



CommunityAction

Serving Barry, Branch, Calhoun, and St. Joseph Counties since 1966

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
HEAD START
EARLY HEAD START
HEAD START/GSRP



2015-2016
Family Handbook

Community Action Main Office

175 Main Street

Battle Creek, MI 49014

(269) 965-7766

Or Toll Free (877) 422-2726

www.caascm.org

Lead Teacher's Name: _____ Asst. Teacher: _____

Site: _____ Classroom: _____

Family Service Advocate: _____ Center Manager: _____

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INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Dedicated to Helping People Achieve and Maintain Independence



Education and Children's Services (ECS) Mission Statement

With the involvement of the community, we strive to enhance the self-dignity and self-worth of the children and families that we serve.

ECS Philosophy

Give all children an equal opportunity to achieve success. Families, staff and the community are included as active partners in the success of children and the program. For all children to be successful, families need support in achieving their goals.

ECS Goals:

1. All children will thrive in their present environment and enter school with the experiences, skills, and confidence needed to be successful.
2. Parents, families and communities together with ECS will actively and intentionally engage in the learning and development of young children and their families.
3. Community Action ECS and community service providers will strengthen the support of special populations of children in our program which include special needs, homeless, foster care, dual language learners and children with challenging behaviors so family knowledge is increased and children achieve their highest potential.
4. Families will have knowledge of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and available community resources which contribute to improved economic security.
5. ECS will increase staff retention and improve job performance by providing adequate professional development and support

necessary for staff to meet federal guidelines and provide a quality early childhood and conducive learning environment.

6. **Fiscal Goal:** The budget will support programmatic goals so that Community Action may comply with all rules and regulations while providing excellent program quality.

ECS Beliefs:

- Ensure that children receive medical and dental exams and good nutrition.
- Help children to develop a sense of self, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-discipline and self-expression.
- Provide learning activities that maximize children's social and emotional, cognitive, language and physical skills.
- Establish a pattern and expectation of success for children, which creates a climate of confidence for their present and future learning.
- Provide a program for children that builds independence; encourages children to take risks; use their imagination, creativity and initiative; and promote a respect for others and for property.
- Ensure that each child is treated as a unique individual capable of achieving his or her full potential.
- Collaborate with and support the whole family while building lasting relationships and connections.
- Provide links to community resources to enable families to achieve and maintain their goals.
- Value family as the child's foremost teacher.
- Encourage and expect family participation in the program.
- Treat all families and children with respect and dignity regardless of culture, gender or race.
- Collaborate with the community to provide the best services for families and for the program.

Welcome

Community Action Education and Children's Services welcomes you to our Program! This handbook is written to help families and staff understand the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures. ECS is designed to be a partnership between families and staff members. We take our responsibility to support parents and nurture young children very seriously. We strive to provide a warm, loving environment filled with learning experiences during each child's day.

Community Action ECS staff form the core of our program. We focus on hiring staff dedicated to the care and development of children. Community Action encourages families to work closely with their child's teacher to implement activities to meet their child's developmental needs.

Community Action welcomes parent visits and participation at the center at any time. Families are encouraged to participate in center activities and membership in Policy Council enables elected parents to have an active voice in program governance.

Community Action is glad to have you as a part of our ECS family!

Background Checks

ECS staff members are screened through a Michigan State Police Criminal Background Check and Department of Human Services (DHS) Clearance before coming in contact with any child in our care. These are updated every two years. Contracted personnel with the Intermediate School Districts (ISD), Registered Nurse, etc. complete DHS clearance through their employer. A copy of this clearance is on file with ECS.

Parents or legal guardians of ECS children are not required to provide DHS Child Abuse and Neglect Clearance. ECS policy states that parents and guardians are under the direct supervision of ECS staff at all times when children are present. This complies with the State of Michigan Licensing rules. However, parents are required to sign a self-declaration of Non-Abuse and Neglect Form at the time of enrollment, before coming in contact with children in our care.

Parents and volunteers, including Foster Grandparents and ECE students, who work with children at least four hours per week for more than two consecutive weeks, are screened through the DHS before coming in contact with children in our care. All Volunteers are under the direct supervision of ECS staff at all times when children are present.

Immediate family members of ECS children volunteering must be 16 years of age and accompanied by parent/legal guardian when volunteering.

Visitors/vendors and non-Community Action employees must check in upon arrival at the ECS center and must be under the supervision of Community Action employees when in contact with children.

Confidentiality Policy

By law and common courtesy, the employees and volunteer participants of Community Action ECS are required to hold all information gathered in the performance of their duties (either relating to people requesting services from the agency, or relating to fellow employees/agents) in the strictest confidence. No information is released to any unauthorized person, inside or outside the agency, without prior signed written release of information from the person the information is regarding. Release of information is mandatory in the event of a court order; threatened harm to self or others; or suspected child abuse/neglect.

COMMUNITY ACTION

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Office Location and Staff

175 Main Street
Battle Creek, Michigan 49014

OFFICE HOURS: 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

SUMMER HOURS: MAY VARY

PHONE: (269) 965-7766 or (Toll-Free) (877) 422-2726 FAX: (269) 965-8580

<i>Director of Education and Children's Services.....</i>	<i>Rebecca Macleery</i>
<i>Assistant Director of Education and Children's Services.....</i>	<i>Deb Cole</i>
<i>Professional Development Specialist.....</i>	<i>Roxane Henderson</i>
<i>Program Software Specialist.....</i>	<i>Diana Hillier</i>
<i>ERSEA Specialist.....</i>	<i>Angie Clute</i>
<i>Mental Health/Disability Services Specialist.....</i>	<i>Nicole Mansfield</i>
<i>Pre-School Education Specialist.....</i>	<i>Rosaland Jones</i>
<i>Early Education Specialist.....</i>	<i>Ratsamy Keyes</i>
<i>GSRP Education Specialist.....</i>	<i>Daryl Waggoner</i>
<i>Facilities/Transportation Coordinator.....</i>	<i>Joyce Cooper</i>
<i>Parent, Family and Community Engagement Specialist.....</i>	<i>Adrienne Gelletich</i>
<i>Fatherhood Program Coordinator.....</i>	<i>Brian Fourn</i>
<i>Health Project Specialist.....</i>	<i>Kathleen Langworthy</i>
<i>Registered Nurse.....</i>	<i>Melinda Hautau</i>

Classroom Staff are not available to answer the phone when children are present, please leave a voicemail. Center Managers and Family Service Advocates are available during this time.

Please limit phone calls to the classroom to attendance/transportation issues only. Staff will check all messages before leaving the center to assist children and families. If there are questions or concerns, please direct your calls to the ECS Office.

Enrollment

Fee Information

Community Action ECS is a federal, state and locally-funded program. Services are offered at NO COST to participants.

Criteria For Admission and Withdrawal

ECS Admission Policy is as follows:

Early Head Start: Children must be birth to 3 years of age.

Head Start: Children must be three (3) or four (4) years old by September 1st

GSRP: Children must be four (4) by September 1st

Families will be required to meet the income guidelines. Proof of all income is required for enrollment. (Income tax record, DHS or SSI determination letter, wage stubs, unemployment or other documentation as needed for proof of income)

Families must provide children's Immunization Records, Certified Birth Certificate, and an up-to-date Physical and Dental Exam.

Special consideration is given to children with special needs.

Withdrawal from the program is viewed as a misfortune for everyone. We will do our best to help each family be successful in the program.

Attendance Information

In order to maximize a child's success in learning new skills, consistent attendance is important. Please make every effort to have your child at school every day.

When your child is unable to attend for any reason, including illness, please call the center as soon as possible. Also, if you know in advance that your child will not be attending, please inform the classroom staff.

When your child has been absent and you did not call in, you can expect a call from the classroom staff. If absenteeism becomes excessive, (more than 3 days), the Family Service Advocate/Center Manager will make a home visit and/or contact the family.

Federal Guidelines (Head Start Performance Standards) state that each center, as well as each child in the program, maintains, at minimum, an 85% attendance rate. When attendance falls below the expected 85%, steps must be initiated to determine the cause(s) for this situation and next, steps to assist the family to improve attendance are initiated.

Note: If your child's attendance does not improve, they may be placed on the waitlist.

Hours of Operation

Schedule Of Operation

Children in Early Head Start sessions attend five days a week, Monday through Friday.

Children in Head Start and Head Start/GSRP sessions attend four days a week, Monday through Thursday.

Hours of operation for your child's classroom will be posted and a letter will be provided during orientation.

Community Action ECS will be closed for the following holidays

Agency Holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

In addition, centers will be closed for the following:

Community Action Staff Training Days

Two weeks for Winter Break

One week for Spring Break

ECS Adult Behavior Policy

ECS provides a safe working environment, including the parking lots for children, families, and staff. This includes all persons involved in Community Action events during work hours, socialization, home visits and family meetings. In order for the program to be effective, communication must be handled in a respectful and professional manner.

Parents/Guardians will not be permitted to threaten staff or family members of other ECS participants. Threatening behavior includes, but is NOT limited to the following:

- Physical Harm
- Verbal threats
- Verbal threats with intent to do bodily harm
- Excessive swearing
- Other hostile behaviors that arise

If a parent/guardian verbally threatens staff or family members of other ECS participants, the following steps will be taken:

1. Parent involvement in the program will be suspended. Parent may request to be Re-instated after a review by Director of ECS and Governing Board.

2. With the assistance of the Center Manager and the Family Service Advocate, a neutral person should be identified as the contact person for the child. This person will:
 - Be available to take phone calls
 - Put the child on and off the bus or transport the child
 - Accompany the child on field trip.

Individual situations may vary and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Obstructive hostile behavior can lead to termination from the program.

All involved staff and families will follow the policy and the Behavior Action Plan that is developed by ECS Staff and/or Director and person involved. Parent(s) will be given a copy and offered an opportunity to ask questions.

ECS Weapons Policy

It is our intent to provide a positive and successful preschool experience for children attending the ECS program. Staff and children need to feel they are in a safe environment. ECS has adopted a zero tolerance No Weapons Policy, including concealed weapons and those who have a permit to carry and conceal. Weapons can include anything that is brought onto ECS property with the possibility to cause bodily harm. ECS staff are mandated Child Protective Service (CPS) reporters. Federal law mandates that ECS reports weapons brought by children or adults to CPS or law enforcement.

Drug Free Zone

The possession, consumption, purchase or sale of alcohol or illegal drugs on Agency premises is prohibited, and violates state and federal statutes. Any violations will be reported to law enforcement.

Smoking Policy

In the interest of supporting a healthy work environment and limiting our employees, clients and visitors from secondhand smoke, all areas of the workplace are tobacco free without exception. Tobacco use is **not permitted** on Community Action properties or premises at any time. This includes electronic cigarettes due to the effects of role modeling for our children.

Custody Order Procedure

By the state of Michigan law, unless courts have determined otherwise, any person listed as a parent of the child on the child's official birth certificate has rights to the child, regardless of whether or not they are on the ECS Child Information Card (emergency card). We cannot deny release of any child to a legal parent listed on the birth certificate without court paperwork.

In a joint custody situation, both parents share responsibility and authority with respect to the children. This involves **parental consultation and agreement**. Each parent should fill out his or her own set of Child Information Cards. Each parent has the right to name his or her own emergency contacts on the separate Child Information Cards. If ECS receives a current written copy of a court order barring a named person from contact with the child, ECS will not consider that person as an authorized contact and will inform legal authorities if the person attempts to make contact with the child at any time.

If not on the birth certificate, the parent must prove joint custody rights by providing written copies of parental rights by court order. When this written copy is on file, the following guidelines apply:

- ECS uses the most recent Custody Orders on file.
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide ECS with the most recent Court Order.
- Custody Orders are to be easily accessible for staff (i.e. in the child's file).
- ECS does not deviate from the most recent written Court Order, even upon parent request.
- Staff should consult with Supervisor if they are unclear about the intent of the Court Order.
- Staff does not monitor the specifics of Joint Custody Orders. Staff members are required to adhere to the following:
 - A parent or legal guardian of a child in an ECS center **may visit** the child at the center at any time.
 - A parent or legal guardian of a child in an ECS center **may pick up** the child from the center at any time.

Education and Children's Services does not serve as the "supervision" for any required supervised visitation for any parent/guardian due to custody orders, divorce agreements etc... ECS does not "track" assigned days or other specifics in a joint custody situation.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Referral Policy

The following information is from Act No. 238, Section 3 (State Of Michigan Child Protection Law) to report to the Child Protection Services Workers, concerns of neglect or child abuse as observed during the child's participation in the program. Michigan State Law mandates Community Action ECS employees to report all suspected cases of non-accidental physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment and child neglect to the Child Protective Services of the Department of Human Services. The law mandates that all personnel engaged in the intake process, care or treatment of children carry out such reporting. This includes all staff, nursing, medical, nutritionist, social worker, home visitors and everyone else. Reporting in good faith frees the staff member from any liability if the report proves to be unfounded. On the other hand, willful failure to report opens the staff member to criminal or civil liability.

Suspect is a key word in Act 238. ECS does not substantiate abuse and/or neglect of a child. ECS does not determine the outcome of CPS referrals.

The Michigan Child Protection Law, 1975 PA 238, MCL 722.621 et. seq., requires the reporting of child abuse and neglect by certain persons (called mandated reporters) and permits the reporting of child abuse and neglect by all persons. The Child Protection Law includes the legal requirements for reporting, investigating, and responding to child abuse and neglect. This document is to assist mandated reporters in understanding their responsibilities under the Child Protection Law. For copies of the Child Protection Law, contact the local DHS office or go to <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>.

ECS Self-Transport Policy

Families who transport their child to an ECS classroom are responsible for the child until the child enters the classroom and they have signed their child in. Likewise, families who pick their child up from the classroom to transport home are responsible for the child from the time the parent signs the child out and leaves the classroom. Families who transport their child to and from class should be aware that ECS's responsibility and insurance does not cover the child until the child is actually in the classroom. Please keep the following in mind:

1. Please be careful and watch out for small children and families in the parking lots.
2. Please use the marked spaces for loading and parking at the center or school.
3. **No Smoking** on school property
4. Please keep music volumes down in the school loading areas.

In case of an emergency, and when a change in an emergency pick-up person is needed for only a day, a phone call must be made to the Center Manager for approval. Follow up should occur to get any additions added to the emergency card as soon as possible. A parent may also come into the classroom or office to add a name to the authorized pick-up list on their child's emergency card.

Please contact the center right away when there is a delay in picking up a child.

Late Drop off/Pick Up

Children cannot be accepted into the class until 5 minutes before the start of their day. When a child is late for school, it can be very hard to follow the daily routine. Please try to have your child to school on time.

Children are required to be picked up within 5 minutes of the end of the class session. If a family is late, we will attempt to make contact with the family or emergency contacts. Failure to pick up your child is considered a neglect issue and CPS may be called.

ECS sites are Cell Phone Free environments

Please have your phone on silent or leave it in your car while visiting your child's school.

In order to protect other families privacy, Community Action requests that you please do not take pictures or videos in your child's classroom.

Active Supervision

Keeping children safe is a top priority for all Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The Head Start Program Performance Standards require that "no child shall be left alone or unsupervised while under their care" (45 CFR 1304.52[i][1][iii]). Making sure that children stay safe and protected is a priority for both parents and staff. Active supervision is a strategy that works. It can be used in classrooms, playgrounds, and buses.

We know that nothing matters more than the safety and health of your child. Here are some ways that you can help:

- We keep the main entrance to our buildings locked to prevent someone from coming into the building from the outside. If you find that the door isn't locking correctly, let us know.
- We have doorbells and shop keeper bells attached classroom doors and doors leading out to our playgrounds. If you find one not working, let us know.
- When you leave the classroom, check to make sure your child or any other child doesn't follow you out the door.
- List all individuals on the Child Information Card that your child may be released to or contacted in case of an emergency. Make sure they know the rules and what to do.
- Sign your child in and out of the classroom. This is extremely important for attendance records and safety measures in emergencies. There is a sign in/sign out sheet posted within each classroom near its entry door. Please remember that you are

responsible for your child until you sign him/her in and also, after you sign him/her out.

- Once your child has been released to your care at day's end, keep him/her close to you so he/she doesn't run in the hallway or exit the building ahead of you.
- If you need have a lengthy conversation with any of the staff, please schedule a time when you both can give your full attention and your child won't be kept waiting.

In-Kind Contributions and Donations

What is In-Kind? Supplies and volunteer hours donated to the classroom by families, community and professional volunteers. Education and Children's Services is federal, state and locally funded. The government funds the basic essentials to run the program. We look to the community and you, our ECS families, for additional support. Parent participation is essential to the process of assisting the ECS program in meeting the required federal match. Read further to learn more about how **YOU** can be involved in volunteer opportunities.

Family Engagement and Participation

Families are invited and encouraged to participate in every aspect of their child's educational program by; volunteering in the classroom, attending trainings, attending regularly scheduled Family Meetings, participating on Advisory Committees and many other creative ways. Ask your child's teacher, Family Service Advocate or Center Manager how you can become more involved.

Family engagement and participation in ECS strengthens the connection between each child's home and the classroom. Families can also strengthen their role as the child's first and most important teacher and help in their child's education by participating in the following ways:

Family Partnerships: ECS classroom staff and Family Service Advocates form relationships with participating families to develop goals through the process of establishing a Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). Community resources, referrals and trainings are provided to families to assist them in successfully meeting their goals.

ECS Policy Council (PC): Participation with the Policy Council provides opportunities for families to share responsibility for setting policies for high quality services to children and families in accordance with the Head Start legislation, regulation and policies and Head Start Performance Standards.

Community Action Governing Board and Policy Council work together in the process of making decisions for ECS. This shared governance allows for the voices of the families to be heard

and allows families to be involved in planning for improvement across all aspects of the program. Your involvement at the center level through family meetings and other opportunities is very important to the overall success of this program. You, the families, make the decision of who will represent your voice through an election process held each year in October at family meetings.

We strive for equal representation from each county and all program options on the Policy Council. Information is shared between PC representatives and family meeting attendees bi-monthly and PC minutes are posted at each site. Representatives attend monthly PC meetings and take part in on-going training throughout the year, which prepares them to be effective representatives for ECS families.

Family Meetings: Family meetings are planned opportunities for families to come together with the purpose of connecting families with one another and to available resources in their community. The team of Parent, Teacher, Family Service Advocate and Center Manager organizes, plans, and arranges activities throughout the year. Meetings will focus on community resources, services and the interests of families. Families may provide input on activities for the children in the classroom. Family meetings provide ways for sharing the importance of how the classroom and the home work together to expand children's learning experiences.

Monthly Home Activity Log (MHAL): Children learn through play and simple activities that reinforce their learning skills. The MHAL records time spent with your child at home and ties into the curriculum and your child's individual educational goals. When families complete a MHAL and return it to the classroom, it counts as in-kind, which is a great way to support ECS when you turn it in at the end of each month. It also provides activities that assist you in your role as your child's first and most important teacher.

Home Learning Link (HLL): The HLL provides family activities that link the classroom learning experience to the home environment. The HLL offers activities and suggestions in six developmental areas; cognitive, social emotional, literacy, math, language and physical development. Families are to submit the completed HLL form to the classroom teacher on a regular basis. This is another opportunity for families to provide the program with in-kind.

Classroom Volunteers: Parent participation in the classroom is needed and welcomed. Families are strongly encouraged to share their cultural heritage, read stories, and participate in the children's activities.

Fatherhood and Male Involvement Program

Community Action ECS promotes the involvement of fathers in the services that directly improve educational, emotional, social, and behavioral outcomes for children. The vision of the Community Action ECS Fatherhood Involvement Program is to increase and support the

engagement and involvement of positive, responsible fathers and males. To accomplish this vision, the Community Action ECS Fatherhood Involvement Program has the following goals:

- Work with staff and families to plan and develop events and classroom activities, and provide classroom resources that engage fathers and positive *male figures in the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of children.
- Provide consistent, ongoing training, resources, and events for staff, parents, and volunteers on the process of developing a successful fatherhood and male involvement program.
- Acquire and provide resources for participating fathers and men to enhance their confidence and competence as responsible fathers and positive male role models.
- Ensure all fatherhood and male involvement efforts work toward fulfilling the guiding principle of ECS, which is to ensure that every child enters school physically, emotionally, and intellectually prepared to begin formal learning.

**If no male figure is available to the family, moms/women are welcomed and encouraged to participate in activities provided.*

For more information contact: Fatherhood Program Coordinator (269) 965-7766.

Volunteer Participant Procedure

Purpose: To ensure the safety of children attending the programs offered through ECS. In addition, ensure compliance status with State of Michigan Licensing Regulations and Head Start Performance Standards. The following is state law and mandated for staff and volunteer participants:

Before staff or volunteer participant may have contact with children while in the care of a childcare center, the staff or volunteer participant shall provide the center with documentation from the Department of Human Services that he/she has not been placed on the central registry for substantiated abuse or neglect. Clearance waived for parent/legal guardian based on Community Action ECS written plan of supervision, which states:

- Children are always in the view of staff while in the care of ECS program.
- Staff and volunteers also provide a signed declaration statement confirming that the individual is:
 - ✓ Aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law
 - ✓ Informed of the center's policy on child abuse and neglect
 - ✓ Informed that the law mandates reports of suspected abuse and neglect

Volunteer Participant Health Policy

Purpose: To ensure families and volunteers having contact with children meet health and safety requirements of ECS. In addition, ensure the program's compliance status with the State of Michigan Licensing Regulations and the Head Start Performance Standards.

Scope: This policy applies to **all volunteer participants** who will be in contact with children at least four (4) hours per week for two (2) or more consecutive weeks regardless of age. Volunteer participants will be required to complete and make available the following:

- ✓ Physicals current within 6 months of start of the program year
- ✓ TB screening current within one (1) year

Ways to Get Involved

- *Be a classroom helper*
- *Take part in Family Meetings*
- *Represent family centers at ECS Policy Council Meetings*
- *Prepare items for the classroom*
- *Visit ECS classrooms and read to the children*
- *Plan a committee to enhance the appearance of ECS centers*
- *Carpool with other families to your Family Meeting*
- *Make phone calls to other parents reminding them of upcoming events and Family Meetings*
- *Serve as a representative of ECS on committees or boards within your community*
- *Share skills or trade with other parents through workshops or trainings (i.e. computer skills, sign language, woodworking, etc)*
- *Write articles for Classroom Newsletters*
- *Accompany children on field trips*

Expectations of Family and Community Volunteers

- When you are volunteering please remove your coat and ask staff for a specific location where coats, hats and purses or other personal items are kept.
- For health reasons, we ask that you wash your hands each time you enter, before interacting with the children, and when you leave the classroom.
- We ask that you do not bring any drinking cups, coffee containers or food items into the classroom.
- Feel comfortable joining in whatever the children are doing. Ask questions such as what is your name, tell me about what you are doing or making? Remember that conversation with children lets them know you are interested in them.

- You may want to think of something you would like to do with the children. You are welcome to bring in a favorite book that you read to your children at home. If you play a musical instrument, children would love to see it and hear how it works!
- Please **NO CELL PHONE, TEXTING, or PICTURES**. In cases where you need to have your phone on for emergency reasons please have it on vibrate and if you need to answer please step out into the hallway.
- All conversations in classrooms must be child friendly. Personal Conversations between volunteers and staff should take place when children are not present.

If you are not sure how to best participate, ask the teacher if there is something specific you can do with the children.

Remember, children learn from all adults who are interested and involved. You do not need to be trained as a teacher to take part in the learning experiences of children.

Parent Communications

Parent involvement includes building a strong communication system between home and center. Parents are encouraged to communicate in the following ways:

- **Parent Conferences and Home Visits:** Teacher/Primary Caregiver will meet at least four times per year with parents. The Family Service Advocate will meet with parents at least two times per program year. Your child's development and family-related topics will be discussed during these meetings/home visits.
- **Phone Calls:** A phone system is available. When classrooms are in session, all calls will go directly to answering machines, and will only be answered when staff is not with children. In case of an emergency, please call the office. Office staff will be able to communicate emergency messages.
- **Resolving Parent Concerns:** ECS encourages communication to discuss concerns directly with teacher/caregivers. On-going communication is important to resolving issues. Most concerns will be addressed at the classroom level, however, if you and your child's teacher/caregiver are not able to reach an agreement, the Center Manager or Family Service Advocate are available to discuss your concerns. If you feel more comfortable speaking with another parent, contact your Policy Council Representative. Their contact information is located on the family communication board on site or in the classroom.
- **Parent Resources:** ECS families receive a Community Resource Guide with detailed information about services or programs in their area. Many sites provide locations where information can be accessed on various topics of interest to our families. Some centers have a computer available with internet connection for families to do job searches, resume building, etc.

- **Community Referrals:** ECS has established community partnerships with area agencies. Consultants are available to work with families on nutrition, mental health, medical needs, and special needs. Your Family Service Advocate can refer you to partner agencies as needed or call the 211 Referral System.
- **Newsletters and other materials:** ECS will also use various flyers, notifications, and newsletters to communicate information to families. These may be distributed by classroom staff, Family Service Advocates or other ECS staff.
- **Child Illness:** If your child becomes ill or has an accident during the day, you or your emergency contact will be called to review the symptoms and make a plan for the care of your child. You may also be asked to sign a symptom or accident report.

Community Partnerships

ECS develops community partnerships with programs, organizations and businesses in each of the counties we serve. ECS takes an active role in community planning to encourage strong communication, cooperation and sharing of information to improve and increase the delivery of services to children and families.

Education, Mental Health, and Disability Information

Curriculum

ECS has chosen **The Creative Curriculum or High Scope Curriculum**. These curricula are research-based, and provide children with essential experiences and activities for their success. They meet all the requirements of our State and Federal funding.

The curriculum encourages our staff to create an interesting environment to play and learn in four major areas of a child's growth and development. These areas are Social-Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, and Language Development.

The curriculum builds on what we know about how children learn at each stage of their development. It includes concepts and skills in math, literacy, science, social studies, art and technology, in addition to learning through daily routines.

The teaching staff plans for individual children and the group using information from the family members and observations of the children at work and play. Lesson plan forms are posted in each classroom and serve as documentation of the opportunities provided for

children in each area of the classroom. Families are encouraged to review lesson plans and give the teaching staff ideas for additional activities that may interest their children.

Additionally, **Teaching Strategies Gold** is another tool used to individualize your child's educational experiences. This is a seamless system for children birth through Kindergarten and is designed to be used as part of meaningful every day experiences in the classroom. It is inclusive of children with disabilities, children who are English-language or dual-language learners and children who demonstrate competencies beyond typical developmental expectations.

In our ongoing efforts to prepare children for school readiness, we have added a literacy curriculum to our programming that compliments the curriculum that we have in place. Please speak with your child's teacher about the wonderful literacy opportunities provided to your child through both curricula on a daily basis.

Name Tags

In all of our Head Start classrooms, teachers have prepared nametags for the children to wear each day. This is a great help and teaching tool used daily for a variety of reasons. Name tags are a great way to assist children in daily name recognition, writing their name and those of others in the classroom, and they feel proud of themselves in doing so. They can be used as an interactive attendance activity as well, and the children love to wear name tags.

Toilet Training

Children must be ready to participate physically and emotionally if the process of learning to use the toilet is to be positive and successful. Otherwise, toilet training can be a battle of wills and a source of frustration for children and their caregivers. In the ECS Program, our goal is for parents and caregivers to plan together to make each child's toilet training experience an opportunity for children to feel successful and competent.

Parents and caregivers are both in a position to be observers of children's growth and development. Parents and caregivers respond to individual children's cues and signs of readiness. At some time between sixteen and twenty-four months, the child will begin to develop an interest in using the toilet. Some children show interest earlier in group care settings because they see other children learning to use the toilet. For successful toilet training, children must be physically ready and emotionally ready.

When a child begins to show an interest in using the toilet, parents and caregivers should meet together to discuss how to proceed in the classroom.

Car Seats and Diaper Bags

Because car seats, diaper bags, and overnight bags may be exposed to allergens such as cigarette smoke and pet hair, we do not recommend these items be brought into infant and toddler rooms. If you need to leave car seats or children's belongings at the center for pick up, please make arrangements with your child's teacher/caregiver for storage at the site.

Back to Sleep

ECS follows the recommendations of Michigan's Safe Sleep coalition for infants. All children under 12 months of age will sleep in cribs with firm, tight fitting mattresses and tight fitting bottom sheets. ECS provides and launders crib sheets. For the safety of each infant, our staff members have been trained to place babies on their backs and to remove all soft items such as pillows, blankets, comforters and stuffed animals from cribs. Babies should sleep in clothing that is appropriate for the room temperature. Blankets may be used when infants are awake and playing or when babies are being rocked and cuddled.

Naptime Items

All sheets and blankets will be provided by ECS.

Parents are unable to bring these or any additional nap items from home due to environmental concerns.

Home Based Program

Early Head Start uses *Partners for a Healthy Baby and Creative Curriculum*. This option is also provided during the summer months and/or when a newborn child cannot be immediately placed into an Early Head Start classroom. The Family Service Advocate and parent arrange weekly home visits.

In addition to the home visits, we provide at a minimum, two group socialization activities each month. The content of the group experience combines the goals of the program with family participation in classroom activities that helps parents better understand child development. It encourages parents in sharing their parenting challenges and joys with one another. It provides activities for parents and children to enjoy together. It offers structured and unstructured learning opportunities for both children and parents. Lastly, it models successful strategies for engaging children and supporting their development.

ECS Infant and Toddler Programs

Our infant and toddler rooms accommodate eight children with two primary caregivers. The infant room provides an environment that facilitates the sensory-motor stage of cognitive development for the children. Age-appropriate toys are provided to assist the children in their individual growth and development. Children are exposed to art, music, physical movement and challenges, and to a great deal of social interaction. Language is a very important component of the program. Caregivers continually speak with children during diapering, feeding, and while helping them fall asleep. Toddlers are given the opportunity to explore their independence and make choices. Parents are an important part of our infant and toddler programs, are able to nurse infants at the center, and are welcome visitors whenever their schedule allows. Each infant's routine will vary according to individual needs. An individualized care plan will be developed for each infant.

Center-based infant and toddler children will be home-based during the summer months and during conference weeks. During these times, weekly home visits and bi-weekly socializations will be scheduled with the family in order to meet the requirements for the program. Diapers, formula and food will be provided for children while they are in our care. Transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start classrooms are based on the developmental needs of each child. In our experience, children are ready to transition by their 3rd birthday. The transition begins around age 2 $\frac{1}{2}$, when we begin exposing children to Head Start classrooms and playgrounds, and should be completed by age 3 if space permits. If a child is not ready to transition by his or her 3rd birthday, approval must be granted by the Director for a child to remain in an Early Head Start classroom. This happens only under exceptional circumstances and is based on the developmental needs of the child. While it may be difficult for parents to transition from having longer hours of care to shorter hours, which may be the case, this should be discussed with the family's family service advocate well in advance of the child's 3rd birthday so arrangements can be made. If you have concerns about your child's transition into a Head Start classroom, please discuss your concerns with your child's teacher or your family service advocate.

ECS Infants' Daily Routines:

- Greeting and sharing of daily information. Routine care (diapering and feeding breakfast, napping), self-directed play in activity areas, small group/individual activities with caregivers.
- Routine care (diapering, feeding lunch, tooth brushing, napping). Lunch clean up.
- Routine care (awake from napping, snack, diapering). Small group/individual activities with caregiver. Self-directed play in activity areas. End of day, share information with parents. Clean up.

ECS Toddlers' Daily Routines:

- Greetings and sharing of daily information
- Routines (breakfast, cleanup, diapering and toileting)
- Choice play in areas, outdoor or indoor large motor play, small motor activities, small group times, stories and language experiences.
- Routines (hand washing, lunch, clean up, diapering and toileting, tooth brushing, napping and resting)
- Routines (snack, clean up, diapering and toileting). Choice play, large motor. End of the day information sharing with parents. Clean up.

ECS Head Start (Pre School 3-4 year olds)

Part Day (AM or PM) Schedules

- Greeting, Open activities, Hand Washing, Breakfast or Lunch, Clean Up, Brushing teeth.
- Group Activities, Transitioning.
- Interest Area activities, Small Group activities, Outdoor activities.
- Clean Up, Transitioning, Story and Language activities.
- Hand Washing, Snack or lunch, Large Motor activities (indoors or outdoors)

ECS Head Start/GSRP (4 year olds only)

Full Day Schedule

- Greeting, Hand Washing, Open activities, Breakfast, Clean Up.
- Plan-Do-Review, Group Activities, Transitioning.
- Interest Area activities, Small Group activities, Outdoor activities.
- Hand Washing, Lunch, Clean up, brushing teeth
- Rest time
- Clean Up, Transitioning, Language activities.
- Hand Washing, Snack, Plan-Do-Review, go home

Indoor and Outdoor Clothing and Outdoor Play

All children should come to school **dressed to play**. Children will play outside every day, weather permitting. Please send appropriate outdoor clothing every day (coat, mittens, hats, boots, etc.) Please follow these guidelines:

- Tennis shoes are the preferred and safest footwear for children in the classroom. Infants will need shoes inside (and out) when they begin to walk.
- Children who wear boots in the winter must also have shoes for indoor play.
- Please send a sweater or sweatshirt if your child tends to get cold.

- Winter clothing includes coat, boots, hat, gloves/mittens and snow pants.
- Please send a complete change of clothes for children of all ages (pants, shirt, onesie, socks, underwear, as appropriate), so that your child can be changed if needed during the day.
- Please mark your child's clothing on the inside with his/her name.

Outdoor Play Information

The outdoor play area is considered an outdoor classroom and an extension of the learning environment.

Each of the Community Action ECS classrooms has an outdoor play area available to them. These areas are licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services just as our indoor areas are.

Always assume your child will be going outdoors and please dress your children appropriately for the weather so that they will be comfortable, safe and can spend their time enjoying the outdoors.

Toys

Please do not send toys from home.

The program supplies the toys and play materials your child will need while at school. If children bring toys from home, they will be placed in their backpacks or cubbies.

If your child uses a small special comfort item daily, please discuss this with your teacher.

Field Trips/Reverse Field Trips/Nature Walks

Children are naturally curious about the world around them. Participating in field trips and reverse field trips provide hands-on activities such as new sights, sounds, smells. Field trips help provide meaning to classroom activities.

Parents and guardians are welcome to attend field trips, reverse field trips and nature walks. They will not be able to ride the bus. When accompanying children on field trips, please do not bring siblings or other children that are not enrolled in ECS. During field trips and reverse field trips, we ask that you and your child remain with the group, so that your child can experience the field trips with their peers.

Each field trip is unique, and your child's classroom teacher can answer any questions during the planning process!

How We Celebrate at ECS

Community Action believes in respecting cultural diversity. For this reason, we encourage classroom staff to recognize and celebrate events like birthdays. Staff may also recognize holidays and traditions from different cultures throughout the year. This may be through singing, crafts, decorations, and circle time. No outside food or drinks may be brought in for these celebrations. Each classroom may choose to recognize these things in a differently, families are encouraged to talk to their teacher how they can share in these learning opportunities. If you wish for your child not to participate in a planned activity, please talk to your child's teacher to make alternative arrangements.

Mental Health

Families and staff develop trusting relationships. Input about children's growth, development, and any possible concern is gathered at time of enrollment. Throughout the school year, we work with families to ensure each child is provided with individualized services that match their developmental levels, learning style, and temperament. Information on how to strengthen nurturing and supportive environments is provided to families.

The Mental Health/Disability Specialist collaborates with classroom staff to develop mentally healthy classrooms environments. Mental Health concerns are discussed and updated during monthly Family Review meetings. Families and ECS staff work together to develop Child Guidance Action Plans, when needed, to support positive guidance of children's behaviors.

Mental Health Observations- Contracted Mental Health Professionals conduct observations twice a year and provide overviews to ECS staff. Recommendations from observations are provided to families. Our contracted Mental Health Professional is available for follow up observations and/or consultations with families.

Families are assisted in accessing community resources for mental health concerns. Mental Health resources information is provided to every family in the Community Resource Book.

Child Guidance and Discipline

For Children Birth through Five, Community Action staff encourages self-control and appropriate social behavior in children. Family input and positive methods of developing these behaviors are used in the center. Per State of Michigan Licensing requirements, staff, volunteers, and parents visiting our classrooms may not use corporal punishment, frightening,

or humiliating disciplinary techniques at any time. This policy applies to licensed centers, family meetings, agency sponsored events and any off-site activities, such as bus rides and field trips.

In ECS, expectations are reasonable for children. Our Child Guidance Policy focuses on knowledge of child growth and development, an interesting classroom environment, and predictable daily schedules that help children feel secure. Classroom staff will use Conscious Discipline to build relationships with children, assist children in making friends, redirect bullying behaviors, and create rules that maintain safety. Children are encouraged to respect the rights of others and care for the classroom environment.

Conscious Discipline is a longtime leader in the integration of classroom management with social-emotional learning, utilizing everyday events as the curriculum and addressing the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to respond consciously to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children.

Guidance is part of the learning experience for all children. Our staff are trained to observe children, to design an environment that minimizes conflict, to use clear language and directions, and to anticipate challenging situations. However, occasional issues requiring intervention may arise. In these cases, staff and families will try strategies that are positive and appropriate for each child's age and developmental stage. Techniques include ignoring behaviors that are not causing safety issues, distracting/redirecting children's behaviors, giving choices and setting limits, problem solving, role modeling appropriate behaviors, using encouraging language, giving visual cues, social stories, and encouraging use of feeling words. Sometimes, a child may need to be separated from other children for short moments (going to the Safe Place) to help him/her regain self-control. If so, the child may rejoin the group as soon as possible.

If a child develops a pattern of inappropriate behavior, staff will meet with the parent and work together to develop a Child Guidance Action Plan. It is our goal to work with families to help each child develop self-control and to keep all children safe. When working together to guide the child in the positive direction and to keep the child and other children safe, it may be necessary to limit the number of days the child comes to the center or provide a combination of home based and center based services.

In every case, we view discipline as a positive process in which children learn appropriate behavior without damage to their physical or psychological well-being. ECS does not permit, nor will it tolerate under any circumstances, the use of abusive or degrading disciplinary methods.

Conscious Discipline Calming Techniques for Children and Adults:



Drain

Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a “ssshh” sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.



S.T.A.R.

Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax. Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Also help children learn to exhale slower than they inhale.



Pretzel

Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe.



Balloon

Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a “pbpbpbpb” sound.

Disability Services

ECS is committed to serving children with confirmed special needs/disabilities. ECS works closely with families and the Intermediate School District to ensure every child is participating in all of the classroom opportunities and receiving the appropriate services as indicated in their program plans. Many of our classrooms provide partner teaching with local special education teachers to enhance your child's learning experience at Head Start.

ECS is required to reserve slots for children with a current IFSP or IEP. Some of the typical disabilities included in our classrooms are: Speech Impairment, Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Early Childhood Developmental Delay, and Cognitively Impaired. Additionally, Early On identifies those children 0-3 years old with qualifying conditions such as a developmental delay or as an established condition.

Soon after your child starts school speech screening by a speech therapist will begin for those children suspected of having speech concerns. Families are notified if the screening indicates a recommendation for speech evaluation. All evaluations and therapy require family involvement and signed parent permission. Additional screenings covering all areas of development are done with families through ASQ and ASQ-SE screeners.

If you feel your child may have a special need, please let your child's teacher know or call the Mental Health/Disability Specialist at the main office in Battle Creek (269) 965-7766 or (877) 422-2726.

Health and Safety

Health Requirements

Family Service Advocates follow-up on health requirements while making sure time frames and deadlines are met.

The Michigan Department of Community Health WIC Division and the Michigan Department of Education Head Start Collaboration Office have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance collaboration of services for clients who are currently enrolled in both the WIC and Head Start programs. This MOU allows local WIC agencies and Head Start programs to work together to share client information required for participation in either programs without necessity of acquiring a release of information from the parent.

Immunizations

ECS staff members work collaboratively with families and providers to ensure that all children's immunizations are on an age-appropriate schedule. At the time of enrollment, parents of children who are not up-to-date on immunizations are assisted in developing a plan to bring their child up-to-date, and in developing a follow-up plan. In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, any child having an immunization waiver for that disease will not be allowed to attend school until the outbreak is over.

Physical Examination

Children will not be allowed to be in the program without providing documentation of a physical/Well Baby Check. A current physical exam/ Well Baby Check must be turned in or completed within the first 30 days of enrollment in accordance with the State of Michigan Licensing Requirements. Children will not be allowed to attend after that 30th day and will only have 10 days before they will then be put on the waitlist. Physicals need to be completed in accordance with the State's Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program and will reflect whether the child is up-to-date on a provided schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care. All children entering the ECS program will receive required screenings for developmental, sensory and behavioral concerns. If you have further questions regarding the EPSDT requirements or the screenings, please contact the Health Project Specialist at (269)965-7766.

Dental Health

Oral health is important in your child's development. Children over the age of one are required to have a dental exam performed by a dentist and completed within 90 days of enrollment and every 6 months thereafter. Please inform us of routine check-ups and treatments. Children brush teeth at school and we provide each child with their own toothbrush for use after mealtime at school.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Your child will have a hearing and vision screening done within 45 days of the beginning of the school year if not conducted as part of the physical exam. You will receive notification of the results.

Medication Administration Procedure

Your Family Service Advocate or a member of the classroom staff can assist with this process. Requests for the dispensation of medication will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. As often as possible, please dispense medicine at home. We do understand that there may be instances that require medicine to be given during the school day. At that time, you will be given a copy of our Medication Administration Procedure. Steps need to be followed before medication can be administered in the classroom. These steps are outlined in the Medication Administration Procedure.

If at any time during the year, your children begin taking medication at home or at school, please inform the ECS staff at once so that we are informed in case we see any difference in a child's behavior.

Administering Medication Policy

Requests for the dispensation of medication will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

It is the intent of Community Action-ECS to accommodate medication administration for a child who is disabled, or for a child with unusual or severe health conditions that would otherwise preclude the child from attending the program. Once a medical concern is identified a Plan of Action will be implemented which allows the ECS staff to administer medications according to the physician's prescription.

During the enrollment process the family should inform ECS staff if their child has a health condition that is life threatening; or if the failure to administer medication would adversely affect the child's long-term health or prevent the child from attending the program.;

A determination regarding the responsibility of administering medication will be made by the parent/caregiver and the ECS staff.

If parent cannot arrange for the administration of medication, ECS staff members will be trained to administer the medication. The families will provide staff with detailed instructions explaining the procedures for the dispensing of the medication.

The following items are a requirement for medication to be administered in an ECS classroom.

- (1) Families must sign an Agreement Plan for Child's Medication Administration which absolves ECS staff of liability for dispensing medication.
- (2) A written statement from the parent must be on file regarding the child's health condition and the request for administering of medication. A doctor's statement

regarding the child's condition and the need for medication must accompany the parents' request.

- (3) The family will be the primary responsible party for ensuring that medication is available to be administered in a timely manner for the benefit of the child's health condition.
- (4) If a parent is working and arranges for another party to administer the medication, such as a relative or another childcare provider a written/signed document stating this will be in the child's file.

As per Michigan Child Care Licensing Regulations, when medication is administered on a center site, the following provisions apply:

- a. Medication, including tranquilizers, sedatives, aspirin, dietary supplements or individual special medical procedures, shall be given or applied only with prior written permission from the parent. Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name; child's name; instructions; strength; and **expiration date** of the medication; and shall be given in accordance with those instructions.
- b. A caregiver shall maintain a record as to the time and amount of any medication given or applied.
- c. The medication shall be in the original container, stored according to the instructions and clearly labeled for the specific child. ECS staff will ensure that the medication is out of the reach of children, and shall return the medication to the family when the contents have expired or container is empty.

NO MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED, IF THE DATE ON THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER HAS EXPIRED.

General health observation measures will follow State Licensing requirements, which include notifying the family of any observed changes in a child's health condition.

Health Services

For the sake of your child and others in your center, please keep your child home if they are too ill to participate in daily activities. In order for us to prevent the spread of illness, if it appears that your child does not feel well or may have a contagious disease, please contact your health care provider. If we inform you that we suspect that your child has a communicable disease, please contact your child's physician for further instructions. If your child is seen by his/her physician we will need you to bring a note telling us what the illness is,

the treatment prescribed and whether it is safe for your child to return to childcare or school.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES BELOW AS RECOMMENDED BY THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS. IF ANY OF THESE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT, PLEASE KEEP HIM/HER AT HOME AND NOTIFY YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, PLEASE LET US KNOW SO THAT WE CAN ASSIST YOU IN FINDING ONE.

A child may be too sick to attend if the child:

- Does not feel well enough to participate in the daily classroom routine.
- Has a fever of 101 degrees or more. (Fever suppressants such as Tylenol may reduce a temperature, but do not eliminate a fever, and may mask other symptoms of illness.)
- Has undiagnosed symptoms such as wheezing, excessive crying, unusual drowsiness, or pink eyes with a discharge.
- Has diarrhea (diarrhea is defined as changes in the child's usual stools, stool that runs out of diapers/clothing, or that the child cannot get to toilet on time more than once per day.)
- Has vomited more than once in a day, or vomits and has other symptoms.
- Has an undiagnosed rash with a fever or behavior changes.
- Has yellow or green mucous along with other symptoms of respiratory illness severe enough to interfere with the child's ability to eat, sleep, or play.
- Live lice/nits - if live lice are found at school, you will be called to pick up your child.

If your child becomes ill or has an accident during the day, you or your emergency contact will be called to review the symptoms and make a plan for the care of your child. You may also be asked to sign a symptom report or accident report.

Community Action is committed to maintaining a safe and productive educational workplace and it therefore requires that every employee and volunteer to report to work free of any communicable diseases and fit to perform his or her job duties and responsibilities. When required the Agency will request a "Fitness for Duty" from the employees' and/or volunteers' Health Care Provider.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call the main office at 269-965-7766 to speak with the Health Project Specialist.

"MANAGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN CHILD CARE AND SCHOOLS" PROVIDED BY AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Prevention of Disease Transmission
 - Baseline routine frequency of cleaning and sanitation can be found on the "Cleaning and Sanitizing Cart." Frequency of cleaning and sanitation should be increased when there are
 - Outbreaks of illness

- Known contamination
- Visible soil, blood, or other body fluids
- Recommendations by the health department to control certain infectious diseases.
- Environmental Surfaces and Equipment

Because children will touch any reachable surface (including floors), all surfaces may be contaminated and can spread infectious disease agents. Therefore, all surfaces must be properly sanitized.
- Shoes

Infants put their hands in their mouths after touching play surfaces; therefore

 - Shoes worn either outside of the infant play area or on surfaces contaminated with disease-causing agents may transfer infectious material to the infant play area.
 - Shoes worn in toilet or diaper changing areas and/or play area of other groups of children, and outdoors should not be allowed in the infant play area.
 - Shoes/slippers worn only in the infant play area are allowed.
- Toys
 - All toys can spread disease when children mouth or touch them after putting their hands in their mouths during play or eating or after toileting with inadequate hand washing.
- Mouthed Objects

Pacifiers, teething toys, and similar objects should be cleaned and reusable parts should be sanitized between uses. Pacifiers should not be shared. Pacifiers should be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Bedding, Personal Clothing, and Cribs

Sleep equipment should be used only by one child, cleaned and sanitized before use by another child, and stored separately from others.
- Toilets

Toilets should be kept visibly clean and separate from the children's activity area.
- Hand Washing

Because many infected people carry communicable diseases without having symptoms and are contagious before they experience symptoms, caregivers/teachers need to protect themselves and the children they serve by carrying out hygienic procedures on a routine basis.

 - Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands.
 - Rub hands together vigorously for twenty seconds.
 - Rinse hands under running water until free of soap and dirt.
 - Dry hands with a clean disposable paper towel
 - Turn taps off with a disposable paper towel.
 - Discard paper towel

Hand washing should occur

- When arriving for the day or when moving from one group of children to another
- Before and after:

- ✓ Eating, handling food, or feeding a child; especially important for children who eat with their hands to decrease the amount of saliva (which may contain organisms) on their hands
- ✓ Administering a medication
- ✓ Playing with water that is used by more than one person
- After
 - ✓ Diapering and toileting
 - ✓ Handling body fluids (e.g., mucus, blood, vomit)
 - ✓ Wiping noses, mouths, and sores

 - ✓ Handling uncooked food, especially raw meat and poultry
 - ✓ Handling pets and other animals
 - ✓ Playing in sandboxes (to prevent ingestion of zoonotic parasites that could be present in contaminated sand and soil)
 - ✓ Cleaning/Handling Garbage
 - ✓ When leaving for the day

Assisting Children with Hand Washing

Encouraging and teaching children good hand washing practices must be done in a safe manner. Washing infants' hands helps to reduce the spread of infection. Washing under water is best. Staff should wash their own hands after assisting children with hand washing.

Prevention of exposure to Blood and Bodily Fluid

Caregivers/teachers follow the OSHA guidelines for cleaning and disposing of blood and bodily fluids.

- Affected area will be properly cleaned and sanitized.
- Contaminated materials will be placed in a plastic bag (securely tied) and disposed of in a trash container.

Diaper Changing

Caregivers/teachers routinely follow the correct steps to changing a child's diaper.

- Nonabsorbent paper liners are used.
- All soiled clothing is placed in a plastic bag.
- Disposable gloves are used.
- Soiled wipes and diapers are disposed of properly.
- Diaper change is recorded on the daily log along with any problems, (e.g., diarrhea, unusual color or odor, blood in the stool, any skin irritation).

Links to further resources:

www.healthychildcare.org

eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

www.michigan.gov/mdch

Nutrition

No outside food can be brought into classrooms by staff or families.

Federal regulations require that all food consumed by children must be prepared/purchased through our ECS kitchens. These measures help us to follow health and safety regulations and avoid allergic reactions.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

This childcare center is a participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program. The CACFP provides cash reimbursement to childcare centers for nutritious meals and helps children develop healthy eating habits. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) administers the CACFP. Through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, you can be assured that your child is getting balanced, nutritious meals and developing healthy lifelong eating habits. Proper nutrition during the early years ensures fewer physical and educational problems later in life.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

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

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

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

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

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Where Healthy Eating Becomes a Habit

Monthly calendars are given to families showing meal and snack plans for the month. Any changes in the food/meals to be served will be made to the posted menu in the classroom and available for the families to review daily. When class is canceled, we may serve that day's meal on the following day, if it still meets our health and safety guidelines.

Nutritious meals and snacks are an important part of your child's day. We serve family-style meals that allow your child to learn during mealtime. Family-style meals promote a time for children to interact socially with the staff and other children in their classroom. Parents receive a copy of the menus in advance for review.

Children less than one year old: Foods in the infant meal pattern vary according to the infant's age. If your child is less than one year old, please request the infant meal pattern requirements from our center.

ECS as a participant in the CACFP, your childcare center receives reimbursement for serving nutritious meals and snacks. Meals and snacks must meet the USDA meal pattern requirements listed here:

Breakfast	Lunch and Supper	Snack (serve 2 from the 4 food groups below)
Milk $\frac{3}{4}$ cup	Milk $\frac{3}{4}$ cup	Milk $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Fruit, Vegetable, or Juice $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	2 Fruit/Vegetable servings $\frac{1}{2}$ cup total	Fruit, Vegetable, or Juice $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Grain/Bread $\frac{1}{2}$ slice	Grain/Bread $\frac{1}{2}$ slice	Grain/Bread $\frac{1}{2}$ slice
	Meat or Meat Alternate $1 \frac{1}{2}$ oz.	Meat or Meat Alternate $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

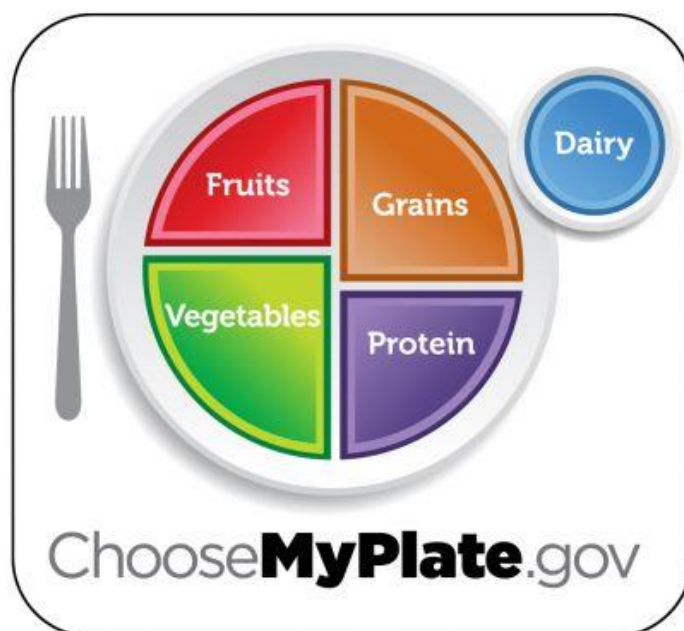
Michigan Department of Education (MDE), is required to verify the enrollment, attendance and meals/snacks typically consumed by children while they are in care. MDE staff may contact you regarding your child's participation in our childcare center.

If you have any questions about the Child and Adult Care Food Program, please contact:

Community Action
Education and Children's Services
175 Main St. P.O. Box 1026
Battle Creek, MI 49016
(269)965-7766

Michigan Department of Education /Child and Adult Care
Food Program
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517)373-7391

MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image - a place setting for a meal. Please visit choosemyplate.gov for further information.



Additional Policies and Procedures

Licensing Requirement Parent Notification

All childcare homes and centers must maintain a licensing notebook, which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP).

All childcare providers must notify parents of the notebook and that it is available for review during regular business hours. Parents of children currently enrolled must be provided with this notification; prospective parents must also be informed of the notebook.

For **childcare centers**, to comply with the legislation, centers must assure that **each parent sign a document** that includes all of the following statements:

- The center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.
- The notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare

Emergency Situations and Severe Weather

In certain situations, each center may be "locked down" and staff will not be available to answer the phone or open doors to let parents into the Center. Staff and children will remain in their designated "safe place" and the building will remain "locked down" until the "all clear" signal has been given. Only after the "all clear" signal has been given will children be available for pick-up and/or release to a parent/guardian.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, ECS will follow the predetermined evacuation plan as shared during your orientation at the start of the school year.

In the event the building must be evacuated, we will follow the Alternate Location Evacuation Procedure, explained at Orientation. We will call you or your emergency contacts to come and pick your child from that location.

If a **TORNADO WATCH** (conditions are favorable for a tornado but a tornado has not been sighted) is issued after a class has started, buses will return children home as scheduled. However, if the **WATCH** extends into sessions that have not started, that class will be cancelled. Children will be sent home via their normal mode of transportation i.e. the bus or pick-up at the Center. During a **WATCH**, parents are welcome to come to the classroom and pick up their child(ren), but are not required to do so. If the National Weather Service changes a **WATCH** to a **WARNING** (see **TORNADO WARNING** below), then children will not be sent home on the bus until the "all clear" signal has been given.

If a **TORNADO WARNING** (a tornado has been spotted in the area) is issued, children will be kept in the Center and will go to their designated "safe place." **PLEASE NOTE:** in this situation, each center will be "locked down".

When there is severe/inclement/winter weather or other emergencies, your child may have to go home early or school may be cancelled or delayed.

You or your emergency contacts will be called. This information may also be posted on the television.

FOR SEVERE WEATHER AND CLOSING INFORMATION, PLEASE WATCH THE FOLLOWING
TELEVISION CHANNELS: 3 (WWMT), 8 (WOOD)

Or log on to www.wwmt.com for weather information and click on school closings.

Pesticide Control Policy

Community Action ECS is committed to providing children a safe environment. It seeks to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children from pests that may be found in classrooms and the surrounding grounds, under some circumstances they may pose a hazard to children. Therefore, pest control practices at our sites and in classrooms may involve a variety of chemical and non-chemical methods that are designed to control pests effectively while minimizing potential pesticide exposure to children.

When there is a need for the use of pesticides at an ECS site, advance notice will be posted three (3) days in advance at the entrance of the site where the pesticide will be applied. In addition, a notice will be sent home with all attending children three (3) days in advance. If a child is absent on the day that the advance notice is sent home, the child's Family Service Advocate or

Lead Teacher/Primary caregiver will contact parents/guardians by phone. Every attempt will be made to provide advance notification of pesticide usage.

The advance notice will include the following:

- *Target pest or purpose*
- *Approximate location*
- *Scheduled date of application*
- *Site contact information*
- *Toll free number for a national pesticide information center*

Parents/guardians can also request notification by first class mail postmarked three days before the application. Please obtain a Request for Written Notification Act of Pesticide Use from your Site Coordinator or Family Advocate.

The Pesticide Control Policy does not apply to application of the following types of pesticides:

- *Germicides, disinfectants, bactericides, sanitizing agents, water purifiers and swimming pool chemicals used in normal cleaning activities; personal insect repellents when self-applied; human or animal ectoparasite control products administered by qualified health professionals or veterinarians; manufactured enclosed paste or gel bait insecticides where students do not have access to the bait.*

COMMUNITY ACTION INTERNAL INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE:

PURPOSE: To investigate and resolve complaints in which an employer observes acts or statements that suggest prohibited activity. Investigation will be conducted in a fair, thorough and reasonable timeframe in accordance with agency policy, procedures and law.

PROCEDURE:

- Client/Employee complaint received and documented.
- Report complaint to CEO for determination of who is assigned to investigate the complaint, based on type of complaint.
- Human Resources will lead any and all complaint investigations related to harassment, discrimination, unsupervised child incidences and workplace violence.
- CEO will immediately report any unsupervised child incident to the board chair.
- HR to Log complaint on Complaint Log
- Investigation begins:
 - Prior to the interviewing the complainant, investigator will review policies and procedures related to the complaint.
 - Investigator will schedule and conduct confidential meetings with the individual who complained and any identified relevant witnesses to the investigation.
 - The investigation meetings will require the following:
 - Have each person interviewed sign an internal investigation confidentiality statement. Investigator is responsible to state confidentiality is required of all employees involved in a complaint investigation. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
 - Investigator begins by asking fact gathering questions, such as what happened, where, when, how, why and if there were any witnesses.
 - Have interviewee write, sign and date a statement of his/her recollection of the event.
 - Investigator will document questions asked and responses.
 - Investigator will remind all individuals participating in the complaint investigation, there is no reprisal. No employee will be subject to discrimination, reprisal or unreasonable interruption of benefits/services for voicing complaints or recommending changes in good faith.
 - Investigator will also identify legal and factual issues to be resolved before reaching a decision;
 - Investigator is responsible to keep the timeframe of the investigation reasonable
 - Investigation is to identify and review all relevant physical evidence.
 - Once all the interviews have been conducted, investigator is responsible to summarize the investigation and provide a recommendation of resolution based on the determination as to the merits of the complaint and evidence obtained to CEO.
 - CEO will report investigation log and resolution to the Executive Committee
 - Once a decision has been reached, communicate the decision to the complainant.
 - Execute the decision.

Community Action

Compliant Information Form

Person Filing Complaint:

Address: _____ Telephone# _____

Person Complaint is filed against: _____

Nature of the Complaint (please include dates, times, locations, and exactly what happened):

Witnesses to the Incident (completed by Community Action investigation person):

Employee Statement:

Signature of Customer/Client Date

Signature of Employee Date

Signature of Investigator Date

GSRP ADDENDUM

Withdrawal/Exclusion Policy

- Withdrawal by family- families should give notification to the program as soon as possible. A follow up from the program will be attempted to determine the cause of withdrawal.
- Exclusion:
 - Should a short term injury or contagious illness occur, a child may be excluded from the program until a doctor gives permission to return to school.
 - A child without an immunization record, medical waiver, or certified, non-medical waiver on file may be excluded after families are notified about this requirement, unless student is in a dose waiting period.
 - Withdrawal from program- these will be in rare, extreme cases where it is determined that, after exhausting all strategies and supports (i.e. asking for a behavior consultant, referring for psychiatric visits, consulting with child's pediatrician, working with special education providers, inviting in a social worker), the child's needs can be better met in another setting. Children will not be excluded because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or other issues that can be supported through professional development of staff, providing resources to families, changes in the learning environment or daily routine, etc. (See Attendance Policy)
 - From Attendance Policy: Staff is committed to having all children in school daily. Teachers will try many strategies to encourage attendance and to follow up with families where attendance becomes infrequent or nonexistent. After multiple strategies over an extended period of time with no result, the family will be notified of the child's withdrawal of the program if the slot is needed for families on the waiting list.

Rest Time Policy (where applicable)

Programs that operate 5 or more hours must have quiet/rest time. This rest time will be a period of at least 45 minutes and no longer than one hour, while accommodating for the individual needs of children. Other quiet activities will be provided for children who do not sleep. Children will assist with setting up and cleaning up as their abilities allow. Soft music will be played, the lights will be turned off and staff will provide a comforting, supervising presence while children rest. Children may bring their own blanket and stuffed animal to

assist them in resting. Each child will be provided one mat or cot to rest on. Mats/cots will be sanitized in accordance with licensing rules.

Parent Notice of Program Measurement

Community Action is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

Questions? Contact: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov or 517-373-8483

Or MDE, Office of Great Start, 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909