shared governance.
- Building on strengths and positive relationships with families, children and staff.

Eligibility for the program is based on three main criteria:

1. The family resides in either Fond du Lac or Green Lake Counties.
2. The child must be three or four years old on or before Sept. 1st of that school year.
3. The family income meets the federal income guidelines.

Applications for enrollment are accepted throughout the year.

**WE WELCOME PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS,
AND VISITORS TO OUR PROGRAM!**

CENTER-BASED PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Children learn best by doing.

The Head Start philosophy emphasizes that children will be provided with a wide range of experiences to help them grow socially, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Adequate space is provided to include room for both quiet activities and active time. Children experience free choice time, whole group activities, and small group activities, which allows for individualizing lessons to specific learning abilities and interests. The classroom is divided into centers so that children can choose from a variety of activities such as playing with blocks, creating with art materials, listening to music, looking at books, playing games, exploring at the science table, or role-playing in the dramatic play center. Each day children will have an opportunity for large muscle development both outside and in the classroom.

Children learn best when they feel safe.

The Head Start classrooms provide a warm, relaxed, and secure environment where children feel safe. Furnishings are child-sized and materials are easily reached by the children. Adults allow children to explore and choose their activities. Positive guidance and redirection is used when needed. We utilize Conscious Discipline to support the positive classroom environment. Staff members are trained to use evidence-based tools to teach children problem-solving skills in real life circumstances and to guide children to handle their feelings in positive and productive ways.

Children learn best when their parents are involved.

Head Start teachers believe that parents are their child's first and best teachers. Parents contribute in the classroom, offer ideas and suggestions, help prepare classroom materials and bring items from home that are relevant to their children's learning.

Children learn best when the material is developmentally appropriate.

Each child is assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD that aligns with our curriculum (The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Sixth Edition). This assessment tool helps teachers determine in what areas each child is thriving, as well as areas where there is a great opportunity for growth. An individual plan is written for each child, and parents help determine which learning opportunities would best support their child.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

FOND DU LAC CENTER

19 West First Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Phone: (920) 922-7760
www.advocap.org

Director of Head Start	Beth Zachwieja	Ext. 3512	bethz@advocap.org
Administrative Assistant	Sherry Auchue	Ext. 3578	sherrya@advocap.org
Family Engagement Manager	Lorri Bohn	Ext. 3544	lorrib@advocap.org
Training & Development Manager	Jenny Dehn	Ext. 3579	jennyd@advocap.org
Health Services Manager	Debbie Serwe	Ext. 3554	debbies@advocap.org
Health Services Assistant	Anna Zangl	Ext. 3542	annaz@advocap.org
Registered Dietitian	Ellen Miller	Ext. 3598	ellenm@advocap.org

Center Operations Managers:

Fond du Lac, First Presbyterian	Tara Bos	Ext. 3592	tarab@advocap.org
North Fond du Lac, Ripon	Jenna Lick	Ext. 3564	jennar@advocap.org
Prairie View, Berlin	RoseAnne Henning	(920) 398-3907	roseanneh@advocap.org

PRAIRIE VIEW CENTER

W911 State Hwy 44
Markesan, WI 53946
1-800-631-6617 / (920) 398-3907

NORTH FOND DU LAC/EARLY LEARNING CENTER

923 Minnesota Avenue
North Fond du Lac, WI 54937
(920) 322-9190

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CENTER

1225 Fourth St
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
(920) 273-5574

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

151 S. Grove St.
Berlin, WI 54923
(920) 361-1781

FOND DU LAC

19 W First Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
(920) 922-7760

BARLOW PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

100 Ringstad Dr.
Ripon, WI 54971
(920) 748-155

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

My Rights as a Head Start parent/guardian:

- to always be treated with respect and dignity
- to be welcomed in the classroom and at Head Start activities (unless legal limitations)
- to choose whether or not I participate, without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program
- to expect guidance for my child from Head Start staff which will enhance his/her total individual development
- to be able to learn enough about the program to take part in major decisions affecting it's planning and operations
- to help develop and participate in adult programs which will improve daily living for my family and myself
- to participate in programs designed to increase my skills toward self-sufficiency
- to be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education, and the improvement of family life

My Responsibilities as a Head Start parent/guardian:

- to accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and the lives of my children
- to take part in the classroom experiences as an observer, a volunteer worker or a paid employee, and to contribute in any way I can to the enrichment of the program
- to guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective
- to work in partnership with staff and other parents in a cooperative way
- to work with Head Start staff to set goals and overcome obstacles, celebrating my strengths and successes
- to learn as much as possible about the program and to partner with Head Start staff to bring awareness to the community about what the program offers
- to take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment

CONFIDENTIALITY

All forms and information on children are considered confidential and are accessible only to authorized Head Start staff members and parents. Records are kept in an individual folder inside a locked file cabinet, and no one else shall have access unless parents have given written permission.

All visiting parents and volunteers are expected to adhere to confidentiality guidelines, including an emphasis on keeping information learned through working with the children completely confidential, as well as prohibiting any type of sharing (information or photos) on social media.

CURRICULUM

Head Start programs provide high-quality early education and child development services that promote all children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school. Our program utilizes a research-based curriculum called Creative Curriculum, which includes screening and assessment procedures to support individualization and development.

Head Start staff sets aside sufficient time to create classroom spaces with the intention to create the best learning environment possible. The activities that are planned for children, the way the rooms are organized, the kinds of toys and materials available, the daily schedules and the way we talk to the children are all designed to accomplish the goals of Creative Curriculum and give your child a successful start in school. When classrooms are appropriately equipped, children are able to make discoveries using their senses of touch, sight, hearing, feeling and taste. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to understand how things work. Play is the best tool to encourage this type of learning. These are some of the developmental areas that we focus on:

SOCIAL: to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.

EMOTIONAL: to help children experience pride and self confidence, develop independence and self control, and have a positive attitude toward life.

COGNITIVE: to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.

PHYSICAL: to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

Additionally, we use a research-based developmental screening tool to gather information about your child's strengths, as well as areas they may need extra support. This is called the Ages & Stages Questionnaire. There are two Ages & Stages Questionnaires, one focusing on physical development and the other on social and emotional development.

The curriculum works best when teachers and parents/guardians plan together. Parents/guardians are a valuable resource to teachers. Your home is your child's first and continual learning environment. You know how your child learns best and what his or her interests are. The teachers incorporate your ideas into their plans. They appreciate knowing what they are learning at home. We ask that you volunteer in the classroom, read the newsletters, attend conferences, keep in touch with your child's teacher and encourage your child to learn and explore at home and in their community. Help your child become an independent, enthusiastic, and curious learner!

OUTDOOR PLAY/ CLOTHING ATTIRE

Outdoor play is a key part of our curriculum. It is important for children to get outdoors, so they can run, jump, climb, and use all the large muscles in their bodies. Being active is additionally beneficial to help children focus while in the classroom. By playing outdoors your child can learn so many things, such as:

- noticing changes in nature
- discovering what happens when it is cold, hot, dark, or light
- using their body in increasingly skillful ways
- being a good observer by seeing, hearing, smelling and touching.

Health experts also agree on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. In order to receive these benefits, children are expected to go outside every day, except in extreme weather (rain, below zero temperatures or wind chill). While we would like to individualize, regulations on required staff-child ratios do not allow us to stay inside with one or two children while the group goes outside.

We do understand that parents have strong feelings about keeping their children healthy. If a child is well enough to attend Head Start, the child is generally assumed well enough to go outside. Health experts agree that cool or damp weather is rarely harmful to children. Please speak with the Health Services Manager or the Director with questions.

It is important that children wear clothes that fit well, but allow them to move freely. Your child might get dirty when they are playing and exploring, so we ask that you send them in clothing that you don't mind getting messy or stained. For your child's safety, we also ask that your child wears close-toed shoes (tennis shoes are the best option).

We will try to remind you when your child is lacking a hat, mittens, boots, snow pants, or other needed clothing. We also try to keep extras on hand for those times when items are forgotten or misplaced. The program depends on children arriving with all of the necessary clothing for a full, active day - both indoors and out. If you are in need of these items, please reach out to your Family Development Specialist and we will try to assist in providing them for your child.

With your cooperation and encouragement, the outdoors becomes an extension of our classroom where exciting learning takes place!

PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Head Start regulations require teachers to make two visits to the home of each child, in addition to the two parent/teacher conferences scheduled at Head Start. The first home visit will take place before school begins. At this time, the teacher will meet with each child's family and answer any questions they may have before school begins. In October/November the parent/teacher conferences at school will be scheduled. The second teacher home visit will take place in January or February. The final parent/teacher conference at school will be scheduled in May. It is important that families attend these conferences to keep informed about their child's progress. Because we value these partnerships, we offer flexibility in scheduling to accommodate your family so that you are able to attend in person and stay informed of your child's progress. Understanding that there can be scheduling conflicts, we can also offer a virtual option when necessary. If you would like to talk to your child's teacher or other Head Start staff at any time during the year, feel free to call and schedule a convenient time.

Every family will receive a monthly newsletter entitled the "*Head Start Connection*". Information on upcoming events such as family nights, parenting classes, community events, etc. are included in that newsletter. Each teaching team also sends a weekly newsletter. This newsletter shares information with parents on the weekly theme and special activities planned for your child, which can also be a great tool to help you talk to your child about the events that have taken place in school.

FAMILY SERVICES

ADVOCAP'S Head Start Family Development staff is committed to meeting the individual needs of each Head Start family. Head Start has been a leader in understanding the value of parent involvement in their child's learning activities.

Our dedicated Family Development staff will be involved with your child and classroom teacher and serve as an information link between families and the classroom staff.

Family Development Staff will:

- * offer opportunities to work collaboratively to determine your families strengths, areas of concern and setting and prioritizing goals
- * provide you with a community resource directory and describe the services available to you at Head Start, ADVOCAP, and in the community
- * provide families with support in improving self-sufficiency
- * provide opportunities for parents to learn about child development and discipline, as well a healthy family management
- * offer fun family events and activities that promote a positive school-to-home connection
- * offer opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and on field trips

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

One of the most unique parts of the Head Start program is the engagement of parents and families. Parents/guardians and staff can work together to decide what kinds of learning experiences they want their children to have in Head Start.

There are many ways for parents to be involved in ADVOCAP's Head Start Program including:

- * volunteering in the classroom
- * eating breakfast, lunch, snack with the children
- * preparing materials at home for the teachers
- * representing your child's class on Policy Council
- * attending family nights
- * assisting the Family Development Specialists in planning family events
- * reading to children

Additionally, teachers will send home other supplemental educational newsletters home each month. These newsletters provide ideas and suggestions in ways families can continue to support their children's growth at home.

SUPPLIES

Here at Head Start, all classroom supplies are provided at no cost for your child. The only needed item for you to supply is a backpack. Please ensure that the backpack is big enough to fit a normal sized folder, which we will also supply. If you are unable to provide a backpack, please be sure to talk to your child's teacher or your Family Development Specialist and we will assist you in obtaining one. Not only is it important that your child uses a backpack for parent to teacher communications, but it also teaches the skill of being responsible for something on their own. We also ask that you help your child develop these skills by making it a routine to check and empty out the backpack every day.

REIMBURSEMENTS

We may provide child care on-site at some evening meetings or special events. In addition, if assistance is needed in order to attend Policy Council or volunteer in the classroom, we will reimburse parents at a specified rate during the hours spent at the meeting or classroom (\$3.50 per hour for one child and \$5.00 per hour for more than one child). If you have any questions, need assistance in locating quality childcare, or would like to get pre-approval for child care reimbursement, contact the Family Engagement Manager at 922-7760 Ext. 3544.

Parents who are members of ADVOCAP's Head Start Policy Council may receive reimbursement for mileage to attend the monthly meetings held in Fond du Lac. Contact the Director at Family Engagement Manager at 922-7760 Ext. 3544 for more information.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a very important part of the program! When a parent, relative, or guardian volunteers at Head Start, it shows the child that an adult is interested in what he/she is doing. Volunteering gives your child a sense of pride and encourages children to do their best. It makes them feel important and special. Together, we can find a role to match your comfort level within the classroom. Just ask us how!

All visiting parents and volunteers are expected to adhere to confidentiality guidelines, including an emphasis on keeping information learned through working with the children completely confidential, as well as prohibiting any type of sharing (information or photos) on social media.

POLICY COUNCIL

The Head Start Policy Council is one of the main decision-making bodies of the program. Members of Policy Council work closely with the Head Start Director to make major decisions affecting the program. At least 51% of the Policy Council members shall be parents or guardians of children who are currently enrolled in the program. Program options will be proportionally represented on the Policy Council by county of residence. Policy Council members are elected as voting members before the October meeting, however other opportunities may come up throughout the year. Additionally, all parents are invited to attend the meetings.

Representatives from the community also play a role in the Council, but these members may not exceed 49% of the total membership. They may be previous Head Start parents, representatives from other service organizations, school organizations, school districts, county public health nurses, colleges, or the county Human Services Department. Policy Council members may not serve more than five years, as stated in the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

If possible, child care is provided during Policy Council meetings, or parents may receive child care reimbursement for attending this meeting held once each month at the Fond du Lac Head Start Center. Mileage reimbursement is available only for Policy Council members that live outside of Fond du Lac. Please contact your Family Development Specialist for more information.

Become a Leader and an Advocate in the Program!

IN-KIND (Non Federal Match)

ADVOCAP's Head Start program serves 257 children, primary funded through federal resources. The remaining funding comes from the State of Wisconsin, which covers approximately 15 of the 257 children we serve. One requirement of the federal grant is that we receive a portion of the grant amount in donations from the community. This can come in the form of material donations, financial contributions and volunteer services.

Parents or guardians volunteering their time at the center, attending Policy Council meetings, preparing materials at home, or participating in other program-related activities, are some examples of how we can achieve meeting our In-Kind requirements. The value of the hours a person volunteers is calculated at a rate comparable to what we would pay for these services.

CLASSROOM AND CHILD MANAGEMENT

Head Start recognizes that each learning environment and every child within that environment is unique. Because of this, it is necessary to set standards that provide for the safety of all children and adults in each classroom. Spaces are designed with intention to promote a positive and supportive environment that encourages growth in all areas of our curriculum. Additionally, staff will take a proactive approach to discipline.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

1. Staff will arrange the classroom to provide for a safe and consistent environment. The classroom will have clearly defined interest areas equipped with materials that are developmentally appropriate and easily accessible to the children. Children will be offered a variety of activity choices. Equipment used will be appropriate for the developmental levels of the children and kept in good repair.
2. The atmosphere of the classroom will promote positive interactions among children and adults. Staff will help children develop self-control and promote positive self-esteem. Adults will model appropriate behaviors, speak calmly to the children, praise and encourage the successive steps of the child's learning progress, and provide opportunities for success. Staff will provide an environment of acceptance which helps each child build ethnic pride and a positive self-concept.
3. Staff will clearly define, teach and model acceptable and respectful behaviors. Classroom rules will be created with the help of children. They will be simple and positively stated. The rules will be reinforced through the use of reminders, visual cues, role-modeling, and positive guidance.
4. The daily schedule will provide predictability for the children. Time will be allowed for various activities including active/quiet, small group/large group/individualized activities, and teacher-directed/self-initiated. Adequate time will be allowed for transitioning.
5. Teachers and support staff will have classroom lesson plans and materials prepared and ready to go when the children arrive each day. As written in the curriculum section of this handbook, we have carefully selected a curriculum that supports the growth and development of each child.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT:

Conscious discipline techniques, along with the strategies listed below, will be used to teach and develop self-regulation skills and healthy social-emotional responses. We will also use these to redirect inappropriate or unsafe behaviors.

1. Praising: Create a sense of well-being and acceptance.
2. Shaping: Systematic planning for gradual, sequential change in negative behavior.
3. Active listening: Help children clarify feelings in order to problem-solve and replace behavior.
4. Substituting: Offer a positive replacement activity for an unacceptable activity.

5. Modifying environment: Change room arrangement.
Reduce group size.
Modify stimulus, reduce waiting time.
Restrict choices.
Remove a child from an activity, only if the child is verbally disruptive or in danger of hurting himself/herself or others.
Revise daily schedule.
6. Providing predictability: Establish consistent rituals and routines.
Plan transitions in advance.
7. Involving parents: Ask for parental input and cooperation.
Provide instruction in behavior modification techniques.

PROHIBITIVE PRACTICES:

ADVOCAP's Head Start prohibits any physical punishment or punishment that humiliates or frightens the children. This includes but is not limited to physical, verbal, or restraining practices, using food, naps, or experiences as a consequence, and punishment for lapses in toilet training. Employees who violate the Discipline Policy will be subject to the provisions of the ADVOCAP Employee Personnel Policies.

ATTENDANCE

Head Start's philosophy states that attendance and full participation by parents and children is important. With regular attendance, your child has the best opportunity to experience success. By being at school every day, your child will become comfortable with the classroom rules and routines, develop strong friendships and positive relationships with teachers and support staff, and become more consistent in academic growth.

It is generous that the federal government funds this program at no cost to parents. However, that comes with the expectation of high attendance rates. To ensure that funding for this program is utilized to the full intent, we ask that families be committed to their children's full attendance.

In the event that your child needs be absent, please call your ADVOCAP Head Start center as early as possible. When parents do not contact Head Start to notify the center of a child's absence, state licensing rules requires the child's teacher to contact the family within one hour to ensure the safety and whereabouts of that child. Please keep in mind this requires the teacher to disrupt the teaching time to make that phone call. Therefore, parents' cooperation in calling the center is greatly appreciated.

Before class starts, teachers are in and out of the room preparing for your child's session time, so we ask that you not bring your child to class more than 10 minutes prior to the start time and that you be prompt in picking up at the end of the session. At drop-off, please ensure you deliver your child to a Head Start staff member to ensure your child's safety and our compliance with state licensing requirements.

SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Each year, Head Start serves children with diagnosed disabilities in an inclusive setting at all centers. Our program offers an educational curriculum rich in many areas including speech and language, physical development, social-emotional skills, and academic growth. Some children may need extra help in the these areas. A developmental assessment is completed on all children. After consultation with parents, a child may be referred to the school district or proper professionals for further evaluation.

For those Head Start children who participate in other programs, a cooperative effort is made to best serve the child. Head Start offers support and training for parents of all children.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

ADVOCAP's Head Start understands that our decision to open, close, or delay school during inclement weather often disrupts family schedules. Our top priority is the safety of children and staff.

We will use school district decisions as a guide, however with serving 13 different districts, we ultimately need to make our own decisions on school closures. In the event that school is closed, we make our best effort to notify media as early as possible so they can communicate with the public. These announcements can be found on WBAY, WLUK FOX11, and KFIZ.

When a 2-hour delay has been called, full-day and PM children will be picked up at their typical address (there will be no AM session). The parent will be responsible for providing transportation if the child will not be at their typical pick-up location.

When an early release has been called, we will not pick up PM children (if notified in time), and will drop full-day children off at their typical drop-off address. The parent will be responsible for providing transportation if an approved adult (someone listed on the emergency card with permission to "release to") will not be at their typical drop-off location.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

ADVOCAP's Head Start has a policy to prepare for unexpected emergencies. It is important that every parent knows how to respond if something unexpected were to occur.

How to Check on Your Child

- Do NOT call Head Start. Telephone lines must be kept free for outgoing calls to emergency personnel. In a citywide emergency, telephone lines may be busy or completely unavailable.
- If at all possible, ADVOCAP's Head Start staff will contact you.
- Watch local TV news channels and listen to local radio stations for updates as broadcast.

How to Pick Up Your Child in the Event of a Disaster

- In most cases, the school will be locked during and immediately following a crisis. No one other than emergency personnel will be allowed to enter until it is determined that conditions are safe.
- In the event that students need to be evacuated from the school grounds, instructions for picking up your child will be communicated through the media.
- When it is safe to release students, parents need to be prepared to pick up with identification. Students will not be released to anyone other than their parent or someone listed on the emergency card with permission to “release to”.

Drills are practiced on a regular basis as required.

CRISIS	RESPONSE
Fire – Gas Leaks	Evacuate the building
Natural Disasters (tornado, flood, earthquake)	Shelter in place
Chemical and hazardous materials spills	Shelter in place and eventual evacuation
Violence	Lock down

HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICIES

Every child needs regular healthcare to promote normal healthy development. Our ADVOCAP’s Head Start family development and health staff will assist parents in finding a dentist and/or doctor and in securing ongoing health and dental care which is affordable, if needed. Parents are encouraged to talk with the Health Services Manager about any other concerns they may have in the area of health or mental health (difficulties with medical bills, attending medical appointments, finding a provider, etc.).

ADVOCAP’s Head Start has a health education program for both parents and children. Head Start parents may take any of the preventive health and safety classes such as CPR, First Aid, etc., at their local hospitals free of charge. There are also many other workshops available in the community regarding positive parenting and a wide variety of other topics of interest to young families. If parents are interested in knowing more about them, they should contact the family development or health staff. Health and safety practices are taught to the children every day as a part of the Head Start curriculum.

Head Start has policies in place to keep children healthy and free from communicable disease. They are as follows:

- Children attending Head Start will need to have a well child physical within six months prior to or within 90 days after enrollment. Because this is a requirement of the WI Department of Health and Human Services, children who do not have their health exams completed within this time will be unable to continue in the program and their name will be placed on the waiting list for re-enrollment when their exams are completed. Parents will need to set up a schedule within 30 days of enrollment to complete immunizations for those children who are not up to date. Children should also be on an ongoing schedule for well child care, which includes both preventive and primary healthcare. Fond du Lac County children will have a dental exam with fluoride provided 3 times within the program year. Green Lake county children will be provided a dental exam, cleaning and fluoride treatment by dental hygienist 2 times within the program year. Parents can choose to opt out of this free service at time of enrollment.
- Children who attend Head Start for more than one year will need their physical within one year from their previous exam.
- Health screening for growth, hearing, hemoglobin, blood pressure and vision will be completed by your medical provider or Head Start staff within 45 days of enrollment.
- Encourage parents to give their child plenty of time to recover if he/she has been ill so they are strong and healthy when they return to the center.
- Prescription medication with the original label can only be given to a child by trained staff. The medicine must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, directions, date, and physician's name. A written request form must be completed and signed by a parent and the child's medical provider before any medication, prescription and non-prescription, can be given to a child. This includes all medications such as Tylenol, cough drops, etc. Parents or guardians will give school medications or refills directly to a staff member such as the teacher, bus monitor, or bus driver. **Medication must never be transported in your child's school bag.**
- Children with an undiagnosed rash or skin problem need to see their doctor for a diagnosis. If a doctor determines that the child does not have a communicable disease, the child may return with a re-admittance slip signed by the medical professional. Children with a communicable disease may return with a re-entry permission slip from the doctor **OR** if the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest period of communicability according to the WI Communicable Disease and Administrative Rule.
- Families need to inform their teacher or Head Start staff if their child is exposed to a communicable disease, lice, or bed bugs. Family Development Specialists can assist in connecting families to resources to help with these concerns.
- Temporary isolation will be provided for all children who become ill while they are at the center. Parents or someone listed on the emergency card with permission to "release to" will be contacted to pick up the child at the center.
- If a child is injured while at Head Start, the parents will be noticed by phone and/or Minor Illness or Injury Form, depending on the circumstances. A written accident report is kept in the child's file, medical log, and Head Start Injury Form will be completed.

- All Head Start staff are required to have current First Aid, CPR and emergency situation training.

EXCLUSION/COVID POLICY

ADVOCAP's Head Start staff will be closely monitoring the health of children who attend our centers and activities. All children are required to be masked during the school day with the exception of meal time, nap time, toothbrushing or if a child has a medical excuse. Due to increased concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19, we will send home any child with the following health conditions:

- ✓ Fever of 100.4 degrees or more
- ✓ Influenza (flu) symptoms
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Undiagnosed rash
- ✓ Persistent cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath, breathing difficulties
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Loss of taste or smell
- ✓ Any illness that prevents a child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- ✓ Illness that results in a greater need for care that staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in the classroom.

If your child has any of these symptoms, they need to stay home from school, recreational/social events, and childcare until they are symptom-free without the use of medication for 24 hours. Limiting your child's exposure to others will decrease the chance of disease spreading to others. We follow your child's county COVID quarantine guidelines if your child has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

****Parents are responsible for notifying their child's school when their child is symptom-free and healthy enough to return to school. If your child rides an ADVOCAP Head Start bus, the bus WILL NOT pick up your child until you have notified the school that your child has been symptom-free without medication for 24 hours.**** Parents are asked to provide their child with a mask upon arrival onto any ADVOCAP bus.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Head Start believes in the importance of good mental health. The staff works with each child to help them succeed and develop good self-esteem. Throughout the school year, our staff use several specially designed curricula to help the children build their confidence and learn to be proud of who they are.

There are also opportunities for parents. Informal discussion groups are held throughout the year on topics of interest that are selected by parents. Topics in the past have included building healthy relationships, step-parent families, child growth and development, parenting, and support groups for both moms and dads. Families are also given information about many other opportunities in the community regarding mental wellness.

Each of our centers in Fond du Lac and Green Lake Counties have a mental health consultant who is available to meet with staff and families. The consultants have experience working with children and families. They observe all of the children in the classrooms each Fall and Spring and meet with the staff to give suggestions and assist in developing a plan to help each child achieve success.

Parents are welcome to meet with the mental health consultant for individual counseling. The appointments are very informal, free of charge, and are confidential (no forms or records are kept). Each year, many of our families find this very helpful. If you or any members of your family are going through a troublesome time, have personal concerns, or just need someone to talk with, call the Health Services Manager to discuss your concerns. You may want to schedule an appointment with the mental health consultant. You may also contact your Family Development Specialist or your child's teacher if you would like any of these services. All information shared is strictly confidential.

Parents are also encouraged to talk and share their concerns regarding their child with any of the staff at parent/teacher conferences, home visits, or at any other time they would like to talk with someone. Children will often have a change in their behavior in response to a change in their lives. If you've had some changes in your family that you feel are affecting your child, please share that information with your child's teacher or Family Development Specialist. By doing so, we can work together to understand your child's behavior and help him or her deal successfully with those changes.

SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Head Start is required to comply with Wisconsin law regarding child abuse and neglect. Our staff is mandated to report the observation of any child who appears to have been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused. This report is kept confidential. They must also report any child whose health appears to be endangered by a lack of physical care and/or neglect. The law is designed to protect the health and welfare of children.

Throughout the year, children are taught to respect their bodies and understand their emotions. Children have the opportunity to learn what they should do if they feel threatened or abused. Parents with concerns are invited to come into their child's classroom or talk with their child's teacher or Health Services Manager.

NUTRITION SERVICES

Meals:

All children at ADVOCAP Head Start participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP is a federal program of the United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). This program gives financial assistance to licensed childcare institutions to provide nutritious meals. The primary goal of the CACFP is to improve the diet of children 12 years of age and younger. The CACFP reimbursement helps to offset food costs to allow caregivers to provide high quality, nutritious meals and snacks to children in their care.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Meals and snacks must meet the CACFP minimum meal pattern requirements for children. The meal patterns are based on research related to the individual needs of children at specific ages. Children will not go without nourishment for more than three hours.

The meal pattern contains specific components for each meal. Breakfast must contain milk, fruit or vegetable, and a grain or meat alternative item. Lunch must include milk, a meat/meat alternate, vegetable, fruit, and a grain item. A snack must contain two different food components (milk, juice or fruit, vegetable, meat/meat alternate, grain).

Special Diets:

Menus will be changed for children with special dietary needs due to allergy or a medical condition. Menu alterations will be made upon receipt of written instructions by the child's physician and upon request of the parent.

Treats:

Head Start includes celebrations and special occasions as part of our developmentally appropriate curriculum. To ensure the safety of our children and staff, families are asked NOT to bring in food treats to celebrate special occasions. Traditional food treats for special occasions do not meet the USDA's meal patterns for snacks and meals. Therefore, these foods cannot be distributed at Head Start. If your child would like to share something to celebrate a special occasion, Head Start suggests non-food treats such as pencils, stickers, or books. Check with your teacher for other ideas!

Head Start welcomes meal and snack suggestions from families for introducing new food experiences to children. Those with suggestions should contact the teacher, who will then coordinate purchase of supplies for use during planned classroom activities.

Menus:

Menus are planned monthly and designed to limit the use of salt, sugar, and fat; while emphasizing foods high in fiber, and including diverse types of food to broaden the child's food experiences.

Food for all meals must be prepared on the premises or come from approved food providers.

Parents will receive a monthly copy of the menus. First Presbyterian, North Fond du Lac, Ripon and Berlin lunch menus will follow the school district's menu; the breakfast and snack menus will follow Head Start's menus. Menu changes may be made without notice due to unforeseen circumstances.

Meal Service:

Staff and volunteers dine with the children family style. Additional portions of vegetables, fruit, bread, and milk are available to allow for individual appetites. Children are encouraged to serve themselves; staff and volunteers may assist children as needed. Meals are eaten in a relaxed and positive atmosphere with adults modeling and encouraging proper table manners, tasting of all foods, initiating conversation, and respecting children's individual appetites and preferences. Children are encouraged to taste all foods, but they are not forced to take or taste any food. Food is not used as punishment or reward. Children are allowed to eat at their own pace. They may leave the table when they are full and then move on to a quiet activity. Parents are strongly encouraged to come and enjoy a meal with their child and his/her Head Start friends.

Nutrition education:

Children participate in planned food-related and nutrition activities in the classrooms. Topics include safe food preparation, learning about My Plate, and connecting food with good health. Family nutrition education opportunities are available throughout the year in collaboration with UW-Extension FoodWise program.

Nutrition Assessment and Counseling:

All families complete a child nutrition assessment during registration. Any individual or family nutrition needs identified during the assessment will be addressed and followed during the school year. New or additional nutrition needs will be addressed during the school year as needed. Nutrition counseling for children or families is available by appointment through the registered dietitian.

SELF-TRANSPORTATION

Parents who transport their child to Head Start must accompany the child into the classroom and complete the classroom sign-in/sign-out sheet. Children must not arrive at school more than 10 minutes before their class begins. Always leave your child with an adult. Please be sure to pick your child up promptly when your child's class is dismissed.

If the child is self-transported and is not picked up at the end of class, the student will be kept at the center. Contacts with parents will be initiated. If no contact with a parent/emergency contact is made within an hour of the class ending, then center management will contact local authorities or DHS.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY ADVOCAP

Fond du Lac Center & First Presbyterian (920)539-0159
Prairie View Center (920)398-3907 or 1-800-631-6617

Classrooms located at the Prairie View and Fond du Lac centers may receive transportation from ADVOCAP, as available. Classrooms located at the First Presbyterian center will receive transportation services through ADVOCAP or Johnson Bus company.

1. Have your child appropriately dressed and ready to board the bus prior to the scheduled pick-up time. While we cannot guarantee an exact time due to many influences, we will provide a general pick-up time, but ask for a 10-minute leeway (early and late) on that time. Drivers will wait three minutes at each stop. Per city ordinance, we are not allowed to honk the horn. After three minutes the driver will continue on their route and is not allowed to come back for any reason. We need to stay on time for the sake of all the other families on the route.
2. Parents or authorized adults must walk the child to the bus. It is the bus monitor's responsibility to assist the children onto the bus and fasten the child's bus seat restraints. Parents or designated adults will sign the daily attendance log when their child gets on and off the bus. We encourage you to help us stay timely by having your child and their belongings ready to go upon our arrival.
3. **If your child is home sick, the bus will not return until a parent calls to let us know that he/she has been symptom-free for 24 hours.** If the child is a "no call, no show" for two consecutive days, the bus will also not return until we speak to the parents. Parents must notify their child's center when the child will not be attending class and when the child is ready to be picked up again. Mondays will be treated as a "reset" day. Any children who had not been picked up the previous week due to illness or "no shows" will be attempted to be picked up, unless we hear differently from a parent.
(**Note:** If a child is sent home due to vomiting, diarrhea or a fever, but becomes AND remains symptom free thereafter, the parent could bring the child to school once they have been symptom-free without medications for 24 hours.)

4. Notify your child's center of any change in your child's pick-up or drop-off at least 24 hours in advance for consideration. We will accommodate changes to routes to the best of our ability. Parents should also notify Head Start no later than a week in advance of moving. If you are moving outside the transportation boundaries of your child's current center, you will then be responsible for providing transportation. When we have a classroom spot available in your new transportation area, you may request a transfer to the new site, at which time ADVOCAP Head Start transportation can resume, if applicable.
5. Children will not be released to anyone other than persons listed on the Emergency Information Card. Minor children CANNOT sign off for Head Start children unless deemed appropriate by the Center Operations Manager, such as a sibling who is age-appropriate to babysit. Parents need to prearrange this with the Center Operations Manager directly. Please have a photo ID available.
6. If there is a concern regarding the transportation and/or drivers, parents/guardians are to call their child's center to discuss the issue with the center operations manager. Concerns are not to be addressed on or near the bus in front of children.
7. There is no food, drink, smoking, or pets allowed on ADVOCAP's Head Start vehicles.
8. When dropping children off, the bus driver will wait three minutes for the parent to come out. If the parent does not come out within this time frame, the bus driver will ask Dispatch to call the parent. If there is no contact with the parent, the student will be brought back to the center. Contacts with parents/emergency contacts will continue to be attempted. If no contact with a parent/emergency contact is made within one hour of returning to the center, the center manager will contact local authorities or DHS.
9. The person taking the child off the bus will need to sign them off. This person needs to be listed on the emergency card with permission granted to "release to". If the driver does not know the person, they will be required to show ID.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Berlin- Northern Express (920)361-2877
First Presbyterian Center – Johnson Bus (920)921-3003
Ripon- Lamers Bus Company (920) 745-2245

Classrooms located at the North Fond du Lac, Ripon, and Berlin centers will not receive transportation from ADVOCAP. Transportation services at these centers are provided by the applicable school districts, if available. Classrooms located at the First Presbyterian center will receive transportation services through ADVOCAP or Johnson Bus company, Ripon through Lamers Bus Company and Berlin through Northern Express Bus Company. External bus companies have their own policies, which we need to abide by.

1. ADVOCAP has a transportation waiver from Head Start. There will not be bus monitors or the individual bus seats on district buses. The children will be seated and ride to school with the other students.

2. A parent or other authorized adult will need to walk the child to the bus at pick-up and drop-off. When dropping children off, the bus driver will wait two minutes for the parent to come out. If the parent does not come out within this time frame, the Head Start center will be notified and attempts to call parent/emergency contacts will be made. If there is still no contact made, the student will be brought back to the center. Contacts with parents/emergency contacts will continue to be attempted. If no contact with a parent/emergency contact is made within one hour of returning to the center, the center manager will contact local authorities or DHS.

3. If you need to report an absence or change in transportation needs, please call the bus company directly. Also call absences into your center so we know your child will not be present in class that day.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking has been determined to be a health hazard both to the individual smoking and all persons who might otherwise be exposed to tobacco smoke. You may not expose any employee or person that ADVOCAP serves to this hazard by smoking in their presence. You are not permitted to smoke in any facility or on the property of any facility, in the sight of the children, or in any ADVOCAP vehicles.

PARTICIPANT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Occasionally, individuals may question decisions made and the availability of services. The individual may wish to address these concerns.

The following procedure should be followed:

1. In the event that an individual has a grievance, the Program Director should be notified and all information will be held in strict confidence.
2. The Program Director will discuss the situation and attempt to resolve the matter with the individual.
3. If the individual is not satisfied, a complaint form will be provided to the individual. The individual may complete the form with assistance as needed, and submit it to the Deputy Director.
4. The Deputy Director will review the complaint form and issue a verbal and written response to the individual within five working days.