Tri-County Child and Family Development

Home Base Parent Handbook

2020—2021

Mission Statement

The mission of Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc., in partnership with the community, is to prepare children and their families for health, school, and life success.

Approved by Policy Council:
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Who’s Who in Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc.

Central Office

Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Robert Welch
Deputy Director: Micki McCracken
Chief Financial Officer: Lyz Schmitz
Program Services Director: Jennifer Verhulst
Human Resource Director: Jamie Moore
Family and Mental Health Services Manager: Lori Wilken
Health Services Coordinator: Pauline Jones
Early Access Service Coordinator: Melissa Edwards
Education Specialist: Angela Syhlman
ERSEA Manager: Dawn Klein
Program Managers: Chris Izer and Rachelle Ravn

All agency employees may be emailed by using their first initial and last name @tccfd.org
My Program Information

My home visitor is __________________.

Phone number ________________________.

Fax number: (319) 233-0300

Email address ________________________.

Office address: 2530 University Ave, STE 4

Office phone number: (319) 233-1621

Note to families and visitors: Use of tobacco products is not permitted on any school property, this includes parking lots. Alcohol, illegal drugs and weapons are also prohibited at all sites.
Home Visit Services/Parent Involvement

It is the belief of Tri-County Child and Family that the parents are the most important teachers their children will ever have, and the home is the child’s first learning environment. Tri-County Child and Family Home Visitors will work closely with parents and families, providing support for parents in the areas of:

- Child development
- Medical and dental health
- Nutrition
- Mental health
- Parent involvement

A Home Visitor will come to the family’s home for 90 minutes each week. The parent and home visitor plan activities together based on the child’s development. Each home visitor is trained in the program’s curriculum which is used to help meet the individual needs of each child, along with parent input. Home visitors may also meet regularly with expectant families to share information about prenatal and postpartum health care, fetal development, breast feeding and how to prepare for the birth of the baby.

In order for this program to be successful, weekly visits and active participation during the visit, is a necessity. When emergencies arise and you must cancel your home visit, please call your Home Visitor and reschedule your appointment.

**If you are unable to maintain weekly visits, your family may have to exit the program.**

Change of Address and/or Phone Number

To avoid an interruption in services, it is very important that you notify the home visitor immediately if your address, phone number or emergency numbers change. We must have a current number and address where you may be reached.
Attendance Policy

It is a Head Start performance standards that families enrolled in our program our meeting once a week for 90 minutes with their Home Visitor. We understand on occasion that visits need to be rescheduled, but they need to be done during that current week. If your attendance falls below 85% you will be given a reminder about the standard and if visits continue to not take place on a regular schedule you will be exited from the program.

Early Access Service Coordinator

Coordinates services for any child and family eligible for Early Access and Early Intervention services. The EASC also works directly with the home visitor and teacher in following through on the child’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Screens and Assessments

Federal Head Start regulations require that every child in a Head Start program receive a developmental screen within the first 45 days of enrollment. This means that the teacher may sit down with your child and ask them some questions or ask them to do certain tasks or the home visitor may ask you about certain skills your child may have. The information is summarized and shared with the parent. It is also used to better plan the experiences that they will offer to your child.

Children’s skills are also assessed by observing the child individually as they use them in the learning environment. How your child is using his/her skills is shared with you on a home visit. Results of these assessments are also used to plan the best possible learning experiences for your child.
Family Fun Event/NEST Events

Home Base families and the home visitor will work together to create exciting activities that will enhance family development. Regular socialization activities will be set up where families are able to observe their child’s interaction with other children. Parents are encouraged to help with planning and preparation of activities.

During socialization activities, children will be guided to follow a few simple rules to make their environment safe for everyone. The rules protect the rights and property of others and assist the child in learning self-control. Socializations are intended for parents, children enrolled in the program and their siblings. Please check with your home visitor for socialization times and dates. You will be given a monthly calendar on NEST events, by your Home visitor at the beginning of each month.

Pedestrian Safety

Tri-County Child and Family is committed to keeping your children safe. Please share the following information with your child. Classrooms will reinforce to children the importance of pedestrian safety.

Please take a moment to go over these tips provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. You can also visit their website at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/kids.

**Pe-des-tri-an:** A person traveling on foot; a walker

**Safe-ty:** The condition of being safe; freedom from danger, risk or injury
Pedestrian Safety Facts
- Children hit by cars can be hurt or killed, even when cars are moving slowly.
- Toddlers (1 and 2 year olds) are most often hurt by a vehicle backing up.
- Preschoolers (3 and 4 year olds) are most often hit when running across a street near home.

Young Children Are Not Small Adults
- Children cannot judge speed or distance of vehicles.
- Children move quickly and can run into the street without warning.
- Children don’t know safety rules and expect adults to watch out for them.
- Children are small and hard for the driver to see.

Safety Tips for Walkers
- Always walk on the sidewalk.
- If there is no sidewalk and you have to walk in the street, always walk facing traffic so you can see any vehicle that might go out of control.

Crossing the Street
- Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks.
  Stop at the curb or edge of the road.
- Stop and look left, then right, then left again before you step into the street.
- If you see a vehicle, wait until it goes by. Then look both ways before crossing.
- Do not cross the street in-between cars.
- Children should hold onto an adult’s hand while crossing.
Safety Education for Parents offered throughout the Year

Safety information will be available during the year for families in the center newsletters. Please look over this information with your child. Transportation and pedestrian safety information is also reinforced in your child’s classroom. Parents are encouraged to participate in bus evacuation drills with their child. Parents can also receive bus aide training. Please contact your family worker if you are interested in this training.

Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)

We believe in building strong partnerships with our families. These partnerships are based on shared respect and trust. They are aimed at helping you reach goals for your family. Your Home Visitor will be helping you identify a goal that you want to work on. Your Family Partnership Agreement goal will be a family goal, something that you want to achieve. Your FPA goal will be reviewed regularly with your Home Visitor throughout the year. Once you have reached a goal, another goal will be developed. By working together, we can achieve great things!

If you have any questions, please ask your Home Visitor.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Building for the Future

This childcare receives Federal cash assistance to serve healthy meals to your children.

Good nutrition today means a stronger tomorrow!

Meals served here must meet nutrition requirements
established by USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Questions? Concerns?

Call USDA toll free: 1-866-USDA CND (1-866-873-2263)
Visit USDA’s website: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd

USDA Civil Rights Regulations and Policies

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA’s TARGT Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information is available in languages other than English.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. fax: (202)690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

“It is the policy of Tri-County not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.7 and 216.9. If you have questions or
Wellness Policy

MyPlate is a good guide for eating healthy. It is important for children age 3 to 5 to eat around the following amounts from each food group:

- Grains: 4-5 ounces per day
- Vegetables: 1 ½-2 cups per day
- Fruits: 1-1 ½ cups per day
- Dairy: 2-2 ½ cups per day
- Protein Foods: 3-5 ounces per day

Your child should be actively moving 60 or more minutes a day. To raise an active child:

- Make active play fun for the whole family,
- Focus on fun, not performance,
- Limit TV and computer time to less than 2 hours a day.
Health Services

Head Start is responsible for promoting healthy development of children. Parents, as primary caregivers of their children, play a central role in child health and developmental services.

In order to determine your child’s health status we will need parents to provide the follow current information:

A current copy of a Record of Immunization Card for your child, complete with all shots up-to-date and Well-Child Physical Exam Form with all needed blood work, according to your child’s age. This must be signed by the health care provider within 30 days of program start date. Regular age-appropriate well-child exams must be completed throughout the year.

The Iowa EPSDT schedule recommends exams as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-3 days</td>
<td>1 month, 2 month, 4 month, 6 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 month</td>
<td>12 month, 15 month, 18 month, 24 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 month</td>
<td>3 year, 4 year, 5 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dental exams for all children 12 months of age must be signed and dated within 90 days of program start date. Annual Health Update form for children enrolled more than 1 year in the program.

Throughout their enrollment, children receive the following services with parent consent:

- **Vision Screen** (completed within the first 45 days of enrollment)
- **Hearing Screen** (completed within the first 45 days of enrollment and annually after that)
- **Newborn Check Up** (completed by 2 weeks of age)
- **Fluoride Varnish** (completed 3 times a year)
- **Nutrition Assessment** (completed by parents 2 times a year)
If you have any questions about health services you may call 235-0383 and ask to speak to the Health Services Coordinator.

**Mental Health Services**

Mental health services are provided by Tri-County’s licensed mental health professional. These services include coaching, classroom observations, staff consultations, family consultations, home visits, various trainings and individual observations as requested. The mental health professional assists staff with developing strategies to build social emotional skills, strong attachments and healthy environments. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a process used to teach children the necessary social and emotional skills to replace challenging behaviors. A PBIS/Positive Solutions for Families parent education series is available.

*Ask your Home Visitor for more information.*

**Transition Services**

What is a transition? Transition is any kind of change in routine for children or families. A definition from the dictionary is... 

*tran-si-tion: passing from one state, stage, subject or place to another.*

*Example: We want to have a smooth transition for the family and child when the child begins in the Head Start classroom.*

Transition is the process of moving from one place to another. Teachers, Home Visitors and Family Service Workers will be working with your family to help you and your child plan for
program changes.

Let us think about times when your child makes a transition... For example, they may move from the baby room to the toddler room. He/she may be getting home base services but then enter the center base program. They may move from one school or center to another. Even dropping your child off at the school is a transition!

Head Start staff will work with you during transition times. Together we will make a Transition Plan to help you and your child prepare for change and be successful.

Staff Qualifications

Tri-County Head Start is committed to the professional development of all our staff. We know that a quality program is the result of well-trained, qualified and dedicated staff. As a result, all of our Teachers have an AAS in Child Development or BA in Early Childhood Education. All Family Workers have a BA. All staff are trained and certified in the following: CPR, First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogens, Safety Emergency Procedures and Child Abuse Reporting. There are several professional development days set aside during the school year for these trainings. Refer to your calendar.

Confidentiality

At Head Start we respect your privacy. Your child’s file is kept in a locked cabinet that can only be accessed by staff involved with your child’s program. We carefully follow our policies and procedures for data management to protect the privacy of your child and your family’s records according to all federal, state, local and tribal laws, rules and regulations. You
will be provided with the Program Data Management Policy booklet detailing the rules and procedures about disclosure of personally identifiable information in your child’s records and your Family Partnership Agreement. We will only allow access to this information as is required by law and procedures from agencies governed above. As a parent, you personally have the right to inspect your child’s records.

Bad Weather/Emergency Closings and Cancellations

If the school district you reside in closes due to bad weather your Home Visitor will **not** due a visit.

Gifts

Staff members are not allowed to accept gifts from our families. We appreciate the trust you show in us, and the opportunity to be a part of your child’s life.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

All Head Start staff are mandatory reporters for child abuse. The Head Start program complies with the State of Iowa law requiring all mandatory reporters working in licensed child care to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. This is in the best interest of your child.

The law tries to protect children from abuse and helps others find ways to handle the stress of raising children. If you would like help in coping with any area of your child’s behavior, please call your child’s teacher, family worker or the mental health specialist. We will try to help you find solutions to your concerns.
Children’s safety and best interests are always our goal. We will notify authorities should we have concerns regarding any child’s safety. If you would like training in the reporting of child abuse please contact your child’s teacher.

Policy Council

Policy Council is made up of Early Head Start and Head Start parents, as well as community people. Home Base parents elect members of the Policy Council. Policy Council meets the 2nd Thursday of each month to discuss agency-wide issues, act on these issues, and discuss any community concerns that may impact their family’s lives.

Volunteer Policy

Volunteers are a very important part of the Head Start program.

To provide the best services, parent and community volunteers are needed to share their talents, knowledge and energy. While volunteer activity is not required for a child to be in the program, parents who volunteer benefit Head Start children and the whole family.

Some specific jobs that volunteers may do:

- help recruit children for the program
- provide special musical and dramatic activities at socialization events
- assist with snack/meal preparation and serving at special events
- support on-going activities
- donate supplies and equipment
- assist with typing, record-keeping and projects
· work at home on special projects
· participate in Family Fun Events, socializations and Policy Council

Regular volunteers, people being in the center more than 10 hours per week, including all students from universities or community colleges, must complete a Criminal Background Check and FBI fingerprinting before they can participate in our programs. If you would like to be a regular volunteer for our agency, you too will have to complete a background check and fingerprinting prior to you volunteering with this agency. Please see your Home Visitor for more information in becoming a regular volunteer in our agency.

Problem Solving Procedures

**Step One - Staff**
If you have a complaint or concern about the school or our services, we ask you to first discuss the issues with the staff you work with (teacher, family worker, home visitor) and try to work out a solution.

Most issues get worked out with a simple conversation. If that does not work, go to Step Two.

**Step Two - Program Manager**
If you are not comfortable talking directly to the staff person OR you do not work out an acceptable solution in Step One, contact the staff person's Program Manager. Call the EMA School at 235-0383 to get the Program Manager's name and contact information. The Program Manager will help resolve the situation and may help facilitate a conversation between you and the staff person.
A few issues need more people involved in the problem solving. If working with the Program Manager does not resolve the issue, go to Step Three.

**Step Three-Program Service Director**
If the Program Manager is not able to resolve the problem, contact the Program Service Director at EMA at 235-0383. The Service Delivery Director will try to resolve the issue and may request a group meeting with others who could help. That might include parents, staff persons, the Executive Director or the Policy Council chairperson.

Occasionally problems need to be looked at by the agency policy makers. If the Program Service Director is not able to help work out a solution, go to Step Four.

**Step Four-Policy Council**
If you still have a concern after working with Program Service Director, request the **Chief Executive Officer** to refer the issue to the Policy Council. The Policy Council will establish a special committee to talk to you and the other persons you have been working with to try to come up with a solution to the issue you raised. That Committee will make a recommendation to the Policy Council for action as a whole.

If you or the Executive Director do not agree with the decision of the Policy Council, the Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. Board of Directors may be asked to review the decision of the Policy Council as Step Five.

**Step Five-Board of Directors**
If requested by either you or the Executive Director, the Policy Council Decision will be reviewed by the Tri-County Child and
Family Development Council, Inc. Board of Directors. The Board may appoint a special committee to make a recommendation to the Board.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why talk to the staff person if they are the problem?**
Most problems come from lack of understanding. Talking about it usually fixes the problem.

**Do I have to talk to the staff person? I am not comfortable doing that!**
No, if you are not comfortable talking to the staff person by yourself, you can go directly to **Step Two** and contact their supervisor, the Program Manager.

**May we skip steps?**
You may always skip Step One. Other steps may be skipped **only** if everyone in the steps being skipped agrees.

For example, if the parent, the staff person, and the Program Manager all agree the situation should be handled by the Service Delivery Director, Step One and Step Two could be skipped and the Service Delivery Director would immediately assist in working on the issue.

**Why not just quit the program if I have a problem?**
Your family is important to us. We want to work with you to help our program be what you need. We need your feedback to make our programs work.

**Will my child be treated badly because I complained?**
No. We encourage our families to let us know when they are not happy with our programs. It helps us make our programs better.

Making a Difference
Parents are key in helping children stay in school! The federal government gives the school money. But did you know we have to make a certain amount of in-kind? In-kind is like money. It is a form of money that you are giving back to the school for your child to have a good education. In-kind is donated time, space or services that are provided by parents and the community. Without enough in-kind, we get less money next year and this will happen each year until there is no more money and no more program!!

For every $1.00 of federal money we get, we are required to get 20 cents match of in-kind.

Help Us Get the In-Kind We Need
• Help staff plan Family Fun Events at your school
• Volunteer in the classroom
• Read to the children in your child’s classroom
• Complete take-home activities and return to the school
• Participate in parent-child activities
• Go on field trips with your child’s classroom
• Transport your child to and from their dentist and/or doctor appointments
• Work on your child’s goals at home
• Serve on Policy Council
• Serve on the Health Advisory Committee
• Join the Parent Involvement Planning Committee
• Join the PBIS Leadership Team
Your child’s education depends on in-kind! Please contact your Family Service Worker or classroom teacher for more information.

Resource Pages
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   Childcare             20

Other helpful resource websites:
www.tricountychildandfamily.org

The “What’s Where in Parenting” Directory is filled with resources available to families in the Black Hawk County area, and is available to all families regardless of race, income, educational, or socioeconomic level. All of the resources listed are free or low cost, and are offered at numerous locations. WWIP can be accessed at www.fccouncil.net.

Programs operated by Operation Threshold can be accessed at www.operationthreshold.org

United Way 2-1-1 can be accessed at www.firstcallforhelpiowa.com.

Information on transportation options in your community is available by calling 211.

Child Care
   Child Care Resource and Referral
   Cedar Falls, Iowa      319-233-0804
Verification of Parent Handbook Receipt

I, ________________________________________,

have received and reviewed a copy of the Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. Parent Handbook.

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Date)

__________________________________________
(HV Signature)

Entered on myHeadStart.com date: ____________