



EARLY EDUCATION: FAMILY GUIDELINES

2025-26 School Year

Dear Families,

On behalf of each of our staff, we are excited to welcome you and your family to the Independence School District Early Education program. Receipt of this handbook indicates that your child is enrolled in an Early Education program that is operated and sponsored by the Independence School District. We would like to extend a special welcome to our new families and many thanks to our returning families. The support you provide to your children and to each of our buildings deeply enriches our learning communities. In addition to academic opportunities, we offer a variety of family services developed for the unique needs of our youngest learners and their families.

As a District, we aim to provide the highest quality early education programs possible, including the following:

- **Our evidence-based curriculum,**
- **Quality, comprehensive services for students and families,**
- **Concrete, meaningful student activities,**
- **Alignment to elementary school programming to offer a seamless transition.**

It is our mission to create a community supportive of your child's education and supportive to all families served. Because our Early Education programming is through the Independence School District, our sites are able to operate as License Exempt facilities within the State of Missouri. However, we follow high standards from multiple agencies such as Head Start, Missouri Early Learning Standards, the Missouri Office of Childhood, and so on. We've taken a balanced approach to enrichment, social emotional support, and academics to form the foundation of our Early Education program.

To help you understand your role and our commitment, we have developed these Family Guidelines for your information. To assist you in reading and using the handbook, we have included a table of contents to help you locate important information. Please take a moment to read the information provided on our policies, procedures, and expectations.

We look forward to partnering with you to provide a high quality learning experience in a family- friendly environment. Your active support and informed participation is key to the success of the children in our program. This said, your feedback, ideas, and involvement are welcome at any time. If we can be of assistance to you and your family, please do not hesitate to contact your building Principal, Early Education Family School Liaison as applicable, and/or classroom teachers.

Phong Nguyen, Director of Early Education

Please note, while staff are interacting with children, they are not available to answer telephones. Voicemail is set up to take messages; messages will be checked periodically. If it is an emergency, call the school office. Please see the table below for telephone numbers.

<u>School</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>School Office Phone Number</u>
Benton	429 S. Leslie	521-5390
Blackburn	17302 E. R.D. Mize	521-5395
Cassell Park	10401 E. 31 st St.	521-5540
Glendale	2611 Lee's Summit Road	521-5510
Hanthorn	1511 S. Kings Highway	521-5485
Korte	2437 S. Hardy	521-5430
Little Blue	2020 Quail Drive	521-5480
Luff	3700 S. Delaware	521-5415
Mill Creek	2601 N. Liberty	521-5420
Ott	1525 N. Noland Road	521-5435
Santa Fe	1301 S. Windsor	521-5450
Spring Branch	20404 E. Truman Rd.	521-5455
Sugar Creek	11424 Gill	521-5460
Sunshine Center	18400 E. Salisbury Rd.	521-5526
Sycamore	15208 E. 39 th St. S.	521-5465
Truman	3301 S. Noland Rd.	521-5350
William Southern	4300 S. Phelps	521-5475

Dr. Cindy Grant, Interim Superintendent 521-5300

Phong Nguyen, Director of Early Education 521-5475

Dr. Melissa Carver, Sunshine Principal 521-5526

Ms. Sarah Lattimer, Hanthorn Principal 521-5485

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency: Police, Fire, Ambulance	911
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-392-3738
Domestic Abuse Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE
Poison Control	816-234-3000
ISD District Transportation	816-521-5335

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Program Philosophy and Goals:

The Independence School District Early Education Program strives to provide the highest quality, comprehensive early education program possible. We in the ISD Early Education program believe:

- A child's development benefits most in a program in which staff and family work closely together.
- A child's family, as the strongest influence in a child's development, must be directly and meaningfully involved at all levels of our program.
- The strengths and uniqueness of each family should be maximized through program participation.

The fundamental goal of the Early Education program is to prepare children for school success by enhancing their social-emotional skills and supporting their desire to learn. In striving to achieve this goal, the cognitive (thinking), social, emotional, creative and physical development of all children is enhanced through activities that meet each child's developmental needs, both inside and outside the classroom.

The ISD's Early Education programs work to create the best possible experiences for a child's maximum growth and development. We are committed to partnering with families to help them achieve goals for the family, as well as the child. To realize these goals, the Early Education program has adopted the following strategies:

- To encourage the child's desire to learn, to be spontaneous, to be creative and to have self-discipline.
- To support the child's thinking process, concept development and communication skills.
- To support family members in relating to each other and to others in their community as they become advocates for their child and family.
- To enhance a sense of dignity and self-worth within the child and the family by establishing expectations and patterns of success.

Vision and Mission:

The **VISION** of the Independence School District Early Education program and families is:

Creating healthy partnerships with families to promote a community of safety, trust, and resilience.

The **MISSION** of the Independence School District Early Education Program is to **Support** and **Encourage** children and families to achieve a greater degree of self-sufficiency: to achieve a strong self-worth and self-confidence; to establish and work towards child and family goals; and to build a foundation for school readiness and later school success.

Family Involvement, Volunteers, and Visitors:

The key to any successful program is family involvement, so we encourage you to become involved. A variety of opportunities are available. You might consider a family and/or policy committee, volunteering to share your special talents, reading to children, or simply to communicate with program staff. Pick up and drop off times are important times to communicate with Early Education staff and review the family bulletin boards for updates and information.

To ensure the safety of our students, volunteers will need to follow these guidelines:

General Volunteer Guidelines for All Programs

- COMPLETE AND CLEAR A FORMAL BACKGROUND CHECK INCLUDING FINGERPRINTING
- SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE AND GET A NAME TAG WHEN VOLUNTEERING.
- FOLLOW APPROVED BOARD POLICY INCLUDING NO SMOKING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.
- AVOID BRINGING BEVERAGE CONTAINERS INTO THE BUILDINGS.
- REMAIN WITH A STAFF MEMBER WHO COUNTS FOR RATIO PURPOSES (NO VOLUNTEERS ARE TO BE LEFT ALONE WITH CHILDREN)
- SERVE AS ROLE MODELS FOR CHILDREN BY DRESSING APPROPRIATELY AND USING APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE IN CONVERSATION.

General Policies & Guidelines:

Attendance

- Consistent attendance is essential for your child's progress. Early Education recommends a minimum of 90% daily attendance. **Families are to call their program to report any absences due to illness or emergency as soon as possible.** When a child has a record of unexcused absences and/or chronic tardiness (three documented consecutive unexcused absences without contact with family), intervention procedures will be initiated.
- **Continued chronic absences will result in the child's spot being considered an enrollment vacancy, as the child will be removed from the program and added to the waitlist.**
- ***Your child must arrive on time in order to get the full benefits of our educational services.*** Children who arrive late miss out on key opportunities and may disrupt the classroom environment. **Children attending Early Education programs should aim to be in attendance by 9:30 a.m. daily to ensure maximum opportunities for participation in educational experiences.**
 - Three (3) or more unexcused tardies will result in hold out from services until a meeting with your child's Family Service Liaison and Building Principal or designee has been held to implement an attendance plan.
 - If there are additional tardiness concerns following these conversations, your child may lose their spot in the program.

Arrival and Departure

- Children transported by car who enter the building must be accompanied by an adult. Adults must show a State-issued photo ID to enter school buildings. Children must be signed in and out every day as applicable based on program requirements.
- No child is permitted to leave the program with anyone except his/her family/guardian or a person who is at least 18 years old and is designated on the emergency card by his/her family or legal guardian. **Acceptable forms of ID include a State photo ID, Passport, or Federal ID, and one of these forms of ID is required at each time of drop off and pick up.**
- **All children must be supervised at all times. It is illegal to leave children unattended in a car.**

Transportation Guidelines (as applicable)

- Transportation set up for new ECSE students or pick up/drop off changes may take up to two weeks to process.
- Transportation to and/or from the programs is provided **only** to children enrolled in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE).
- During bus pick up and drop off, the child must be escorted by a family/guardian. **Under no circumstances will a child be dropped off alone and/or left to go home alone. If no adult is at home to receive the child, the child will be returned to the program at the end of the route. An approved adult must pick the child up at school. Identification will be required.**
- Children transported by bus will be met by staff and escorted to the classroom.

- All bus riders, including children using bus services for field trips, are expected to follow the bus rules:
 - Children are to remain in their seats until the bus monitor releases vest restraints.
 - Children and adults are not allowed to chew gum, eat, or drink while on the bus.
 - Children must use soft voices and talk only to nearby seat mates to minimize noise levels.
 - Any child who persistently creates a disturbance on the bus or is returned to the school 3+ times **may be denied the privilege of riding the bus.**

Emergency Contact

Regulations require that staff are provided with up-to-date contacts and authorization(s). **You must notify the office when you move, get a new home or cell phone number, change employment, change hours of employment or school, or change babysitters.** If your child has an accident or becomes ill at school, we must be able to reach you or an individual on your emergency card. If we are unable to reach anyone on behalf of the child over an extended period of time, local authorities may need to become involved. Also, automated phone calls that provide vital program information are set up based upon the contact phone number that you provide.

Communication with Families

Early Education staff make communication with families a high priority. These communications may take the form of a monthly newsletter, messages and posts in Seesaw, virtual meetings, emails, phone calls, etc... Our goal is to provide families/guardians with up-to-date information regarding school events, food menus, recent lessons, and activities to help your child's growth and development. Other program flyers and newsletters may be sent home on occasion to inform families of program changes and community resources/events.

Clothing

Your child should be dressed in clothing appropriate for play and for the weather. Children should wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather. Tennis shoes or other shoes with rubber soles should be worn. **Cowboy boots, sandals, flip-flops, and platform/heeled shoes are discouraged because of safety issues.** Outdoor time occurs every day unless the temperature is extreme or it is raining or snowing. For the safety of the child, no dangling earrings will be allowed. If there is a need for clothing assistance, please contact the school.

Outdoor Play / Temperature Policy

Outdoor play (as weather permits) is an important part of the daily curriculum. If a child is well enough to attend school, he/she is well enough to go outside. As temperatures drop below 40 degrees or approach 95 degrees, staff will consult state licensing regulations and/or contact the district's public safety department for further guidance on weather conditions. The length of time spent outside will be reduced or an alternative indoor activity may occur. Children will be kept inside on **Red Alert** days. The district-established guidelines during cold months are:

- 35 degrees F and above - Full outside recreation time.
- 15-30 degrees F - Shortened outside recreation time with additional indoor recreation time.
- 15 degree F and below - Indoor recreation time.

Personal Belongings, Money, Toys, Etc.

Please do not allow your child to bring money, toys, gum, food, jewelry, medicine, lipstick, lotion, etc. to school. If there is ever a need for money, the family will be notified through formal communication. The school district will not be liable for personal items brought to school, including electronics.

Please do not bring videos / DVDs to school. Videos or DVDs will only be used as a short part of instruction that supplements curriculum. All videos must have licensing permission that allows their use. Feature-length movies are not a part of the curriculum and put the program at risk for liability issues.

If families bring personal sleep items for their children, all items will need to be taken home at the end of each week and washed. Families will need to return clean sleep items for the new week.

Food

It is the program's goal to serve nutritious meals and snacks. If the building principal has approved a student to bring in food items for sharing with class members, these items must arrive in the **unopened box** that contains **prepackaged individual servings to be sent home for consumption**.

Severe Weather

For school closing information, please listen to your radio or television. **If the Independence School District is closed, ALL Early Education programs are closed as well (includes Head Start/Early Head Start sites, Foundation Preschool sites, and ECSE programs).**

If the ISD cancels school, you will receive an automated call from the district to the phone number linked to your child's school account. Please listen closely to this message.

It is not recommended that families/guardians check students out during emergency situations. Doing so places the family, child, and staff members at risk. While this may be difficult to understand in an emergency situation, it truly is in the best interest of you, your child, and program staff.

FOR WEATHER "School Closing" INFORMATION

- Listen to area news media
- Parent Square
- Visit our web site at www.isdschools.org

Community Complaint

Any member of the community may present a complaint in writing to the Independence School District Interim Superintendent, Dr. Cynthia Grant. For community complaints concerning Head Start Performance Standards, concerns will be reviewed and resolved by the Director of Early Education, Mr. Phong Nguyen, and the Head Start Family/Policy Committee.

Harassment

It is the policy of the District to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment because of an individual's race, color, sex, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation. The School District prohibits any and all forms of unlawful harassment and discrimination because of race, color, sex, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation.

Special Services:

Screening/Disabilities

- Depending on program requirements, children may receive screenings such as vision, hearing, lead/hemo, and/or developmental screenings with family permission.
- If screening results indicate a potential concern with a child's vision, hearing, and/or lead/hemo, the family will be notified and a referral will be made for further follow-up with the child's physician or medical center.
- If a family brings a concern about a developmental delay and/or disability is suspected, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Process Coordinators are contacted immediately. Concerns regarding children's development in the Early Education Head Start Program will be referred to the Content Lead for Student Supports. Staff will coordinate a Problem Solving Team (PST) meeting with relevant team members, such as the classroom teacher and an interventionist to discuss strategies to better support the child.
- ***Should the PST decide at some point that an evaluation is needed, the family or guardian will be contacted and written permission will be obtained prior to beginning this process.***
 - Once an evaluation is completed, the family or guardian will be contacted to participate in an Eligibility meeting. If a child is eligible for special services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed with input from the family or guardian. IFSPs are for children birth up to age 3 years; IEPs are for children ages 3 years and up.
- Children with disabilities and/or their families may receive a range of developmental services through their school district or other community agencies based upon needs identified in the evaluation. Such services may include special instruction, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and/or physical therapy.

Family Services

The Early Education program offers families a variety of opportunities and support for growth. With the help of an Early Education FSL, families can identify their strengths, needs, and interests. A community resource directory listing sources of emergency assistance, crisis interventions, training, and education is available to all families.

Mental Wellness

To promote healthy family functioning, the Early Education program offers resources to assist families with a variety of needs ranging from basic familying strategies to crisis intervention and abuse prevention. Quarterly newsletters for mental wellness will be shared with all children to provide families with up-to-date information on mental health. Your classroom teacher or your building Principal may connect you to a licensed Mental Health person for consultation and/or

referrals to community agencies. In addition, your school may have additional staff such as a Counselor or Family School Liaison to assist with these needs.

Guidance & Discipline:

Positive Guidance Techniques

To promote school/life readiness and support the development of healthy relationships, program staff will use positive guidance techniques, such as:

- Modeling and encouraging expected behavior
- Redirecting children to more acceptable activities
- Setting clear limits
- Encouraging, teaching, and practicing problem solving skills
- Use of appropriate language
- Teaching social emotional skills, such as self-control and sharing
- Timely interventions to avoid unacceptable and/or harmful behavior
- Providing a quiet, safe space to assist with calming down. Classrooms have several calm down spaces that children can utilize to help them regain control of their feelings.

For our infant/toddler care, staff provides respectful, responsive and sensitive care aimed at meeting the individual needs of each child. Responding to individual cues builds resilience in infants and toddlers, which prepares them for later transitions to preschool and primary school.

- **ABSOLUTELY NO PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OR VERBAL ABUSE WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM!** This includes yanking, pulling, grabbing, pushing, yelling, teasing, swearing, etc... In addition, we ask that families and guardians refrain from physical punishments such as spanking children on school grounds.

Behavior Intervention Policy

Children shall not be allowed to intimidate or harm others, harm themselves or destroy property. The following behaviors are considered intimidating and harmful: inappropriate abusive language (statements about killing), ongoing use of profanity, sexually inappropriate behavior (exposing self, touching others, etc.), hitting, biting, kicking, scratching and running away from adults.

Isolated episodes of these behaviors will first be handled by the classroom staff through the use of positive guidance techniques and an evaluation of their classroom environment. When the behavior becomes repetitive, these procedures will be followed:

- Classroom staff will contact the building principal.
- The school will partner with the family and the child's teacher. Family/teacher interviews and classroom observations will be made to assess triggers, functions of behavior and points of intervention. A *Behavior Intervention Plan* and/or *DECA Protective Guidance Plan* may be developed. If plans are unsuccessful, the Problem Solving Team (PST) process will be used to formulate different strategies or access additional options or resources.
- Excessive inappropriate behavior may result in Independence School District Early Education staff assisting the family in transitioning to a more appropriate placement.

Health & Wellness:

Bathroom Needs and Usage

Children usually show signs of bladder control between the ages of 24 months (2 years old) and 36 months (3 years old). In our Infant/Toddler programs, an individualized schedule of diapering is implemented for all children. For those families who qualify, our Early Head Start/Head Start programs provide disposable diapers and wipes to be used during our program day.

Qualifying Early Head Start/Head Start families have the choice to utilize the products provided. Families that have a preference of a different brand may provide that for their child. Diapering is documented on daily sheets for all children ages birth to 2 years old and is given to families each day at dismissal. Individualized toilet learning is implemented upon agreement with the family and classroom staff regarding readiness. Signs of readiness are self-help skills such as pushing down and pulling up clothing, the ability to communicate the need to go to the bathroom, the ability to stay dry for 2 hours at a time, etc...

In the preschool setting, most children will have bladder and bowel control and be able to take care of their own bathroom needs. However, it is not unusual for preschool children to have occasional accidents. ***Children should not be punished or degraded for toileting accidents.*** Families are asked to keep 1 or 2 extra sets of clothing at school for their child (including socks). When an accident occurs, staff will encourage children to change their own clothing, providing additional assistance when needed. To prevent the spread of infectious disease, please teach your child to flush the stool and wash hands after every use.

Breakfast/Lunch/Snack

In our **Infant/Toddler** programs, breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided. Infants are fed on demand based upon their individual needs.

Facilities are available for storage of breast milk. Families choosing to provide breast milk must supply milk in a sealed container. The milk container must be labeled with the child's name and date. In addition, mothers are welcomed and offered a comfortable place to breastfeed their children. Our comprehensive Early Head Start program provides infant formula fortified with iron to be used while children are in attendance at our program. Early Head Start families have the choice to utilize the products provided. Families that have a preference of a different brand may provide that for their child.

For **preschool children**, breakfast, lunch and/or snacks are provided depending on the program option in which your child is enrolled as well as the family's free/reduced lunch status. Early Education students will be offered breakfast, lunch, and/or snacks depending on the program. Full pay families will pay full meals costs, reduced lunch families pay the reduced price, and there is no charge for free lunch families. In the case that ISD Nutrition Services be approved for specialized meal service Federal funding, meals and/or snacks would be at no cost to families. Head Start programs do not charge families for breakfast, lunch, or snack as meals are covered by CACFP/grant funds.

For both infant/toddler and preschool programs, **in order to provide the required alternatives for any specialized dietary needs (allergies, disabilities or other conditions requiring medical assistance), doctors must fill out an Individualized Healthcare Plan and this plan must be on file at your program of attendance**. This form is available in your school building, so feel free to ask your Early Education Coordinator or school nurse as applicable.

Please note, hot meals must be served within certain timeframes, so tardiness may result in your child eating an alternative snack or cold meal such as cereal with milk and fruit.

Head Lice Guidelines

The objectives of these guidelines are to create a consistent approach in all Independence Schools to manage head lice. The Independence School District has the support and resources of the Independence Health Department, child services and community social services through District Family School Liaisons.

The Independence School District has accepted the recommendation of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, cited in *Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases. A Guide for School Administrators, Nurses, Teachers and Child Care Providers*, (July, 2005), as well as the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics stating that students should not be excluded or sent home early from school because of head lice.

- Schools will not perform routine school wide head lice screenings. However, the school nurse will perform individual screenings on students who are symptomatic or as requested by an administrator.
 - Symptoms of head lice infestation are: Itching, tickling feeling or sensation of something moving in the hair, irritability and sleeplessness, sores on the head caused by scratching.
- If the school nurse should identify a student with live head lice the family/guardian will be notified and the student will be excluded from school. If the student has viable eggs they will be allowed to return to class, but will be excluded from school after that day. Siblings of the affected students should also be screened. The student should receive treatment before returning to school. The family/Guardian must accompany the student to the school nurse to be rescreened after treatment. If live head lice or viable eggs remain the student will not be allowed to return to school and the school nurse will clarify with the family/guardian on treatment options. Once the student shows no signs of live head lice or viable eggs they will be allowed to return. It is not necessary for all non-viable nits to be removed from the hair to return to school, but it is highly recommended.
 - Active head lice will be identified as: Live lice or viable eggs “nits” that are within ¼” from the scalp.
 - Egg/Viable nit: located within ¼” of the scalp
 - Non-viable nit: located away from the scalp at least ¼”
- Students who have had an active case of head lice will be rescreened within 6-10 days following their return to school. If live lice or viable eggs are present the family/guardian will be notified and retreatment is required for the child to attend school.

- The decision to send home communication to families/guardians regarding head lice in a specific classroom, grade level, or school, will be at the discretion of the building nurse in collaboration with the Director of Health Services.

If there is no follow-up by the family, the student has not returned to school within two days, the school nurse will enlist the assistance of the building principal. Families are to involve school and community resources early to avoid attendance and truancy issues.

Immunizations

The Independence School District Early Education Program follows State Immunization Laws and will comply with any changes as they occur. Immunizations must be current in order for your child to remain in school. If your child has any immunizations after enrollment, you must share current immunization records with the school nurse.

Missouri Statute 210.003 requires that, “No child shall be permitted to enroll in or attend any public, private or parochial day care center or preschool unless such child has been adequately immunized against vaccine preventable childhood illnesses specified by the Department of Health.”

Infants and toddlers must comply with Missouri Immunization Law which states that the center must maintain on file “information indicating that the child has completed age-appropriate immunizations, is in the process of completing immunizations or is exempt from immunization requirements as defined by 19 CSR 30-62.192 Health Care.” Infant and toddler immunization requirements change rapidly, and must be current in agreement with the above law in order for a child to remain in attendance at a childcare center.

Failure to comply with the above Missouri immunization laws will result in children being held out of attendance, and could result in termination of services. Check with your local health department for information on free immunizations.

Medical Exam

All children at Head Start/Early Head Start sites are required to have a physical exam under the supervision of a doctor **within 30 days of entry into the program and annually thereafter so that a current physical is always on site.** The family is responsible for any appointments and any follow up care that may be needed. **The required Physical Form will be provided to you for your medical provider to complete and return to school. The school will work with families to support any follow up services identified.**

Medication

- All medication (including inhalers for asthma) to be taken by, or administered to a student while at school, will be delivered to the school nurse by a family, guardian or designated party with consent in writing by a family or guardian. A completed and signed Medication Consent Form must be on file.
- Medication must be in a current pharmacy labeled container with: student’s name, date, Dr.’s name, medication name, quantity, frequency, dosage and route of administration. Only medication approved by the FDA will be given to students with family and doctor consent. Doses must be within accepted ranges found in medical and pharmaceutical reference books.

Medication trained personnel can **refuse** to give medication **if any of the above listed information is not provided.**

- Disposal of medicines will be made per recommendations of the Food and Drug Administration. Medication will be discarded if not picked up by a family/guardian within five (5) days of notification or discontinuation of use.

Dental

- All children enrolled in Early Education Head Start Preschool (3 to 5) programs are required to have a dental examination **within the first 90 days** of entry into the program, and annually thereafter. The family is responsible for any appointments and any follow up care needed. A dental form will be provided to you for your dentist to complete for each dental appointment.
- Self-care oral hygiene procedures will be emphasized daily as part of the early learning classroom experience. *Supervised tooth brushing is a part of classroom teaching. Children will brush once daily after a meal as a part of the daily routine. Our comprehensive early education program provides child size toothbrushes and baby spiffies to be used while children are in attendance. Teaching staff will monitor cleanliness and condition of toothbrushes on a regular basis. Toothbrushes will be labeled, rinsed daily, stored separately and replaced every three months, or as needed.
 - o **Please note that with the current health and safety protocols, the ISD Early Education program will abide by the latest guidance from Eastern Jackson County as well as school district decisions when it comes to brushing teeth at school.*

Child Illness

We ask that you notify the main office at your school building when your child is ill.

Regulations require that the reasons for absences be documented. The Early Education program will notify families when certain communicable diseases are present in the program.

Unusual behaviors will be monitored closely and families will be contacted if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- Cranky or less active behavior than usual
- Feeling general discomfort or seeming unwell
- Crying more than usual
- Loss of appetite

Families will be contacted when signs of illness are observed. **A child may NOT be brought to the Early Education Program and may NOT remain in care** with (1) or more of the following symptoms. A child will be sent home if the following occur during the day:

- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (oral/ear), or 99 degrees under the arm
- Diarrhea: More than (one) abnormally loose stool
- Severe coughing
- Difficulty or rapid breathing
- Severe itching and/or scratching of the body or scalp that denotes a change in the child's normal pattern
- Pinkeye: tears, redness of eyelid, irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- Infected skin patch(es): crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusually dark, tea colored urine
- Gray or white stool
- Unusual spots or rashes (including untreated ringworm)
- Sore (red) throat or trouble swallowing

- Vomiting more than once
- Yellowish skin or eyes

Families of children developing any of the above symptoms, any other COVID-related symptoms, and/or suffering injuries during the day will be notified by staff and these children shall be picked up by the family or family designee listed on the emergency contacts card. If you are called to pick your child up from school, you should do so as soon as possible for your child's comfort and the safety of other children and staff.

- If an approved party has not picked the child up within an hour and a half, staff will hotline.

Injury/Accident Procedure for Child

Staff will have available first aid supplies such as band aids and vinyl gloves when outside the classroom. Minor accidents are handled by staff and are communicated to families.

In the event that there is a serious emergency, (i.e., life-threatening accident, allergic reaction, head injury, etc.) 911 will be called and the child will be taken to Centerpoint Hospital by an emergency vehicle for treatment. Families/guardians will be called immediately.

Family Participation & Involvement:

Family Involvement

Community and family involvement is critical and input is needed in four areas:

1. In offering solutions and ideas regarding components of the Early Education program
2. As volunteers (as appropriate pending current health and safety requirements) and/or observers
3. In developing and participating in activities for families (including virtual activities or meetings)
4. In working with their children in cooperation with Early Education staff

Current job postings for all Early Education positions (families as Teachers, Early Childhood Special Education, and Early Childhood) will be posted on the District web site, www.isdschools.org.

Head Start/Early Head Start qualifying families may participate on the Independence School District Head Start family Committee and the Mid-America Head Start Policy Council if elected to do so.

The Head Start program requires the Family Committee(s)/Policy Committee be established near the start of the program year. The Head Start family Committee/Policy Committee meets regularly to make decisions concerning program policies and procedures. From the Head Start Policy Committee, representatives will be elected to Head Start Policy Council to represent our Head Start programs in decision-making for the metro Kansas City area. All committees will have recurring meetings throughout the year.

Head Start Family Committee

The Head Start family Committee is made up of Head Start families and representatives of the community. At least 51% of the Head Start family Committee must be families of Head Start children presently enrolled in the program. Community representatives must have concern for children from low-income families and children with special needs and be familiar with resources and services in the community. Head Start regulations require families serve no more than 3 years on Policy Council to promote broader participation.

Workshops and Training

Early Education program staff provide many resources and training sessions designed specifically for families.

All Program Volunteers

Family members (must be at least 18 years of age) are encouraged to volunteer and participate in all program activities (as appropriate pending current health and safety requirements). They are also encouraged to accompany children on field trips, share special talents and cultural activities, serve on committees and assist with special events. The basic district guideline requires that all volunteers who come in contact with students on a regular basis (20+ hours a month) or who are responsible for the supervision of children in an academic or extracurricular situation such as field trips must have a **cleared criminal and child abuse background check on file.**

Process To Complete Background Check

1. Pick up the Criminal Record & Child Abuse/Neglect form from the building Secretary or Early Education FSL.
2. Complete the Criminal Record & Child Abuse/Neglect form and return to the building Secretary or Early Education FSL.
3. Forms will be submitted and processed by the appropriate state agencies and returned to the school district.
4. **Approval process could take up to 4-6 weeks.**
5. Individuals will be notified when they can begin volunteering activities.

Education:

Meet the Teacher

An orientation is held for families or guardians of each child preparing to enter the Early Education program. This year's *Meet the Teacher* event in August may offer the option of meeting virtually or meeting in person. More information will come on this as the date draws closer. This event provides an opportunity for families to get to know staff, share information, and to ask any questions they have about the program. The information exchanged helps staff to better meet your child's needs.

Home Visits and/or family-Teacher Conferences

Home visits and/or family-teacher conferences provide an opportunity to share important information related to your child's education, behavior and development. Your program requirements and level of communication and involvement will determine the necessity of home visits and/or family-teacher conferences. Again, these may be virtual this year depending upon the latest health and safety requirements.

- As a family, you have information and knowledge about your child that is helpful to the teacher in better understanding your child.
- Home visits/conferences help your child feel important.
- Teachers will share information and answer questions about your child's development.
- Additional support staff may attend home visits to support questions regarding your child's development.

****Pending health and safety requirements throughout the year, Early Head Start and Head Start Families will participate in at least two home visits and two at-school family-teacher conferences per year. HOWEVER, familyS FROM ANY PROGRAM MAY REQUEST A CONFERENCE WITH STAFF AT ANY TIME.***

Curriculum

Our Early Education program utilizes Creative Curriculum to meet the needs of the varied age groups within the program. This curriculum has a foundation in research and theory, making it comprehensive and developmentally appropriate. Head Start preschool classrooms have a supplemental curriculum called *Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices* along with *Conscious Discipline* to support social-emotional development. Additional resources are available for teaching staff to use within the classroom, including Spanish resources.

Another resource we will be using is SeeSaw, which is a virtual communication and sharing tool to assist us in working more collaboratively with children and families.

Educational Screening

Depending on program requirements, children in the Early Education program may receive a developmental and social-emotional screening within the first 45 days of their enrollment if they haven't yet had one, as well as at the beginning of each school year.

For the developmental screening, children birth to two years of age are screened using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires and children two through five years of age are screened using the Brigance Head Start Screen III. A screening provides a snapshot of a child's development at a particular point in time. Screenings can also help identify children that have developmental delays or are advanced academically which can help teaching staff ensure children get the appropriate support in the classroom.

For the social-emotional screening, children are screened using the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). This is a checklist that looks at children's strengths in the areas of Attachment, Self-Control, and Initiative. Children are also re-assessed in the Spring using this tool.

Ongoing Assessment

Throughout the year children will be assessed using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The DRDP is a research based observational assessment that has been recommended by the Missouri State Board of Education. Children birth up to three years of age are assessed using the Desired Results Developmental Profile Infant /Toddler (DRDP-IT 2015). Children three through five years of age are assessed using the Desired Results Developmental Profile Preschool (DRDP-PS 2015).

This assessment system was developed based on the following six Desired Results:

Desired Results for Children

- DR1: children are personally and socially competent.
- DR2: Children are effective learners.
- DR3: Children show physical and motor competence.
- DR4: Children are safe and healthy.

Desired Results for Families

- DR5: Families support their child's learning and development.
- DR6: Families achieve their goals.

For more information on the Desired Results Developmental Profile please visit:

<http://www.desiredresults.us/> Teaching staff collect information throughout the year for this ongoing assessment and progress is tracked by completing the DRDP assessment three times per year for each child – at the end of the Fall, Winter, and Spring terms. This assessment allows teachers to monitor each child's growth and development and plan learning activities accordingly.

Infant/Toddler Daily Routine shall include the following components, but follows the needs of the individual child:

Morning and Individualized Care

Breakfast
Individualized Nap
Exploring and Learning Time
Snack
Outdoor / Gym

Lunch

Early Afternoon Individualized Care

Nap Time
Snack
Exploring and Learning Time
Outdoor / Gym

Late Afternoon Individualized Care

Exploring and Learning Time
Nap Time

2-Year-Old and Preschool Daily Routine

Depending on the program option, breakfast, lunch, and/or snack will be served. All program options may contain the following components:

Choice/Center Time - Children engage with materials of their choice at a minimum of 45 minutes per day. Teachers use choice time to observe children and ask open-ended questions that will initiate and extend children's thinking.

Outdoor Time - Children develop large muscles and further develop social skills with peers.

Literacy Time - Activities are designed to further develop and enrich language and literacy skills. This may occur in various formats such as large group, small group, or individually.

Large Group Time (3-5 year olds as appropriate) – Children and adults in the classroom may participate in a total group activities, such as reading books, singing, dramatic play, rhythm and movement, games, or practicing social emotional skills.

Visitors to District Property and Events:

All visitors to school property or events must demonstrate appropriate behavior as good role models for the District's students. Visitors during school hours, including Board members, must sign in at the building main office prior to proceeding elsewhere in the building. The principal of each school building will ensure signs are posted to direct visitors to designated doors nearest the building office.

Disruptive Conduct

Visitors who engage in disruptive conduct or exceed the scope of permission granted may be considered trespassers and subject to arrest and prosecution. The Superintendent or designee may limit or revoke permission to visit school property or parts of school property at any time. The Superintendent or designee may inform the visitor that he or she is not welcome back on District property or at District events indefinitely or for a specific period of time. During any period of prohibition, the visitor will not be allowed on District property. The Superintendent may make exceptions for families, guardians or custodians of students enrolled in the District if the person's presence is necessary to transport the student or may benefit the student educationally, or in situations where the family, guardian or custodian will be supervised at all times.

Possession of Weapons

Possession of weapons, including concealed weapons, is strictly prohibited on District property, on District transportation or at any District function or activity sponsored by the District unless the visitor is an authorized law enforcement official or is specifically authorized by the Board.

Sex Offenders

Individuals listed on the Missouri Highway Patrol's sex offender registry may not be present in any school building, or on District property, in any District vehicle utilized to transport students, or be present at school activities without the written permission of the Superintendent. For those extraordinary circumstances when permission is granted, it will be granted in writing for a specific event. In such cases, the Superintendent will notify the principal of the building in which the sex offender will be present and arrange for the sex offender to be supervised at all times and the sex offender will not be permitted to be alone with a child.

Equal Opportunity & Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, & Retaliation

The District is committed to providing equal opportunity in all areas of admission, recruiting, hiring, employment, retention, promotion, contracted services, and access to programs, services, activities, and facilities. The District strictly prohibits any unlawful discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, disability, age, sex, gender, national origin, or any other characteristic protected by law. The District also prohibits retaliatory action, harassment, or discrimination against individuals who make complaints of, report, or otherwise participate in the investigation of any such unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. The District is an equal opportunity employer.

Anyone who believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed, and/or retaliated against in violation of this policy should report the alleged discrimination, harassment and/or

retaliation to the District's Compliance Officer, unless the Compliance Officer is unavailable or the subject of the report. In that case, the report should be made directly to the alternative Compliance Officer. The District designates the following individual to act as the District's Compliance Officer:

Name: District Compliance Officer
Address: 201 North Forest Avenue, Independence, Missouri 64050
Phone #: (816) 521-5300
Fax #: (816) 521-5619
Email Address: compliance@idschools.org

In the event the District's Compliance Officer is unavailable or is the subject of a report that would otherwise be made to the Compliance Officer, reports should instead be directed to the alternative Compliance Officer:

Name: Director of Human Resource
Address: 201 North Forest Avenue, Independence, Missouri 64050
Phone #: (816) 521-5300
Fax #: (816) 521-5619
Email Address: compliance@idschools.org

All employees, students, and visitors who have witnessed any incident or behavior that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this policy must immediately report such incident or behavior to the District's Compliance Officer for investigation.

All complaints of violation of this policy will be promptly investigated by the District, and appropriate action will be taken.

Public Notice

The Superintendent or designee will publicize this policy and will disseminate information about this policy to employees, families/guardians, and students, as well as to newly enrolled students and newly-hired employees.

District Information & Records

Generally, the District will ensure the public has access to the meetings, records and votes of the Board. In certain situations, and as permitted by law, these meetings, records and votes will be closed to the public.

The District's custodian of records is responsible for responding to requests for District records. Requests for records will be directed to the custodian, whose identity will be made available on request. The Board appoints the following person as custodian of records:

- Title: Board Secretary
- Address: 201 North Forest Avenue, Independence, Missouri 64050
- Phone #: (816) 521-5300

In addition, the Superintendent will designate an alternate records custodian to serve in the absence of the records custodian.

Student Records:

Education records are maintained on every student enrolled in the District. Education records refer to materials maintained by the District that contain personally identifiable information about a student. Education records may include, but are not limited to, date and place of birth, family/guardian names and addresses, emergency contact information, enrollment and attendance records, academic records, special education records, discipline information, and health records. The confidentiality of a student's records, excluding general directory information as defined by the District, are protected by law, and only families/guardians, eligible students (a student who is 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution to whom all rights formerly given to families transfer to the student), and school officials who have a legitimate educational interest are provided access to records, unless specifically allowed by law. The District establishes procedures and complies with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Safe Schools Act, and the Missouri Sunshine Law.

The District will annually notify family/guardians and eligible students of their rights under FERPA. Families/Guardians or eligible students may inspect and review their educational records, request amendments, provide consent for release of information, and file a complaint. Records will be made available for inspection within the timeframe as defined by law. In accordance with law, the District will share information without family consent or notification with law enforcement, Children's Division of the Department of Social Services, military recruiters, or a post-secondary institution.

Family requests for access to a student's educational records may be made by contacting the Custodian of Records.

The following individuals may have access to your child's file depending on program requirements:

- Head Start Grantee Monitoring Team Members
- Any Health and Human Services official representative
- Any State official, such as USDA, Dept. of Social Services, Dept. of Health
- The Auditor for the School District of Independence, Missouri
- Administrators of School District of Independence
- Building Administrators
- Early Education Director of Head Start
- Early Education Quality Assurance Monitor
- Early Education Coordinators
- Early Education Secretary, Building/Principal Secretary, and/or Bookkeeper
- Early Education Data Entry Clerks
- Early Education Content Leads of Education, Health, Student Supports, Family/ Community Engagement, and ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance), and Early Education Spanish Interpreter
- Early Education Family School Liaisons or K12 Family School Liaisons
- Early Education Teachers and Teacher Assistants
- School Nurse, Health Service Assistants, and/or Health Screeners

Reporting & Investigation Child Abuse:

The Board requires that District administration develop and implement a training program for mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect whom the District employs. All school employees and school officials are required to report possible abuse or neglect of children. As mandated reporters, District staff and school officials will immediately report any child abuse or neglect they suspect or observe by calling the Abuse Hotline at 1-800-392-3738 or reporting online (when applicable and available). A mandated reporter may also make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect to any law enforcement agency or juvenile office. However, such a report does not take the place of reporting to the Children's Division (CD).

