



SPOKANE COLLEGES
HEAD START & ECEAP

Parent Handbook



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Welcome!

We're excited to welcome you and your child to the Spokane Colleges Head Start & ECEAP community!

Head Start and ECEAP are comprehensive early learning programs that support your child's growth from birth to kindergarten. We help prepare children for school by promoting development in areas of education, health, and social-emotional skills. We also support families as partners in their child's success.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. Children do better in school when families are involved, and your participation is a key part of our program. You can volunteer in your child's classroom, attend trainings and events, and help guide the program through parent leadership roles.

We especially encourage you to join the **Policy Council, a group that meets monthly to give parents a meaningful voice in shaping program decisions.** Parents and community members collaborate to improve services and share ideas.

This handbook includes important information about our policies and practices. It's here to support you and your child throughout your Head Start and ECEAP journey.

Bobbi Woodhaugh

District Director



Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

Enhancing the lives of children and families for success in school and life.

Mission

We are dedicated to providing high-quality education, health, and family services to support the well-being of young children and their families.

Our Values

Empower Through Education

We believe education enriches lives and strengthens families. We support lifelong learning and encourage each individual's growth as a foundation for personal wellbeing and success.

Honor Individual Strengths and Perspectives

We welcome children, families, and staff from all backgrounds. We value the unique qualities, experiences, and viewpoints each person brings to our program.

Serve the Community

We build strong partnerships to respond to community needs. Working together, we enhance services that support and strengthen families.



You Are Part of Our Team

Preschool Head Start (HS) and ECEAP depend on you to help make our program successful! There are many ways for you to get involved, and we encourage you to participate in your child's classroom and center activities.

Ways to Volunteer and Get Involved

Classroom Opportunities

- Read books with children
- Assist with classroom learning and art projects
- Support your child's learning goals at home
- Share family traditions and culture
- Sing songs or play an instrument
- Talk about your job or hobbies
- Prepare classroom materials at home

Program Planning

- Represent your center at Policy Council
- Help with the program's self-assessment
- Participate in parent committee meetings
- Assist with recruitment at community events

Health and Nutrition Activities

- Help with health screenings
- Share family recipes
- Help with food experience activities in the classroom

Office Activities

- Answer phones
- Decorate bulletin boards
- Help with mail, filing, or making copies
- Place information in family cubbies

While you are participating in activities, such as volunteering in the classroom, attending training, or going to a parent meeting, Head Start can help pay for childcare for your non-enrolled children. Talk to your Family Services Coordinator for a Child Care Reimbursement form.

IMPORTANT

Regular volunteers must complete a TB test and a Criminal History Check.

All adults and children must wash their hands when entering the classroom.

Hand sanitizer is not allowed as a substitute and is not provided.

In-Kind Contributions

Each year, our program must collect over **\$1 million in volunteer time and donated services** to meet federal requirements. This is known as our "in-kind" contribution.

Your time matters! Whether you volunteer in the classroom or support your child's learning at home, it all counts.

IMPORTANT

We must keep track of all parent volunteer hours – please work with staff to record your time.

Classroom and Children Services

You are always welcome to visit your child's classroom. Please make other arrangements for your enrolled child's siblings, as the classroom environment is set up just for enrolled children.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Drop-off and pick-up can be emotional for young children. If you can, take a little extra time to help your child transition into and out of the day, especially when saying goodbye.

Supporting Your Child's Growth

Children in Head Start & ECEAP build strong relationships with other children and adults. They learn through play, and explore the world through art, water play, music, movement, and stories. These experiences help children:

- Develop social-emotional skills and express their feelings in healthy ways.
- Learn to solve problems and become independent.
- Build confidence and feel good about themselves and school.

To support your child's development, staff will:

- Involve you in planning activities and collecting in-kind contributions from home.
- Offer children many chances for success and encouragement.
- Meet with you formally four times a year to discuss your child's goals and progress, provide informal daily communication, and be available to talk or meet as needed.
- Offer fun learning experiences like cooking and practicing safety and health habits.
- Celebrate each child's unique background and culture.

NOTE

Activities related to religious instruction are not part of the Head Start or ECEAP curriculum.

Learning in the Classroom

We use a research-based curriculum called **The Creative Curriculum** to support your child's development in social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive areas. Teachers adapt activities to match your child's age, interests, temperament, and culture.

We also use **Conscious Discipline**, a program that helps children learn self-regulation and builds social-emotional skills for lifelong success. Ask your teacher or Family Services Coordinator for more details.

Classrooms are designed for different age groups: infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Some may have a mix of age groups to support transitions (for example, toddlers moving into preschool).

Staff-to-Child Ratios

We follow the required adult-to-child ratios to ensure safety and high-quality care. Often, you will see more staff than required.

- **Infants:** 1 adult for every 4 children (maximum of 8 children per classroom)
 - **Toddlers:** 1 adult for every 4 children (maximum of 8 children per classroom)
 - **Preschoolers:** 1 adult for every 10 children (maximum of 15 children per classroom)
-

Holidays and Celebrations

Classroom celebrations focus on what children are learning. Families are encouraged to celebrate holidays and special traditions at home.

Sample Daily Schedule

- Arrival
 - Breakfast / Brush Teeth
 - Learning Activities & Play
 - Handwashing
 - Lunch
 - Rest Time (for full-day programs)
 - Snack
 - Outside Play
 - Departure
-

Dressing for School

Please help your child come to school ready to learn and play!

- Wear comfortable, washable clothes for messy activities.
- Dress for the weather: coats, hats, mittens, and boots are needed for outdoor play.
- Bring a full extra set of clothes (labeled with your child's name) to keep at the center.
- Wear safe shoes for running and climbing (no flip-flops or strapless sandals)

Child Guidance and Discipline

All staff use **Conscious Discipline** to guide children and teach self-regulation. When a child's behavior may be unsafe to themselves or others, staff and parents work together to create a behavior support plan. We may also partner with specialists for extra support.

IMPORTANT

Restraint is never used.

Children are not suspended or expelled for their behavior.

Toilet Training

Children are not required to be toilet trained to participate in our program. We recognize that toilet learning is a developmental process, and each child progresses at their own pace. Teachers will partner with you to support your child's toilet learning in a respectful and individualized way.

We encourage children to use the toilet, but they are never forced. Please provide extra underwear and clothing for your child in case of accidents. If your child wears pull-ups or training pants, talk with their teacher so we can maintain consistency between home and school. Our goal is to create a supportive, pressure-free environment that promotes confidence and independence.

Biting

Biting is a common stage of development, especially in infants and toddlers who are still learning how to communicate, manage emotions, and interact with others. Our teachers respond quickly and calmly when biting happens. We help children learn other ways to communicate and solve problems, and we pay close attention to what might be causing the behavior (like teething, frustration, or tiredness) so we can try to prevent it in the future.

If your child bites or is bitten, you will hear from us that same day. We'll provide basic care like an ice pack if needed and send home an incident report. We never share the names of other children involved to protect everyone's privacy.

If biting becomes frequent, we'll work closely with you to create a plan that supports your child at both home and school. Together, we'll help your child move through this stage with patience, support, and understanding.

Reminders for Parents

- To support learning, please keep your phone silent and refrain from using it while in the classroom or during drop-off and pick-up.
- We encourage families to keep personal toys at home whenever possible.
- For confidentiality and safety, photos of children other than your own should not be taken or shared on social media.

IMPORTANT

You must sign your child in and out every day using the electronic attendance system. A full legal signature is required.

Infant/Toddler Services

Our program provides a nurturing, responsive environment where infants and toddlers can grow and thrive. We encourage you to be involved and share in your child's daily experiences.

Communication

You are always welcome in the classroom. You can rock or nurse your baby, spend time together, and participate in daily activities.

We ask that you communicate with your child's teacher each day. Use the **Daily Communication Log** in your child's classroom to let staff know about changes in your child's:

- Meals or bottles
- Sleeping habits
- Mood or emotions
- Health or routines

We also invite you to share ideas about classroom activities or family traditions that are important to you.

Feeding

Breastfeeding/Human Milk

Human milk is the optimal source of nutrition for infants, and we are here to support families who choose to provide it. A comfortable, private space is available for nursing or pumping on site.

If you are sending human milk, please ensure it is in appropriate, airtight containers and clearly labeled with your child's name, the date, and the time it was pumped. If you are sending frozen human milk, please also include the date it was frozen. This helps us ensure safe handling and storage of your milk and supports your feeding preferences.

Bottles

Tell staff what kind of formula your baby uses. Most standard formulas are provided. If your child needs a special formula (such as low-iron or hypoallergenic), a doctor's note is required. Infants will always be held while being bottle-fed.

Meals

We provide healthy, balanced meals and snacks. Meals are served family-style, even for toddlers, to encourage independence.

Between 6 and 12 months of age, your baby may begin to drink from a cup. This helps prepare your child to wean off the bottle around 12–13 months.

Let us know:

- What your child eats at home
- When your child tries a new food

Introducing new foods is your decision. Teachers will support you and follow your guidance.

Diapering

- Diapering is done on a regular schedule and as needed.
- Staff wear gloves and use disposable changing table paper.
- After each change, the area is sanitized, and hands are washed.
- Diapers and wipes are provided by the program.

A record of diaper changes is kept for you to review.

Sleeping

We follow **Washington State safe sleep guidelines**:

- Infants sleep on their backs in individual cribs.
- No blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals, or mobiles are allowed.
- No swaddling or restraints are used.
- Children may be rocked or soothed to sleep, but any blankets used for comfort will be removed before the child is placed in the crib.

- Infants are placed in cribs after they fall asleep and are picked up when they wake up. Infants are never left in cribs while awake or upset.

Infants and toddlers follow their own natural sleep schedules. Toddlers have consistent daily rest time built into the classroom routine.

Additional Services

Our program offers a variety of services to meet the needs of all families. We work together to make sure every child and their family feels welcomed, supported, and included.

Dual Language Learners

If your family speaks a language other than English at home, we will support you:

- We can provide interpreters through community partners.
- Staff have access to phone-based interpretation services.
- Written information can be provided in your home language upon request.
- Classrooms include books, music, and materials that reflect the languages and cultures of our families.
- Whenever possible, we hire staff who speak the languages of the children we serve.

Mental Health

Mental health is a key part of your child's healthy development. It includes how we feel, relate to others, and manage emotions.

We use the **Conscious Discipline** approach to support children and families in developing social and emotional skills. It helps build strong, positive relationships and peaceful classrooms.

Our goals are to help children and families:

- Feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Build healthy relationships with others.
- Learn how to express feelings and solve problems.
- Develop self-confidence and positive self-esteem.
- Know when and how to ask for help.

Teachers, family services staff, and mental health consultants are available to support your child and family. Mental health consultation is available, and we also offer parent training on related topics. Ask a staff member for more information about services or community referrals.

Disabilities Services

We want to ensure that all children get the support they need. Every child receives developmental and health screenings within **45 days of enrollment**. This helps identify areas where more intervention or evaluation may be helpful.

If you have concerns about your child's development, talk to your child's teacher or Family Services Coordinator. We will work together to find the right resources and services. Children with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be able to receive their services directly in the classroom as part of their daily routine.

Kindergarten Transition

Preschool children receive support when preparing to transition to kindergarten. We help families:

- Find out which school their child will attend.
- Get registration forms and help with completing them.
- Collect immunization and health records.

With your permission, we will send a summary of your child's development and learning to the receiving school to help your child's kindergarten teacher get to know them.

Nutrition Services

Children in our program are served healthy, balanced meals that meet the guidelines of the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**.

IMPORTANT

If your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions, please tell us right away. Your Family Services Coordinator and teacher will work with our cooks and the program's registered dietitian to make sure your child's needs are met.

Mealtimes Is Learning Time

Meals are part of the classroom learning experience. Please bring your child to school on time so they can eat with their classmates.

If your child arrives late for breakfast:

- Please check with your teacher or Family Services Coordinator.
- We will ensure they are fed and don't miss a meal.

At the table, children learn to:

- Serve themselves and pour drinks.
- Pass food and use utensils.
- Talk with others and try new foods.

Many parents notice that their children are more willing to try new foods at school than at home. This is a normal part of learning and growing. You can support your child by staying positive and encouraging them to explore new tastes in a relaxed and patient way.

Meals Provided

Children who attend for more than 6 hours receive:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Afternoon snack

Monthly menus are shared in your site newsletter and posted in the classroom.

NOTE

Due to safety and sanitation, all food served in the classroom must be eaten at the table.

Food provided in the classroom cannot be taken home and must be eaten during program time.

Parents may eat in the classroom if they are volunteering that day and have scheduled it at least **2 days in advance**.

Due to food costs, we can only provide meals for up to **two volunteers per day**.

Non-enrolled siblings are not allowed to eat classroom meals.

EatPlayGrow™ Curriculum

We use **EatPlayGrow™**, a fun and interactive health and nutrition curriculum developed by the Children’s Museum of Manhattan and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It helps children learn healthy habits through:

- Art and storytelling
- Math and science activities
- Movement and music

Ask your teacher about this month’s lesson so you can support it at home!

Nutrition Learning Activities

At least once a month, toddler and preschool classrooms prepare simple, healthy foods during class time. If you have ideas for easy snacks children can help make, please share them with your child's teacher.

We focus on foods that are:

- Low in added sugar
- Low in fat and salt
- Easy for children to safely handle.

Food for classroom activities must be purchased by Head Start staff.

Healthy Food Policy

- **No sweets, gum, or candy** may be brought to the classroom.
- We do not allow outside food, including home-prepared, home-canned, frozen, or store-bought items. Only food purchased and prepared by the program may be served.
- If your child needs a special diet, please notify your Family Services Coordinator and teacher as soon as possible. We will work with you and the dietitian to create a plan that meets your child's nutritional needs.

Health Services

We care about your child's health and your family's well-being. Our goal is to support your child's physical, dental, and emotional health so they are ready to learn and grow.

We expect every child to have a **medical and dental home**, a regular doctor and dentist. If you need help finding care, we can connect you with services in the community.

Health Screenings

Within the first 45 days of enrollment, staff will provide basic health screenings for all children, including:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Height and weight

You will receive the results of these screenings.

Emergencies or Sudden Illness

All staff are trained in **pediatric first aid and CPR**. If an emergency happens:

- We will provide immediate care.
- We will call 911 if needed.
- We will call you right away. If we can't reach you, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on your Release and Treatment Authorization form.

IMPORTANT

Please keep your contact information, and your emergency contacts, doctor, and dentist information up to date.

We will ask you to sign a permission form allowing your child to receive emergency care if we cannot reach you. If your child is transported to the hospital, a staff member will stay with them until you or a family member arrives. ID is required at the time of pick up.

Health Care Plan

Our staff follow a written **Health Care Plan** to provide complete health services for every child. The Health Care Plan is available for review upon request.

First Aid and Safety

- Every classroom has a **fully stocked first aid kit** and a no-touch thermometer.
- At least one certified staff member is always present with each group of children.
- Staff keep their pediatric first aid and CPR certifications up to date.

Immunizations

Washington State law requires children to be fully immunized or exempt before starting school. Medically verified proof of immunizations and/or a certificate of exemption is required at enrollment.

Exceptions may apply for families experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, or for those with refugee status. Talk to your Family Services Coordinator or health care provider if you have questions.

Well-Child Exams

Children must have regular check-ups to make sure they are healthy and developing as expected.

- Infants and toddlers need more frequent exams.
- Preschoolers need a yearly exam.

Staff are required to keep a copy of your child's most recent exam on file.

Dental Exams

Dental exams are also required. Staff will keep a copy of the most recent dental visit in your child's file. We can help you schedule dental appointments if needed.

Medication at School

If your child takes medicine, we prefer it to be given **before or after school**.

If medicine must be given during school hours:

- Parents/guardians must speak with their Family Services Coordinator before a child begins, changes, or stops any medication that is currently being or will be administered at school.
 - An Individual Health Plan (IHP) is required to administer any prescription medication at school. A doctor's authorization is required to write an IHP.
 - The IHP outlines your child's medical condition, required medications, daily care needs, responsible staff, and any necessary emergency procedures.
 - Relevant staff are trained in the IHP and emergency procedures.
 - Parents are present at IHP delivery meetings.
 - Once delivered, the IHP is followed daily.
 - IHPs are reviewed at least annually or as conditions change. Updates are made based on new medical information or your child's needs.
 - Any changes to the IHP require a doctor's authorization.
-

When Your Child Is Sick

Please call your center **as soon as possible** if your child is sick or will miss school.

Children who are not well enough to engage in their normal routines and activities, including outside play, should not attend school.

If your child has been in the hospital, ER, or Urgent Care, please bring a **doctor's note** confirming they are well enough to return.

Children must stay home if they have:

- **Vomiting:** Two or more times in 24 hours
- **Diarrhea:** Two or more watery stools in 24 hours, or any stool containing blood or mucus
- **Fever:** Temperature of 100.4°F or higher (must be fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning)
- **Rash:** Unexplained rash not related to heat, allergies, or diapering
- **Sore Throat:** With fever or swollen glands
- **Lice, Ringworm, or Scabies:** May return after the first treatment.
- **Open Sores or Wounds:** Any sore or wound that is draining bodily fluids and cannot be completely covered with a waterproof bandage, or mouth sores accompanied by drooling.
- **Behavior Changes:** Extreme tiredness, persistent crying, trouble breathing, or significant change in behavior or activity level that suggests illness.

Parent/Family Services

We believe that families are the heart of Head Start and Early Head Start. Your values, strengths, and culture guide our work with you and your child. Our staff are here to support your family and help connect you with resources to meet your goals.

Who Will Support You?

Each classroom has a **Direct Service Team (DST)** made up of:

- Your **Family Services Coordinator (FSC)**
- **Classroom Teachers** - Lead & Associate or Co-Teachers
- Site **Classroom Quality Specialist**
- Site **Center Manager**

This team works together to support both your child's learning and your family's well-being.

What Can We Do Together?

Throughout the year, you and your Family Services Coordinator will:

- Set personal or family goals together.
- Plan and take small steps toward reaching those goals.
- Connect you with supportive community resources.

Each site also offers special opportunities for parents and children to learn, grow, and have fun together.

How Can We Help?

Our staff can:

- Support you in your role as your child's most important teacher.
 - Listen and help you identify and reach your goals.
 - Help you explore training programs and career opportunities.
 - Provide information and classes on topics you care about
 - Connect you to resources in the community.
-

Home Visits and Parent Conferences

We want to understand what matters most to you. That's why we schedule:

- **Two home visits** each year to talk about your child and family goals.
- **Two parent conferences** to review your child's learning and development.

Parent Engagement and Leadership Opportunities

Head Start believes parents are partners and leaders. Your voice matters, and there are many ways to be involved in guiding our program.

Policy Council (PC)

Policy Council is a program wide decision-making group made up of elected parents and community members who meet monthly to help make decisions about the program. This includes reviewing budgets, approving staff hiring, and sharing feedback.

- Every site has at least one **parent representative** and one **alternate**
- Policy Council members receive training and support.
- No experience required, just an interest in helping improve services for all families.

Ask your Family Services Coordinator, Teacher, or Center Manager if you're interested in joining the Policy Council.

Other Ways to Lead and Advise

You can make a difference by:

- Attending Parent Committee meetings at your site
- Joining program-wide planning or advisory committees
- Helping with the yearly **program self-assessment**
- Serving on the **Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee (HMHSAC)**

Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee (HMHSAC)

The HMHSAC brings together:

- Parents
- Program staff
- Community health professionals

This group meets quarterly to discuss topics related to:

- Medical and dental health
- Mental health and wellness
- Nutrition
- Family support services

We welcome your voice and encourage you to represent your site at these meetings.

Program Self-Assessment

Every year, parents and staff come together to reflect on how well our program is supporting children, families, and our community. This annual self-assessment is an important opportunity to evaluate what's working, identify areas for improvement, and ensure we meet both your needs, and all federal Head Start performance standards. Your input helps us grow stronger, more responsive, and more effective every year.

We review many aspects of the program, including:

- The quality of education and care for children
- Family services and support
- Health, nutrition, and safety practices
- Communication and collaboration with families
- Compliance with federal requirements

Site Parent Meetings, Training, & Parent/Child/Family Events

All parents are encouraged to attend regular Site Parent meetings, training, and events at your child's center. These happenings are a wonderful way to:

- Connect with other families.
- Gain knowledge and skills through trainings that are of interest to parents.
- Share ideas, ask questions, and solve problems together.
- Participate in fun and engaging activities for children and families.

- Stay informed about what’s happening in the program and community.
- Talk with staff and give feedback.

Your participation helps build a strong school community and ensure your voice is heard.

Site Parent Committees

Each center has a Parent Committee, made up of parents who want to be more involved in program planning and decision-making. As part of a committee, you can:

- Help guide family activities and educational events.
- Share input on services and classroom needs.
- Support special projects.
- Elect representatives to Policy Council
- Partner with staff to improve the program for all families.

Being part of a committee is a fantastic way to develop leadership skills, make a difference, and support your child’s early learning experience.

Parent Education

We offer learning opportunities to support you as a parent and help your family thrive.

At each site, you’ll be invited to complete a short **interest survey**. This helps us plan training and activities that matter most to you and your family.

Examples of Parent Training Topics

- Building strong parent-child relationships
- Stress management
- Career planning and job search
- Credit repair and money management
- Conscious Discipline: Parenting tools
- Preventing child abuse and neglect
- First Aid and CPR
- Healthy eating and nutrition
- Community Resource information
- Family literacy activities
- Fatherhood and male caregiver involvement

Opportunities to Continue Your Education

We partner with local organizations and colleges to help parents reach their education and job goals. Opportunities include:

- GED classes
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- High school completion programs
- Training and college programs at **Spokane Colleges**

Your Family Services Coordinator Can Help You:

- Find financial aid or scholarships
- Plan for a career or build job skills
- Locate quality childcare
- Apply for housing or rental assistance
- Explore work or volunteer opportunities
- Connect with community resources such as food assistance, mental health, or disability services
- Find a doctor, dentist, or other providers for your family

NOTE

Head Start may cover the cost of some parent training and childcare while you attend. Ask a staff member for more information.

Licensing, Plans, and Policies

Emergency Preparedness

Each site has a written **Disaster Plan** and practices:

- Monthly fire drills
- Quarterly disaster drills (e.g., earthquake, lockdown, or bomb threat)
- Secondary evacuation locations

Keep your **emergency contact information up to date** so we can reach you right away if needed.

In case of a community-wide emergency, you can also call the **Spokane Colleges Operations Hotline at 509-533-3303**.

You will receive a **site-specific emergency card**.

More Information Available from Site Office Staff:

- Childcare licensing
- Disaster Preparedness Plan
- Health Care Plan
- Staff policies
- Liability insurance
- Consistency of Care Plan
- Pesticide application schedule
- Menus
- Inspection reports and enforcement notices

Classroom Photos

Photos or videos of your child may be taken by staff (with your permission) for classroom use.

Head Start does **not use classroom video surveillance**.

We will never post your child's photo on social media without your written permission.

Policy Review

Our staff will go over key policies with you to help you understand how things work at Head Start/Early Head Start. If anything is unclear, please ask. We're here to help.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to your child's success and is an expectation for all families enrolled in our Head Start program. Consistent daily attendance helps children build relationships, develop routines, and benefit fully from the learning experiences we provide.

Families are expected to ensure their child attends consistently, on all scheduled days, unless the child is ill or has another approved reason for absence. If your child's attendance becomes irregular or falls below **85%**, program staff will contact you by phone, text, email, or a home visit to discuss the reasons for the absences and develop a plan to support improved attendance. We will work with you to identify and address any barriers that may affect your child's attendance.

If attendance does not improve despite these efforts, the program will review your child's enrollment on a case-by-case basis. Continued failure to attend regularly, without improvement or

ongoing communication, may result in your child's enrollment being discontinued in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards and program policies.

IMPORTANT

Call the center if your child will be absent.

If we don't hear from you within 1 hour of your child's schedule start time, we will try to contact you.

If your child has two consecutive days of unexplained absences, we will conduct a home visit to check on the well being of you and your child.

Our program requires, at minimum, 85% attendance for each child, each month.

Child Care

Only enrolled children may be in the classroom during class time, due to safety and liability rules.

If you are volunteering and need childcare for a non-enrolled child, talk to your Family Services Coordinator. The program may reimburse you for the cost of childcare for authorized activities.

Behavior Management

We use and practice a research-backed, evidence-based curriculum called **Conscious Discipline** to teach social-emotional skills and promote positive behavior for adults and children.

Physical discipline is not allowed at any time by anyone, including parents, on center grounds. This includes:

- Spanking
- Slapping
- Yelling or name-calling
- Yanking or shaking

In line with the federal Head Start policy:

- Children will **not be suspended or expelled** for behavior
- Restraint is **never** used
- Staff will partner with families to develop **Behavior Support Plans** when needed

Child Protective Services (CPS)

All Head Start/Early Head Start staff are **Mandated Reporters**. If we suspect a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect, we are required by law to report it to CPS.

If possible, staff will let you know after making a report. If you ever have concerns, you may speak with a staff member or contact CPS directly.

Our goal is to keep children safe and support families in times of need.

Child Records

We keep secure records of your child's health, development, and participation. These records include:

- Immunizations and health screenings
- Dental and well child exams
- Attendance and classroom observations
- Eligibility and enrollment documents

Only trained staff with a signed confidentiality agreement can access these files. If you would like a copy of your child's records at any time, please contact your Family Services Coordinator.

Confidentiality

Your family's information is private. We follow all federal rules on confidentiality.

Only parents and authorized staff may see your child's file. If someone else needs access, we must have your **written permission** or a **court order unless allowed or required by law** (See Notice of Privacy Practices)

Files are securely stored and destroyed **3 years** after your child leaves the program.

Consistency of Care

Early Head Start classrooms use a **Primary Caregiving Model**:

- Each staff member is assigned to a small group of four children.
- This promotes strong, nurturing relationships and consistent caregiving.

All classrooms use a **Lead/Monitor Protocol** or **Daily Staffing Plan**:

- Specific staff are responsible for planned activities throughout the day, and responsibilities are posted in every classroom.

Drug- and Weapon-Free Environment

We follow the **Spokane Colleges Code of Conduct**. No drugs, alcohol, or weapons are allowed on center grounds.

Enrollment and Disenrollment

Enrollment decisions are made on a combination of the following factors:

- Eligibility: Families with income at or below the federal poverty level are prioritized.
- Those experiencing homelessness, or in foster care are eligible.
- Families who receive TANF, SNAP, or SSI are eligible.
- Child's age:
 - Early Head Start serves infants and toddlers from birth to 3, as well as pregnant parents.
 - Head Start serves children ages 3 to 5.
- Additional considerations may include:
 - Children with developmental disabilities
 - Individual family needs and circumstances
- Transitioning out the program:
 - We support smooth transitions as your child grows and moves from one stage to the next:
 - Early Head Start children will transition to Head Start or another preschool program around age 3, depending on readiness, availability, and eligibility.
 - Head Start children transition out the program when they start kindergarten, usually around age 5.
- Disenrollment:
 - We understand that family needs and circumstances can change. Families may choose to disenroll from the program at any time. Disenrollment may also occur if:
 - A family relocates out of Spokane County
 - The family voluntarily withdraws from services
 - Attendance expectations are not being met, after efforts to support regular attendance. If you are considering disenrolling or have questions about your child's status in the program, please contact your Family Services Coordinator. We are here to help ensure any transition is handled with care and support.

Fraud

Our program is funded by both federal and state sources. This means we follow eligibility rules from two programs: **Head Start** (federal) and **ECEAP** (state of Washington). To qualify, families must meet specific guidelines related to income, housing, and other life circumstances.

Providing false or incomplete information during the enrollment process may affect your child's ability to participate. We are required to verify all information to ensure that services go to families who are truly eligible.

Illness

If your child is sick, please follow the illness guidelines in this handbook and keep them home to prevent the spread of illness.

Lateness

Children should:

- Arrive on time
- Stay for the full session
- Be picked up on time

If you are late for pick-up often, we will ask you to sign a **Late Arrival/Pick-Up Agreement**.

Additional late fees may apply to sites that charge childcare fees. Chronic late pick-up can result in services being discontinued.

Outside Play

We go outside daily, weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately and send a change of clothes. If you need assistance providing clothing, please let us know.

Pick-Up

- Only individuals listed on your child's **authorized** contact list can pick up your child.
- Anyone picking up your child must be **at least 13 years old**.
- Bring photo identification. Staff may ask to see ID.
- If a parent has restricted access, we must have a **court order on file**.
- If someone appears intoxicated or impaired, we may contact **law enforcement**.

If your child is not picked up within **one hour of closing**, and we cannot reach you or your emergency contacts, we will contact law enforcement and **Child Protective Services**.

Tobacco and Marijuana-Free Environment

Smoking, vaping, and marijuana use are **not allowed**:

- Inside buildings
- During home visits

This follows **WA State Law RCW 70.160.030**.

Transportation

Staff are **not allowed** to transport children or parents in private vehicles due to liability policies.

Respectful Communication and Behavior

All Individuals are expected to communicate and behave respectfully while on Head Start property, at Head Start events, and during any program-related activities or communication. This includes interactions with staff, children, families, volunteers, guests, and community partners.

Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Yelling, threatening, or intimidating others
- Harassment, bullying, or intimidation
- Using explicit, hateful, discriminatory, or offensive language
- Physical aggression or violence
- Abusive, disruptive, or unsafe behavior
- Wearing clothing that displays explicit, offensive, or inappropriate words or images for a child- and family-centered environment

When inappropriate behavior occurs, staff may end the interaction, request assistance from a supervisor, ask the individual to leave the premises or event, or contact security or law enforcement when necessary.

We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all children, families, staff, volunteers, and community members.

Program Options

Head Start offers services at **11 sites** across Spokane. We provide a variety of program options to meet the needs of families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

School Day Program

- Children attend school for approximately **6.25 hours per day**
 - Center hours vary by site
 - Classes are **Monday through Friday**
 - **No cost** to families
 - Hours vary by site, ask your Family Services Coordinator for your site's schedule
 - Offered at: AEC, GFH, Logan/Lidgerwood, NECC, SCC, SFCC, and WCCC
-

Home Based Program

(Early Head Start only)

This option is for pregnant parents and/or families with infants and toddlers who prefer home-based services. What to expect:

- A **trained home visitor** will come to your home once a week for **90 minutes**
- Each visit includes fun, developmentally appropriate learning activities to support your child's development
- You'll receive personalized support for your entire family, including help with:
 - Your child's development and education
 - Health and nutrition
 - Mental health and emotional well-being
 - Accessing community resources
 - Parenting strategies and goal setting
 - **Pregnant parents** receive **two visits per month** with a focus on prenatal support

You'll also be invited to **Socialization Sessions, a Stay 'n' Play group for families:**

- Held once a week
 - A chance for parents and children to come together for group play, learning, and connection in a classroom setting
 - Activities are designed to support development and encourage peer interaction
 - **Snacks are provided**
 - **All services provided at no cost** to families
 - A terrific way to build community with other families
-

Working Day Programs

Designed for parents who are working or attending school are open Monday-Friday and provide full day childcare.

Campus sites:

- Prioritize serving student families
- Open Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
- Sites: SCC and SFCC follow the campus schedule; some classrooms may operate year-round

Community sites:

- Prioritize serving working families year-round
- Open Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
- Sites: MLKCC, NCDC, Gonzaga Family Haven, Sisters Haven, WBC, and WCCC

Fees and Support for Working Day Services

Our working day childcare sites charge monthly fees. We accept and offer:

- DCYF Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)
- CPS funding and Foster Care funding
- Available community resource funding
- Student discounts
- Self-pay and payment plans

There is also an annual enrollment fee for each child in working day programs. Working Connections Child Care covers all annual enrollment fees.

Talk to your site's **Fiscal Specialist** for more details about fees and payment options.

Site Closures

All Head Start sites are closed on **federal holidays** and during scheduled **in-service training days**.

Your site will provide monthly updates with closure dates.

A Message for Parents About Pedestrian Safety

Keeping children safe near streets and driveways is very important. Here are key facts and tips to help prevent accidents.

- Preschool children are quick and often unaware of danger.
- Each year, many children are injured when they suddenly dart into the path of a car.
- Most preschoolers are injured near their home or on their own street.
- Most crashes involving children happen between **3 p.m. and 6 p.m.**
- Most crashes involving children happen in **fair, warm weather.**

Twice as many preschool boys are injured than preschool girls

How You Can Help Keep Your Child Safe

Always Supervise – Never let young children cross the street alone. An adult or responsible older child should always help.

Teach Them Who Can Help – Show your child which trusted adults (like parents, teachers, or caregivers) can help them cross the street.

Teach by Explaining – Use clear, simple words. For example, say:

“When I cross the street, I stop at the curb. I look for cars. I look **left**, then **right**, then **left** again. If it’s clear, I cross while still looking both ways.”

Teach by Example – Every time you cross a street, model safe behaviors:

- Hold your child’s hand
- Stop at the curb
- Look **LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT**
- Cross only when it’s safe
- Keep looking for cars as you cross

Praise Safe Behavior – When your child follows safety rules, offer praise and encouragement. Practicing together makes safety habits stick.

Head Start & ECEAP Centers

If you need help or have questions, contact our **Administrative Office**:

Address: Spokane Colleges Head Start / Early Head Start
3939 N. Freya Street
Spokane, WA 99217

Phone: 509-533-4800

Online:

- **Facebook:** facebook.com/Spokane.HS.ECEAP/
- **Instagram:** [@Spokaneheadstart](https://www.instagram.com/Spokaneheadstart)
- **Website:** ccs.spokane.edu/Head-Start

Center	Address	Phone	Infants (0-12 mos.)	Toddler (1-3 yrs.)	HS Preschool	Child Care	ECEAP Preschool
Adult Education Center	2310 North Monroe St Spokane, WA 99205	509-533-4650		X	X		
Gonzaga Family Haven	975 E. North Foothills Drive Spokane, WA 99207	509-533-8711	X	X	X	X	
Logan/Lidgerwood Center	3704 W Nevada Spokane WA 99207	509-279-6480	X	X	X		
Martin Luther King Jr Community Center	500 S Stone Spokane, WA 99212	509-279-6316	X	X		X	
Northeast Child Development Center	4001 N Cook St Spokane, WA 99207	509-279-6376	X	X	X	X	
Northeast Community Center	4001 N Cook St Spokane, WA 99207	509-279-6351			X		X
SCC Bigfoot Child Care Center	1810 N Greene St, Building 20 Spokane, WA 99217	509-533-7170	X	X	X	X	
SFCC Early Learning Center	3410 West Whistalks Way, Building 29 Spokane, WA 99224	509-533-3624	X	X	X	X	X
Sisters Haven Community Building	1935 N Holy Names Ct. Spokane, WA 99224	509-279-6490	X	X	X	X	
West Boone Center	2427 W Boone Spokane WA 99201	509-279-6901	X	X		X	
West Central Community Center	1603 N Belt Spokane, WA 99205	509-279-6340		X	X	X	

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

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: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;
- Email: program.intake@usda.gov.