

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/ Early Head Start

Part: 1302 Program Operations

Subpart: D-Health Program Services

Section: 1302.47 Safety Practices

Subject: Release of Children at Head Start/ Early Head Start

Policy:

Head Start/ Early Head Start will adhere to the state of Florida childcare standards that state that children shall not be released to any person other than their parents or legal guardians or a person authorized in writing by the custodial parent or legal guardian.

Procedure:

1. Upon being accepted into Head Start/Early Head Start Program, but before the child begins attending, the parent or legal guardian will complete the Department of Children & Family Child Care form.
2. On the Child Care form, the parent or legal guardian will list the persons who are authorized to pick up (or receive) the child. Two copies will be made of this form. The original will remain in the child's family file in the main office; the copy will be placed in the Emergency folder in the classroom. The center's which have transportation will make a third copy to be placed in the bus folder and kept in possession of the bus escort. **Any person allowed to receive a child must be at least 16 years old.**
3. Staff will assure that only those persons listed as authorized to receive the child, and who have written permission from the parent, will receive the child at the end of the day. Any staff member releasing a child to an authorized person shall require photo identification from that person unless the staff personally knows him or her.
4. Any person picking up a child from Head Start/ Early Head Start facility must be on the pick-up list and only after parent/guardian has given written permission in person.
5. The **parent/guardian must make the request in person and in writing** when an individual that is not on the pick-up list has permission to remove a child from the center, staff must request picture I.D. and make a copy to be placed in the family file along with a note signed by the parent.
6. In case of an emergency and the parent/guardian cannot pick up child, or be reached, and no prior arrangement has been made; center staff will contact the adults on the child's emergency contact list.

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7. When the class leaves the center at any time i.e. Field Trip, Fire or Fire Drill, a staff person will take the Emergency File.
8. If there is a non-custodial parent, Head Start/Early Head Start will follow Court Orders. The non-custodial parent will be allowed to see the child unless there is a Court Order saying that (s)he is not allowed to do so. If the Court has ordered that the non-custodial parent not be allowed to see the child, HS/EHS will need to have a copy of the Court Order on file.
9. If a non-custodial parent arrives to pick up a child, he or she will be allowed to do so **only if HS/EHS has a copy of the custody papers stating that the parent has visitation rights on that day.** However, if the visitation is not on the day the non-custodial parent wants to take the child, or there is no visitation allowed, HS/EHS will not allow him or her to take the child, unless the custodial parent has given permission in writing to center staff.
10. A non-custodial parent will be allowed access to the education, health, and nutritional progress of the child, but will not have access to the Family Section of the Child's Family File.
11. If a parent, guardian, or otherwise authorized person is incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol upon arrival at the center to pick up a child and the staff is concerned about the safety of the child, the staff will inform the parent of their suspicions of drug or alcohol use. They will then ask the parent if there is someone who is available to pick up the child. Staff will communicate to the parent that if nobody else is available to transport the child home then Head Start/Early Head Start will. If the parent insists they are going to drive the child home we must release the child but inform the parent that when they leave we will call Law Enforcement and notify them of the situation. Incapacitated means: staggering or not able to walk or stand straight (not able to function), slurring of words, may be accompanied by a strong odor.
12. When the bus arrives to drop the child off, if the driver or escort observes that the parent, guardian, or person authorized to receive the child is incapacitated, staff will evaluate the safety of the child. If staff believes the situation is dangerous to the child, (s)he will leave the child, but will immediately call the Center Director to report the situation. The Center Director will report the situation to the Department of Children & Families. If no one else is available, the Center Director will report to the local Law Enforcement.
13. The situation will be reported to the Family Service Coordinator on the Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting form.