



Your Own United Resources, Inc.

# Parent Handbook

Head  
Start

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## ***Welcome to Head Start.....***

All of the staff at Your Own United Resources, Inc., are happy that you have chosen Head Start for your child's preschool experience. Our agency has been providing quality center-based preschool services for over 50 years. We have talented and knowledgeable teaching staff who will provide a wonderful classroom experience for your child, but **YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER.** We know from experience that children are most successful when the teaching staff and parents work together. We are hoping that you will be an active participant with our program.

Each page of this handbook will provide you with information about our program and services. In addition, your classroom staff and assigned Family Engagement Specialist are always available to answer any questions you may have. They will also be making a home visit with you to introduce themselves and to share important program information.

## **We need parents to keep connected with us.**

Please remember to:

1. Report any changes in your phone number, address, or other emergency information to your teaching staff or the Central office as soon as possible.
2. Check your child's bag daily...praise your child's work and respond to any papers.
3. Text or call your child's teacher or bus monitor for absences.

***Call with any questions or concerns:***

***1-515-573-2453, Ext.205***

**We look forward to working with you and your child during the program year.**

**Michelle Carden**

Director

Your Own United Resources, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation administering the Head Start Zero-Five program to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services in Hamilton, Humboldt, Webster, and Wright counties. Our agency is funded to serve 158 Head Start children with a center-based preschool program and to serve 76 families with home-based Early Head Start services. Ten percent of our enrollment must be children with diagnosed disabilities. Funding for the operation of the Head Start Zero-Five program is provided by a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services with supplemental funds provided by state and local sources.

Local match, called in-kind or non-federal match, at a minimum of twenty five percent of our total federal award, is required as part of our contract to provide services. Head Start programs do not charge for preschool services, but donations of time, materials and monetary donations can be accepted and are very much appreciated.

Our program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs, and that the children of families with limited income can benefit from a comprehensive developmental program to meet those needs. The program approach is grounded in the philosophy that children can benefit most from a broad range of services and involvement of the entire family. Head Start's overall mission is to prepare children to succeed in school and life and to empower parents.

Head Start services provided by Your Own United Resources, Inc. are governed by the national Head Start Performance Standards as well as the Iowa Department of Human Services Licensing requirements. The Board of Directors, Policy Council and Staff of Your Own United Resources, Inc. have established policies and procedures to ensure the delivery of quality services to every child enrolled in our Head Start programs. Both the Iowa Department of Human Services licensing requirements and the Performance Standards are available for review upon request. If there is any question about the Iowa Department of Human Services practices, please contact: Ray Salsbury, Child Care Licensing Consultant, Iowa Department of Human Services, Story County Office, 126 S. Kellogg St., Suite 101, Ames, IA, 50010 or call at 1-515-631-8855. Fax – 515-296-2672 or e-mail – rsalsbu@dhs.state.ia.us

### **Vision Statement**

Families and children will be supported in their growth and development through a coordinated community-wide system.

### **Mission Statement**

To prepare eligible children birth through five years to succeed in school and life and to empower parents through education, support, and available resources.

### **The Head Start Philosophy**

Through research, we know children learn by doing.  
Young children view the world concretely and  
what they know at any given point  
depends on the firsthand experiences they have had.

## **Staff**

Y.O.U.R., Inc. conducts criminal and child abuse record checks on all employees prior to employment. A physical exam is a requirement, which includes testing for communicable diseases, and repeated at least every three years after initial employment.

Staff receives thorough training in required program policies and procedures:

- Initial Orientation
- Universal Precautions
- Emergency Procedures
- First Aid/CPR
- Mandatory Reporting
- Ongoing training

## **Standards of Conducts**

All employees, contracted staff members, consultants and volunteers must acknowledge receipt of a copy of the agency's Standards of Conduct

## **Eligibility**

To be eligible for Head Start services, a child must be at least three years old by September 15<sup>th</sup>. At least 90 percent of the children who are enrolled must be from income-eligible families. Our agency maintains a waiting list that ranks children according to our program's selection criteria to assure that eligible children enter the program as soon as vacancies occur.

## **Unlimited Parental Access**

Parents have access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the center's hours of operation or whenever their children are in the care of the center, **unless parental contact is prohibited by court order**. When parents are divorced or separated, both parents may have equal rights where their children are concerned.

## **Non-Custodial Parent**

If a parent or guardian is not listed on enrollment forms, written court or legal documentation must be provided to have access to child and/or records. If there are court documents in child's file that deny or limit non-custodial parent/guardian right to visitation we CANNOT release child. The staff will call the custodial parent and report the circumstances.

## **Access**

Any person in the center who is not a staff member **shall not** have "unrestricted access" to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian. This means that all visitors to the building will never be left alone with children and a staff member will always be present when a visitor is part of the classroom activities.

## **Sex Offender Registry**

Sex offenders who have been convicted of a sex offense against a minor, who are required to register with the Iowa Sex Offender Registry, even when the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian. A sex offender shall not be on the property of a licensed center without the written permission of the agency Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child or ward to

and from the center.

## **Home Visits**

The Family Engagement Specialists assigned to your classroom is required to make a home visit with every family coming into the Head Start program. The purpose of the home visit is to orient the family to the program and to complete a form called the Family Assessment.

At the first meeting, you will determine how often to meet in the future and decide what kind of support you need from your Family Engagement Specialist. Some families need a great deal of support - other families need only minimal assistance throughout the year. The Family Engagement Specialists will partner with the families to develop goals, to help families gain knowledge and access community resources and to learn more about their child's development.

Your child's Teacher and Teacher Associate will also make a home visit prior to the start of school. We feel children will be more comfortable meeting the teaching staff for the first time in the security of their own homes. The classroom staff will also make a home visit near the end of the year to discuss your child's progress.

## **Conferences**

Two parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled; one in fall and one in spring, to discuss your child's progress. It is customary for the parents to come to the classroom for these conferences; however, other arrangements can be made with the classroom teacher if necessary. Children identified as needing intervention services will be referred to the Problem-Solving Team. Parents will be invited to attend these meetings.

## **Volunteers**

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom once a month, if possible. If it is not possible because of work or school conflicts, there are several other ways parents can participate:

- Serve on center committees or Policy Council
- Attend parent/child activities
- Chaperone field trips
- Collect and save materials for the classroom
- Prepare classroom materials at home
- Repair toys or equipment
- Provide dress-up clothes for dramatic play area
- Provide a presentation for the class - do you sing or play the guitar???

In the classroom, volunteers help with table setting, clean up chores, assisting on the playground, one-on-one activities with individual students, art activities and lots of tying shoes, zipping zippers, and wiping noses! There is no formal training necessary to be a classroom volunteer. The classroom teacher will give brief instructions for each assigned activity and is always in attendance to lend a helping hand.

***Please do not attend if you have been sick within the past 24 hours.***

Volunteers will be required to sign a non-conviction statement that they are free of any communicable disease and that they have no criminal or child abuse record.

Volunteers will never be permitted to be left alone with any child other than their own.

### **Father/Male Involvement**

It is our goal to have fathers, whether they are in the child's home or not, become active participants in the Head Start child's preschool experience. Dads, or other positive male models, can participate in the home visit, attend orientation, and open house, attend parent/child activity nights, serve on Policy Council, attend conferences, and volunteer in the classroom. Dads will be encouraged to participate in community sponsored activities throughout the year.

### **Family Literacy**

Head Start is a strong advocate for family literacy. The Family Assessment is completed during the home visit will help identify literacy needs of the parents in the family. Staff are trained to direct parents to training and educational opportunities available to them. We work under the premise that parents are a child's first and most important teacher, therefore, it is important that parents possess the skills to master reading and writing.

### **Parent Child Activities/Parent Committee Meetings**

**All parents** of Head Start Zero-Five enrolled children are members of the Parent Committees. These committees are set up by locations and meet three or four times per year, or as decided by the Committee.

Parent Committees provide every parent with the opportunity to assist in the development of activities that address their interests and needs and that support the education and healthy development of their children.

Often these Committee meetings also include a Parent/Child activity....a time for parents to participate in a developmentally appropriate activity with their Head Start child.

### **Communication**

You will receive many papers from your child's teacher. They will be in a folder with some that you may keep and others that need to be returned to the classroom.

Monthly menus, calendars, newsletters, buzz slips, etc. will be sent in the folder. You may hear from staff via e-mails, text messages or phone calls, too.

### **Policy Council**

Policy Council is the parent governing body of Head Start Zero-Five. Through this structure, parent and community representatives can participate in the policy making and operation of the agency. This group shares responsibility with the agency's Board of Directors to oversee the delivery of high quality services to children and families in accordance with national Head Start legislation, regulations, and policies.

Policy Council members assist in the development and function of the program through their input into



personnel, budgeting, and programming decisions. Community involvement keeps our program responsive to the needs of the area and keeps the public aware of the philosophies of Head Start.

Policy Council serves as a link between the agency, parents, and the community. Members have the opportunity to initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvement. They advise on the establishment and regulation of general policies and procedures, including input into personnel policies and approval for hiring/firing of agency staff. Policy Council is also involved in completing the agency's self-assessment of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

No Head Start staff or members of their immediate families may serve on Policy Council. Policy Council members may serve as volunteers in the program. If, at any time, however, they receive wages for their services to the program, they must resign from Policy Council.

Policy Council members are elected each fall and serve a one-year term. Community representatives are selected each year. Policy Council composition and number of members are defined in the Performance Standards and the local Policy Council bylaws.

### **Parent and Community Grievance Policy:**

Your Own United Resources, Inc. Head Start Zero-Five recognizes the right and responsibility of program parents and community members to express concerns of safety, process, or procedures. Concerns and issues should be brought to the attention of the agency staff able to correct the situation. Staff shall report to the agency Director with any suggested resolution. If it is not possible, appropriate, or comfortable to address staff, the issue may be addressed, verbally or in writing, directly to the Head Start Zero-Five Director, or designee. Any staff member may give you additional information on filing a grievance.

### **Advocacy**

Advocacy is defined as writing or speaking in favor of or supporting someone. You are the primary advocate for your child and you should also advocate for what is right and just for families in our communities. Advocates get involved, learn the facts, and make informed decisions for their children that support their health, education, and well-being. Advocates may also be involved on a program level....as a participant in parent committee meetings or as a member of Policy Council. Advocates may voice their opinions regarding programs and services needed in their communities, state, or nation by contacting members of City Councils, Legislators, or advocacy groups, and by voting responsibly.

**Family Engagement Specialists can assist you in advocating for your child and family.**

### **Locations**

Our agency has children in 9 classrooms in our four-county service area. These classrooms are located in 4 different centers.

Dakota City

Webster City

Eagle Grove

Fort Dodge

## **Attendance/Absences**

It is your responsibility as the parents/guardians to notify your child's teacher within the first hour of each school day they will be absent. This can be done by calling or texting the classroom. When a child is absent and Head Start has not been notified, the parents will be contacted by the classroom staff or Family Engagement Specialist assigned to the child's classroom.

The following reasons are considered excused absences:

- **Health Concern or illness**
- **Temporary family situations**
- **Isolation due to adverse weather conditions**
- **Parental concern about impending weather**
- **Kindergarten round-up**
- **Medical, dental or WIC appointments**
- **Temporary transportation problems**
- **Death in the family**

Continued habitual absences of the child will result in the child being dropped from the program. Other than for medical reasons, when a child is absent two consecutive weeks, he/she will be dropped from the program and placed on the waiting list. He/She will be replaced with a child from the waiting list. If the child should return and a slot is still available, the child will be allowed to re-enroll.

## **Rest Time**

Rest time is required by the Iowa Department of Human Services licensing when children attend longer days. Although there is a designated rest time, it does not mean the child has to sleep. Classroom staff will provide alternate activities for those that choose not to rest. Head Start will provide a rest mat and all blankets (that will be washed regularly) as well as a quiet area to allow all children the opportunity to rest. It is asked that no items be brought from home (i.e. stuffed animals, special blanket).

## **Clothing**

It is important that you dress your child appropriately for the outside weather and the day's activities. Children will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. Flip-flops and sandals should not be worn because of safety issues. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal or disruptive in nature. All families are encouraged to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an accident or messy play.

## **Arrival/Departure**

Parents who transport their own children must escort the child to the classroom and sign the child in on a daily sign in sheet. Children must be signed out at the end of the program day. Parents should be aware of the hours of operation so that drop off and pick up of your child is done in a timely manner.

- Parents are responsible for notifying staff immediately when there are any changes to the Authorization to Release Form
- All persons delivering or picking up children must carry identification information with them in case staff members have not met them before
- At the staff's discretion, they may decide not to release a child to anyone they judge to not be sufficiently competent to ensure the child's safety

### **Procedures for children who are dropped off or picked up late:**

Head Start understands that a situation may arise that causes a parent to be late in picking up their child after class, or bringing their child in after the start time.

If late drop off and pick up times become a habit, teaching staff will discuss the situation with the parent(s). If this does not correct the situation, the Education Specialist, or assigned Family Engagement Specialist, will meet with the parent(s) to address the situation.

Note: If parent(s) or emergency contact persons cannot be contacted to pick up the child, staff will contact law enforcement or Child Protective Services. For the safety of your child, you must follow all traffic and parking regulations at the sites.

### **Other children should not be left unattended in your vehicle**

Upon arriving and during the course of the day, staff will observe the health status of each child. If it is determined that a condition or behavior may adversely affect the child or class if the child should remain at school, their parent may be contacted to pick up the child.

### **Inclusion**

Head Start provides developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing to include children with special needs. Inclusion in the classroom enriches the learning experience for teachers, students, other children, and their families.

### **Schedule**

Each center may have a different schedule but here are typical things your child will be doing throughout the day.....

- Arrival and Sign-in
- Bathroom Break and Breakfast
- Tooth brushing
- Large Group
- Story
- Outside Play
- Drinks
- Small Group
- Work Time
- Clean-up
- Music and Table Setting
- Bathroom Break and Lunch
- Large Group
- Rest Time
- Snack
- Get ready to go home

### **Food and Nutrition**

Head Start promotes child wellness by providing nutrition services that supplement and complement those of the home and community. Head Start's child nutrition services assist families in meeting each child's nutritional needs and help in establishing good eating habits.

Children will be served nourishing snacks and lunch. Foods served will be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. Meals are served family style. Food related activities and leisurely meal times provide opportunities for the development of positive attitudes toward healthy foods, for decision-making, sharing, communicating with others, and the development of muscle control and eye-hand coordination. A variety of food is served to

broaden each child's food experiences. Food is never used as a punishment or reward. Each child is encouraged, but not forced to eat or taste his or her food.

**No food may be brought into the classroom or center unless prepared or ordered by the teachers or kitchen staff. Food treats, even those individually wrapped, are not permitted.**

Our Head Start Program follows all Children and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards for meals and snacks. Exceptions are allowed for allergies, medical conditions, and religious beliefs.

The Child Application form, the Child's Health Record and the Nutrition Assessment Form allow parents the opportunity to share important health information regarding food allergies. Parents may be asked to sign a release so our agency can obtain additional information about the allergies from the child's doctor. Unless documentation is obtained from a physician, no alterations in food served to a child can be made. In order to maintain the health and safety of the child, a child health/nutrition plan will then be developed by the food service coordinator, health coordinator, and/or dietician, with the parent's involvement before the child can attend classes. All staff involved with the child's care will be notified of the special diet/restrictions/substitutions. Menus will be adapted accordingly. Special signs will be made and distributed to teachers and kitchen sites indicating a special diet in the classroom.

Menus are sent home monthly with all children and reviewed by staff to ensure any food substitutions are addressed.

Substitutions will also be made for children whose parents specify religious dietary restrictions. A written statement from the parent is all that is required. The contracted registered dietician will provide guidance on appropriate substitutions.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. "In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity." Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form,(AD-3027) found online at:

[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) , and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **Mail:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

2. **Fax:** (202)690-7442

3. **Email:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov);

## **Dental Hygiene**

Staff must promote effective dental hygiene among children. Each preschool child is taught to brush his or her own teeth with a smear of fluoridated toothpaste. Staff supervise tooth brushing, and ensure that each child has his or her own toothbrush, labeled by name. Toothbrushes are never shared. They are stored so that they stay clean and open to circulating air with no bristles touching any surface. Toothbrushes are replaced when the bristles become bent, at least every three months. Any contaminated toothbrushes are discarded and replaced. Children with disabilities are supported with any needed adaptations. Staff will always lead and model to the children the proper way to brush their teeth.

## **Transportation**

Although it is our agency's goal to be able to provide transportation with door-to-door pickup and drop-off, it ***is not a requirement of our Head Start contract or state licensing to provide such services.*** As expenses to provide transportation services increase, it is necessary for our program to re-evaluate, on a regular basis, the extent to which we can provide these services.

Parents in all of our centers will be asked to transport their own child if at all possible. Applications for transportation services will need to be completed by the parent who cannot transport. Priority will be given to those children in a daycare setting and families without transportation. Parents receiving transportation services will need to complete an agreement that they understand both the agency's responsibilities in providing services and the parent's responsibilities in receiving services.

Head Start hires a bus monitor to accompany the children while enroute. It is the responsibility of the parent/caretaker to see that children enter and exit the bus safely.

You must have your child ready when the bus arrives. If your child is ill or will be absent, you must call both your bus driver and your classroom teacher. If you don't have a phone, we will issue you a bright orange sheet of paper that you can display in your window. The bus driver will not wait the required two minutes at your home if he/she sees the paper in the window.

**Abuse of transportation policies and procedures may result in the agency refusing to provide transportation services.**

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are scheduled throughout the year as an educational experience for children to learn about their communities. Transportation is provided on agency buses which meet all safety requirements. Parents and volunteers are encouraged to assist classroom staff during the trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home on the monthly classroom calendar.

## **School Closings**

We follow the decision of the school district, so if public school is canceled, there will be no Head Start classes.

Listen to the following radio or TV stations for announcements of school closings, late starts or early release:

KHBT/FM-97.7      KVFD/AM-1400      KWMT/AM-54      Cable Channel 12  
KKEZ/FM-97      KIAQ/FM-97      KQWC/AM-1500

## **Celebrations/Holidays**

We do not celebrate any of the traditional holidays because of the diverse ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs of our Head Start families.

We prefer, instead, to follow the children's interests in developing our curriculum and to focus on kindergarten readiness skills.

Food treats, even those individually wrapped, ***are not permitted.***

## **Outside Play**

Head Start classes have daily opportunities for outdoor play if the weather permits. Children have the opportunity to develop large muscle skills, to get exercise and to be active. When weather conditions do not allow outdoor play, children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities.

Children will be going out for gross motor play unless it is raining or bitterly cold. Children should come to school dressed warmly, including hats, mittens and snow boots when necessary.

For warmer days, dressing children lightly is just as important. For those days in-between, dressing them in layers is recommended.

A child that is too sick to be outdoors is probably too ill to be in school.

## **Objects from Home**

Because the Head Start program provides toys and learning materials for your child, no toys should be brought from home. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money or toys to school. We are not responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home

## **Pets**

Parents may bring family pets for a scheduled visit to the classroom, but all animals must remain outside the building during the visit. Classroom staff will ensure that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal must appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children. Staff will ensure that adults and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after coming into contact with the animal. Any children allergic to a pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles will not be allowed in the classroom because of the risk for salmonella.

## **Water Play**

Water tables are used in the classrooms, and during water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during play activities. Outdoor water play is limited to buckets or other containers. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets and water tables.

## **Confidentiality of Child Records**

The following procedures will be adhered to in order to protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information (PII) in child records. **PII** means any information that could identify a specific individual, including but not limited to a child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child. **Child records** means records that: (1) are directly related to the child; (2) are maintained and secured by the program, or by a party acting for the program; and (3) include information recorded in any way, such as print, electronic, or digital means, including media, video, image, or audio format.

**Release only with Parent Consent:** When applicable the program will require parent's written consent in order to disclose specific child records. The consent will explain why the records will be released and identify the party or parties to whom the records will be released to. Parents will be required to sign and date the consent. Parent consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time, however it cannot be retroactive.

**Release without parent consent but with parental notice and opportunity to refuse:** The program will notify parents when forwarding records to another program, school, or school district in which the child seeks or intends to enroll or where the child is already enrolled. Only records related to the enrollment or transfer will be disclosed. Upon parent request, a copy of the forwarding records will be provided in advance, and will give the parent an opportunity to challenge and refuse disclosure of the information in the records, before they are forwarded.

**Release without parental consent:** The program will disclose PII from child records without parental consent to:

- (1) Officials within the program or acting for the program, such as contractors, as long as the program maintains oversight with respect to use, further disclosure, and maintenance of child records, such as through a written agreement;
- (2) Officials within the program, acting for the program, or from a federal or state entity, in connection with an audit or evaluation of education or child development programs, or for enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements of the program;
- (3) Officials within the program, acting for the program, or from a federal or state entity, to conduct a study to improve child and family outcomes, including improving the quality of programs, for, or on behalf of, the program;
- (4) Appropriate parties in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency during the period of the emergency, or a serious health and safety risk such as a serious food allergy, if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of children or other persons;
- (5) Comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- (6) The Secretary of Agriculture or an authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service to conduct program monitoring and evaluations for the Child and Adult Care Food Program without any specific child or parent being identified;
- (7) A caseworker or other representative from a child welfare agency (DHS), who has the right to access a case plan for a child in foster care placement, in which the agency is legally responsible for the child's care and protection, if the agency agrees in writing to protect PII, to use information from the case plan to address child's needs, and to destroy information that is no longer needed for those purposes; and,
- (8) Appropriate parties in order to address suspected or known child abuse and is consistent with laws on reporting child abuse and neglect.

**Limit on disclosing PII:** The program will only release information that is deemed necessary for the purpose of the disclosure. **Written agreements:** All written agreements with third parties contain procedures to protect PII and actions taken if violations occur. Written agreements will include provisions for the destruction of PII when no longer needed for the purpose of the disclosure. All parents have the right to inspect any written agreements with third parties.

**Parental rights:**

(a) Inspect record

(1) A parent has the right to inspect child records.

(2) If the parent requests to inspect child records, the program will make the records available within a reasonable time frame, but no more than 5 business days after receipt of request.

(3) If the program maintains child records that contain information on more than one child, the program will ensure the parent only inspects information that pertains to the parent's child.



(4) The program will not destroy a child's record with an outstanding request to inspect and review the record under this section.

(b) Amend record

(1) A parent has the right to ask the program to amend information in the child record that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy.

(2) The program will consider the parent's request and, if the request is denied, provide a written decision to the parent within a reasonable time that informs the parent of the right to a hearing.

(c) Hearing

(1) The program will schedule a timely hearing and ensure it is conducted by a person without direct interest in the outcome.

(2) The hearing will afford the parent a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issue(s). (3) If the program determines the information contained in the record is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the child's privacy, the program will either amend or remove the information and notify the parent in writing.

(4) If the program determines the information contained in the record is accurate, not misleading, or does not violate the child's privacy, the program will inform the parent of the right to place a statement in the child records that either comments on the contested information or states why the parent disagrees with the program's decision, or both.

(d) Rights to copy of record – The program will provide a parent, free of charge, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties with parental consent and, upon parent request, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties, unless the disclosure was for a court that ordered neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information furnished in response be disclosed.

**Maintaining Records:**

The program will abide by the Your Own United Resources, Inc. Record Retention Policy.

The program will maintain child records in locked files and password protected databases (including web-based), ensuring that only parents, and officials within the program or acting on behalf of the program have access. All web based data systems that are currently used by the program have privacy policies that adhere to the industry standards set forth under administrative, technical, and physical safeguards.

The program will keep within the child records, for as long as the records are maintained, information on all individuals, agencies or organizations to whom a disclosure of PII from the child records was made (except for program officials and parents) and why the disclosure was made.

If a parent places a statement in the child record, the program must maintain the statement with the contested part of the child record for as long as the program

maintains the record and, disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the child record to which the statement relates.

Children's files, including, but not limited to, the Head Start application, screenings, assessments, and health records, are kept in locked files, both in the classroom and at the central office. At the time of transferring, designated children's records are forwarded to the child's next placement with parental consent.

### **Curriculum**

Head Start classrooms use Creative Curriculum as a guide to plan activities that meet each individual child's learning style and that builds on his/her strengths and interests. The environment is designed to allow children to make choices throughout the day as they are guided in experiences that address all areas of development.

### **Assessments/Screenings**

Teaching staff assess children by collecting data through observation, anecdotal reports, portfolios and check-lists and by sharing each child's progress with parents at parent/teacher conferences and at home visits.

### **Cultural Diversity**

Head Start services are delivered with respect of cultural diversity:

Every individual is rooted in culture. The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program are reflected in our programming. As much as possible, services and written materials are provided in the families' home language.

Cultural diversity is based on accurate information about cultural groups, not stereotypes. Addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices is a necessary, developmentally appropriate practice.

Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society. Effective programs for children with limited English-speaking ability require continued development of the primary language while learning English.

All staff show respect for cultural differences in their work with children and families.

Multicultural programming for children enables children to develop an awareness of, respect for, and appreciation of individual cultural differences. ~~All children benefit.~~

### **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports**

The Head Start program feels that children must have a safe, orderly environment in order to have a positive, successful preschool experience. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) describes a process for addressing children's challenging behavior that is based on understanding the purpose of the behavior and a focus on teaching new skills to replace challenging behavior.

Staff will make sure children understand classroom rules and boundaries. Rules will be simply stated and posted as reminders. Staff will verbally review rules as needed. These rules are:

Be Safe      Be Responsible      Be Kind      Be Respectful

### **I am Moving, I am Learning**

Head Start classrooms are implementing curriculum that will show the relationship between physical fitness and early learning. It provides a developmentally appropriate focus on children's wellness as a way to combat childhood obesity.

The mascot, CHOOSY, or Chose Healthy Options Often & Start Young, leads children in songs and movement activities. The goals of I Am Moving, I Am Learning are to:

- Increase the quantity of time spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity
- Improve the quality of structured movement experiences
- Improve healthy nutrition choices for children every day

### **Transition**

It is important for parents to be involved as their children begin their Head Start preschool experience. Prior to school starting in the fall, we have a parent orientation at each of our sites. This provides parents with information about their parental rights, opportunities for their involvement during the year, and brief information about the comprehensive services available for their family during the program year.

Another important transition time for children and families is the end of the program year. We inform parents of the educational opportunities available to them through the public schools. We help them understand their rights and responsibilities concerning their children enrolled in a new school setting, assist them in effectively communicating with school personnel and encourage them to continue to be involved in their child's education.

We partner with all the public schools in our area by initiating and coordinating meetings between Head Start teachers and parents and public school teachers to discuss the development and progress of their children and to ensure that relevant records are transferred to school or next placement in which the child will enroll.

### **School Readiness/Child Outcomes**

It is important for parents to be informed about the progress and accomplishments of their children. Teachers, teacher associates and parents provide much of the information necessary to document a child's progress.

### **School Readiness Goals**

1. Children will learn to regulate and manage their emotions and behaviors.
2. Children will develop and engage in positive relationships and interactions with trusted adults and peers.

3. Children will participate in activities to develop control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance.
4. Children will be able to demonstrate fine motor strength and coordination.
5. Children will identify and practice healthy and safe habits.
6. Children will use and understand increasingly complex varied language.
7. Children will be able to demonstrate knowledge of print and develop the awareness that print conveys meaning.
8. Children will use and comprehend oral language for conversation and communication.
9. Children who are dual language learners will increase their ability to understand, comprehend and speak English.
10. Children will use observation to gain or make sense of their surroundings.
11. Children will use math in everyday routines to count, compare, relate, pattern, and problem solve.
12. Children will develop scientific skills of observation and information collecting within their natural and physical environment.
13. Children will develop and understanding of self in relationship to their families and community.
14. Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity, and eagerness in exploring the world around them.
15. Children will develop creative expressions, skills through art, movement, and drama.

### **Health Requirements for Enrollment**

All children entering the Head Start program are required to have age appropriate **immunizations** as set forth by EPDS (Early Periodic Screening and Diagnostic Testing). (Exceptions - religious exemptions).

Children must have a current annual **physical** within 30 days of entering the program and **a dental exam** within 90 days of entering the program

### **Biting**

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is important to think positively of children who bite. Biting is a form of communication. It is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. The biting incident will be interrupted and staff will stay calm and not overreact. Staff will comfort the bitten child and administer first aid if necessary. The biter will be removed

from the situation and redirected to other activities. The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident with confidentiality being maintained. If the biting pattern continues, staff will work together with the parents to develop an intervention plan to try to end the behavior.

### **Handwashing**

Staff, volunteers, and children must wash their hands with soap and water as soon as possible upon entering the building. Hands must be washed after diapering or toilet use, before food preparation, setting the table, whenever hands are contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids, and after handling pets or other animals. Staff should also wash their hands before exiting the building at the end of the day. Staff must also wash their hands with soap and running water before and after giving medications, before and after treating or bandaging a wound and after assisting a child with toilet use.

### **Diapering/Changing Clothing/Toilet Training**

Our agency has adopted sanitation and hygiene procedures for diapering that adequately protect the health and safety of children served by our program and staff. Procedures ensure that the child is safely secured at all times and that he/she will never be left unattended. The child's dignity will be protected at all times. A child's soiled clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for cleaning. When changing the child's clothing, staff will follow the instructions on the parent's authorization form.

Authorized staff will allow and enable children to independently use the toilet when it is developmentally appropriate and when efforts to encourage toilet training are supported by the parents.

Staff will consider the following milestones when determining a child's readiness for toilet training and will help parents understand the biological, physical and emotional stages of toilet training:

1. Muscle control
2. Emotional readiness and a willingness to cooperate, and
3. The ability to communicate toileting needs

Staff will assist children in using a child-sized toilet or a modified seat; will encourage them to use the toilet and help them, as needed; and will positively reinforce their efforts, regardless of outcomes.

### **Mental Health**

Head Start promotes mental wellness for program participants and their families. Our agency also supports families in accessing mental health information and services. Classroom staff incorporate activities that help children develop improved social behaviors and emotional well-being. Parents may be linked to resources that promote mental wellness.

### **Medical/Dental/Health Emergencies**

Policies and procedures have been approved by the agency's Policy Council, the Health

Advisory Committee and contracted health consultants to handle medical, dental and health emergencies.

All emergencies will be managed by Classroom Staff meeting first aid licensing standards and following all OSHA Guidelines. Staff will assess the emergency and then determine the process to follow. First Aid will be administered if necessary, parents will be contacted and 9-1-1 called, if necessary. Each classroom will have emergency numbers posted.

### **First Aid Kits**

First aid kits are maintained in each classroom at each site and each kit is accessible to staff members at all times. They are kept out of the reach of children. A Red Cross symbol is placed on the wall or on the bag to visually indicate the location of the kit. First aid kits are taken to the playground, indoor gym areas and on field trips. All buses have a first aid kit. Head Start first aid kits also have the emergency contact information.

### **Anaphylactic Reaction/Severe Allergic Reaction/EpiPen**

Medication, CPR and first aid training provided to Head Start staff during annual pre-service, including written tests and clinical practices, are sufficient training for staff to follow the action steps necessary in the case of anaphylactic or severe allergic reactions. If a doctor provides a prescription for an EpiPen, the parent must provide one for classroom staff to use if necessary. Identified staff who may need to use an EpiPen will receive proper instructions.

### **Medication Administration**

Whenever possible, arrangements should be made with the family and the physician to schedule administration of medication during a time when the child is under parental supervision. No medication can be administered in the classroom without the parent's written authorization. A physician's directions must accompany each medication for both nonprescription and prescription medications. Staff are trained in medication administration and all medications shall be stored so they are inaccessible to children.

### **Head Lice**

During the school year, children may be exposed to head lice. Head Start's policy is to first protect the dignity of the child and to follow the policy that if live lice or nits are found, the child will remain at school. A parent will be notified. Children may not return to the classroom until they have been treated. Families with chronic problems will be referred to their Family Engagement Specialists and/or Health Coordinator for assistance.

### **Student Illness**

Following the Department of Human Services licensing regulations, a child should be kept home or sent home in the following situations:

- **Diarrhea** more than one time (unless accompanied by a physician's explanation)
- **Fever** - a thermometer reading of 101 degrees Fahrenheit by mouth or ear, 100 degrees Fahrenheit under arm.

- **Unexplained vomiting** more than two times
- **Severe coughing** - the child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croup or whooping sounds after coughing, unless associated with asthma.
- **Difficult or Rapid Breathing**
- **Unusual spots or rashes** unless associated with sensitive skin
- **Sore throat or trouble swallowing**
- **Infected skin patch(es)** - crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin.
- **Unusually dark, tea colored urine**
- **Gray or white stools**
- **Unexplained headaches and/or stiff neck**
- **Severe itching of the body or scratching** of the scalp

A child must be kept home for a period of at least 24 hours with any of the symptoms listed above.

If a parent is notified that a child needs to be picked up, the child will be kept in a quiet, supervised area until he/she can be picked up.

When a child in a classroom or center has been exposed to a contagious disease, an exposure notice will be sent home to the parents. It explains the symptoms of the disease so parents can be aware of their child possibly contracting the disease. A notice will also be posted at the classroom.

If it is suspected that a contagious disease is spreading through our classrooms, or if an enrolled child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, classroom staff will notify the Director or Health Coordinator to report the situation to the County Health Department.

### **Cleaning and Sanitation**

All Head Start facilities are maintained in a safe, clean and sanitary condition. Staff are trained in cleaning techniques, including the proper use of protective barriers (gloves, etc.) and proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials to meet OSHA guidelines and requirements. Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label and nontoxic supplies will be used whenever possible. Toys will be sanitized as needed.

### **Child Protection Policy**

***Because the health and safety of our children is a primary concern, no child will ever be left unattended.*** Staff, substitutes, and regular volunteers will sign a non-conviction statement and will be advised of mandatory reporting requirements. All staff will be trained in emergency procedures. All staff will submit to state and national criminal and abuse record checks. All centers will follow DHS requirements for state licensing as well as Head Start Performance Standards.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

As employees of Your Own United Resources, Inc., ***all staff are mandatory reporters.*** If in the course of employment, a staff member examines, attends, counsels, or treats a child and reasonably believes that the child has suffered abuse, he/she must make a report, first

orally, then written to the Centralized Services Intake Unit. They will follow the procedures and instructions given to them by the Centralized Services Intake Unit. Reports and information shall remain confidential except to those needing to know to follow up on the reporting process. Any person or agency required by law to report a suspected case of child abuse, who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, is guilty of a misdemeanor and civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure.

Your Own United Resources, Inc. realizes that in the course of play, active children may receive injuries. Occasionally a child will show signs of injury (bruising, etc.) or say something that raises our level of concern. When concern leads to suspicion, the Iowa Code mandates that all staff report any case of suspected child abuse or neglect. The law is intended to protect children and to assist parents in finding alternative ways of dealing with the stresses of raising children.

### **Lost Child**

To prevent a lost or missing child or children, staff will do head counts frequently. They will position themselves in the classroom and on the playground to observe children at all times and prevent a child from leaving the area. Staff will perform a “sweep” of the bus or vehicle children are exiting to be sure that no child is overlooked. If it is determined that a child is lost or missing, staff will make a quick “sweep” of the area, call 9-1-1, and notify parents of the situation. The Central office will be notified as soon as possible that a child is lost or missing.

### **Smoking/Prohibited Substances**

The indoor and outdoor environments and vehicles used by Your Own United Resources, Inc. are designated as non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited at any Head Start facility or activity. The use of, or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs/substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Staff and other adults who are inebriated, intoxicated or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances will be required to leave the premises immediately.

### **Natural Disasters**

The Policy Council of Your Own United Resources, Inc. reviews and approves annually the safety procedures for staff to follow in the case of natural disasters. Procedures are in place for tornado, power outage, flood, fire, earthquake, chemical spill/ammonia leak, blizzard, ice storm and fog. Staff will follow instructions of emergency preparedness teams and /or law enforcement officers as the situation dictates. Decisions will be made as soon as possible to keep all children from harm’s way. Parents will be notified and children will be returned home or released for pick-up as soon as conditions permit.

### **Fire/Tornado Drills**

Full evacuation fire drills and tornado drills are required by licensing standards to be practiced once a month, regardless of weather. Emergency procedures are posted in every room. They include a map with written directions. Procedures also identify the staff person who is responsible for removing an immobile child.



## **Bomb Threats**

Any bomb threat will be treated as a potentially dangerous situation. In the event a bomb threat is called in to any Head Start center, staff is cautioned not to use light switches or building phones in case they are wired to a detonating device. 9-1-1 will be called immediately and law enforcement officials will instruct staff members on how to proceed with the situation.

## **Intruders**

In the event that an unauthorized person should enter a Head Start facility, the first staff person to approach the intruder will offer them assistance to exit the building or direct them to the appropriate staff person. Staff will gather children in the classroom area, away from the intruder. 9-1-1 will be called. Staff will follow law enforcement instruction on evacuation of children.

## **Persons Posing a Safety Risk**

A person who may pose a safety risk includes, but is not limited to, any adult under the apparent influence of drugs or alcohol. No child shall be released to anyone who cannot safely care for the child. 9-1-1 will be called if necessary. Staff will attempt to stall the parent or adult while waiting for assistance. Children will be moved to a safe place away from confrontation.

## **Violence in the Community**

In the event of violence in the community, staff will lock all outside doors. Children will be gathered in their classrooms and will be kept away from any windows. 9-1-1 will be called if necessary. Staff will supervise children in safe areas until parent pick up or threat of danger is removed.

## **Weapons**

No staff, student or other person on Head Start premises shall carry, have in their possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another person any real weapon or look-alike weapon whether or not any child or person is endangered by such actions. Dangerous weapons, real or toy, include, but are not limited to, guns, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, knives, etc.

## **Facilities**

To meet Performance Standards, Your Own United Resources, Inc. shall ensure that the program's physical environment supports the delivery of high quality services to all children and families. Facilities, materials, and equipment are selected and maintained to create a learning environment that is safe, accessible, welcoming, comfortable, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive and in keeping with the individual needs of children and families.

All Head Start facilities meet the Iowa Department of Human Services licensing requirements and provide an environment free of toxins, including cigarette smoke, lead, pesticides, herbicides and other air pollutants as well as soil and water contaminants.

Safety inspections are done to ensure that each facility's space, light, ventilation, heat and other physical arrangements are consistent with the health, safety and developmental needs of the children.

### **Head Start Classrooms**

Teachers, in collaboration with families, promote each child's development and enhance each individual child's learning. This is called **developmentally appropriate practice**.

Each classroom environment is set up with centers that the children may play in during large group time:

<b>Library/Listening</b>	<b>Science/Discovery</b>
<b>Sensory</b>	<b>Technology</b>
<b>Manipulative/Math</b>	<b>Blocks</b>
<b>Dramatic Play</b>	<b>Art</b>

Each center incorporates literacy and math materials. Play is an important vehicle for promoting children's language, cognitive and social skills.

### **Playgrounds**

Outdoor play areas are arranged to prevent any child from leaving the premises and getting into unsafe and unsupervised areas. Playground equipment is designed, installed, inspected and maintained with the children's safety in mind. The equipment does not pose a threat of serious falls and will not pinch, crush or entrap the head or any part of a child's body or clothing.

### **Vehicles**

All parents are encouraged to use age-appropriate and size-appropriate seat restraints while transporting their child to and from the classrooms, etc. If parents do not provide appropriate seat restraints or resist using them, staff will remind them about the risk involved and any applicable laws that require use of restraints for transportation of children.

Agency buses and other vehicles used to transport children will be licensed according to state law and will have appropriate insurance. Buses and/or allowable alternative vehicles will be equipped with a first aid kit and emergency information for all children being transported. Bus monitors or drivers will have cell phones and/or access to two way radio communication.

Children will be taught safe riding practices, safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle, recognition of the danger zones around the vehicle and emergency evacuation procedures.

## From the Performance Standards: 1303.74 Safety Procedures

(a) A program must ensure children who receive transportation services are taught safe riding practices, safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle and for crossing the street to and from the vehicle at stops, recognition of danger zones around the vehicle, and emergency evacuation procedures, including participating in an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the vehicle the child will be riding.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The information in this booklet is designed to help you recognize the importance of both transportation and pedestrian safety. Our Performance Standards dictate that we present this information to parents and to children in the classroom within the first thirty (30) days of the program year.

Parking lots and parking areas present potential hazards to children who are anxious to get to their classroom. We need to emphasize to parents that children should ALWAYS hold a parent's hand when approaching the building. Traffic is unpredictable – and so are your children. Exiting your car and approaching the building are both perfect opportunities for you to TEACH your child the importance of looking both ways in traffic and proceeding with caution when walking in any area where cars are parked.

Other information includes the LAW concerning the use of child restraints (booster seats or “car seats” with harnesses) in cars. Children who ride the bus will be required to use a child restraint system or a harness built into the bus seat. It is important for you to be a role model for your children – you need to BUCKLE UP each time you enter your car.

Bus pick-up for children using our transportation is curbside – with the exception of one-way streets, we will attempt to pull up directly in front of your house. In high traffic areas and on dead end streets we may have to stop at a corner and have you escort your child to the bus while holding his/her hand. Again, this is the perfect opportunity for you to TEACH your child that they are never to go in front or in back of the bus where the driver cannot see them.

### **What Parents Need to Know**

1. Parents often think their children are able to handle traffic safety by themselves before they actually are.
2. Children don't have the skills to handle these risky situations until at least the age of ten.
3. Boys are much more likely than girls to be injured or killed in traffic.
4. Young children assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them.
5. Children can't judge speed and they think cars can stop instantly.

### **How Parents Can Help Teach Traffic Safety**

1. Begin to teach your child about traffic safety at a very early age. Give them plenty of chances to practice when you are with them.
2. Young children learn by watching their parents and other adults. Cross streets properly – use the crosswalks and don't cross in the middle of the street. Children are shorter than adults; they can't see over cars, and cars can't see them.
3. Teach the Safe Street Crossing method. Teach your child to:
  - a. Cross with an adult or older friend
  - b. When possible, cross at an intersection
  - c. When crossing near a corner, watch for the turning traffic
  - d. Stop at the curb. Do not step out into the street. Look left, right, left and over your shoulder. Continue to look as you cross.
4. Children in preschool should always hold your hand when approaching the building for Head Start. Traffic and parked cars make our parking areas dangerous.
5. When your child arrives home on the bus, be watching as he/she exits the bus. Children are easily distracted and may not move toward the house. Insists that your child move away from the bus so that it can depart safely.

### **Bus Safety for Head Start Children**

Bus safety for children is an important issue. Parents can help teach children to be safe bus riders by talking to them and practicing safe riding in the family car.

Each bus has a paid monitor – a person assigned to see that the children are safe enroute and that they get into the building safely.

Head Start buses are equipped with SafeGuard restraints. They provide upper body restraint. Children are expected to stay belted in during the ride, keep their hands, feet and book bags to themselves, talk with “inside” voices and follow directions from the bus monitor. During the first month of school children will receive information in the classroom about school bus evacuations. At least one “drill” will be held during the first month of school.

A child under the age of one and weighing less than 20 pounds shall be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This restraint system will be strapped into the car with a seat belt. It will contain a 5 point harness and is to be located in the back seat. The middle of the back seat is the best.

A child under 6 years of age shall be secured by a child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This restraint system can be a “car seat” with an internal harness that is secured by the car's seat belt; a high back “booster” that uses both the car's seat belt and shoulder harness; a low back “booster” that uses the car's seat belt and shoulder harness. It is against the law for a child under the age of 6 to be secured only by the car's seat belt.

A child between 6 and 11 shall be secured by a child restraint system (booster with seat belt and shoulder harness) or by a seat belt/shoulder harness, seat belt alone or a safety harness.

### **Transporting Your Child in a Car**

Everybody in your vehicle needs a safety belt or safety seat.

Anyone riding loose in the vehicle can hurt those who are buckled up by being thrown against them. People riding without belts or safety seats can be hurled out of the car and seriously injured.

The back seat is the safest place for children. If you have an airbag, no child under the age of 12 should be placed in the front seat.

Infants must ride in the back seat facing the rear of the car.

### **School Bus Safety**

Some children in our centers use the bus to get to and from Head Start. All children have the opportunity to ride the bus for field trips. Children must be taught to respect the rules on the bus in order for everyone to have a safe ride.

We ask that parents escort children out to the bus. We do not want the rider to leave the bus except to escort children into the school. If we must pick-up on a one- way street, we ask that parents bring the child out to the bus.

Children will be placed in child restraint devices – either specially designed child restraint seats or in restraints built into the bus seats.

Please be watching for the bus. We prefer that you come to the bus and escort your child away from the bus when he/she exits. Children are impulsive and may dart in front of or in back of the bus without warning.

Motorists following or approaching the school bus must stop when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop arm signal. These signals show that children are entering or exiting the bus.

### **Free Safety Seat Inspection**

A certified child safety seat technician will check and teach you to install your child safety seat. Bring your car, your safety seat and your child. Call the Birth Center at 515-574-6052 for an appointment.

### **Bike Safety and Helmet Use**

- Start helmet use early –even when riding a tricycle or play vehicle. Allow children to ride only on sidewalks or on playground area where there is no traffic.
- Choose a helmet that meets current safety standards. Let your child help choose the helmet – and explain that a helmet is just part of the gear, as it is with football or hockey. A brain injury cannot be cured!

- A big bike “to grow into” is not easy to learn on or to ride safely. A young child should be able to sit on the seat with knees straight and feet flat on the ground.

**\*\*WARNING DRAWSTRINGS ON CLOTHES CAN BE DANGEROUS\*\***

Current styles on children’s clothing, especially drawstrings, have brought new injury risks. Some clothing can cause serious injury by catching on bus doors or handrails, playground equipment and cribs.

A drawstring at the waist, hood or neck on clothing can catch in a small gap in playground equipment, a bus handrail or on a bolt. A drawstring with a large toggle or knot at the end is most likely to get caught.

- Choose clothes without drawstrings –snaps, Velcro, buttons, or elastic are better choices
- Remove hood and neck strings
- Remove drawstrings from the waist and bottom of coats
- Warn children about dangling key rings, large buckles and other objects hanging from their backpacks