



Head Start/Early Head Start Program

**PARENT/STAFF
Operational Handbook Program Year**

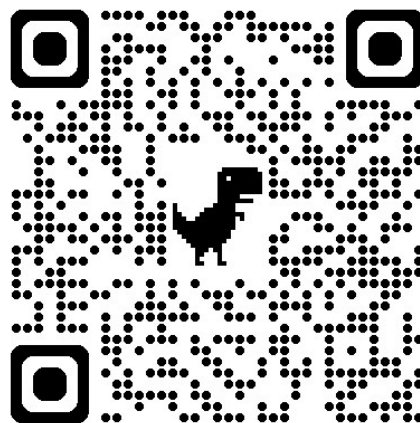


Table of Contents

• Head Start/Early Head Start Program	1
• Table of Contents	2
• What Is Head Start	5
• Statement of Services	5
• Infant/Toddler Early Head Start Program	5
• Preschool Head Start Program	7
• Program Staff	8
• Smoke-Free Work Environment	8
• Hours of Operation	9
• Center Calendar	9
• Inclement Weather, Delays, Closures	9
• Holidays and Other Celebrations	11
• Attendance and Absences	11
• Arrival of Children	11
• Departure and Release of Children	12
• Late Pickup	12
• Transitions	13

• Curriculum and Ongoing Assessment	13
• Outdoor Play	14 • Water
Activities	15 •
Touch and Nurturing	15
• Guidance and Discipline	15
• Suspension and Expulsion	16 • Mental Health
Consultation	17
• Rest / Naptime	18
• Clothing, Toys, and Backpacks	18
• Computer Use	18
• Videotaping or Photographing of Children	18
• Field Trips	19
• Family Services	19
• Family Partnership Agreements	19
• Staff Relations and Communication	20
• Food and Nutrition Services	20
• Allergy	21
• Meals	21
• Breast Milk	22
• Food and Celebrations	22
• Health, Safety, and Emergency Services and Procedures	22

• Emergencies/ Emergency Contacts / Emergency Preparedness Plan	22
• Daily Health Check	23
• Sickness, Exclusion Policy, and Infectious Diseases	23
• Immunizations	24
• TB Screening Policy and Procedure	24
• Staff Screening Policy and Procedure	24
• Pandemic/Epidemic Additional Requirements	25
• Administration and Storage of Medication	25
• Hand Washing	26
• Accidents and First Aid	26
• Authorization for Emergency Medical or Dental Treatment	27
• Dental Care	27
• Fire Drills	27
• Gang Free Zone	27
• Child Abuse and Neglect Identification and Reporting	28
• Local Licensing Information with Contact Information	29
• Services Provided for Children with Disabilities, Developmental Delays, or At-Risk – for Developmental Delays	30
• Mental Health Services	31
• Confidentiality of Records	31
• Authorization to Release Confidential Information	31

- Declining or Refusing Services32
- Parent Visiting the Center and Community Volunteers32
- KAF, Inc. Standard of Conduct31
- Parent Notification35
- Procedure for Parent Review of Standards35
- Program Governance35
- Parents' Rights - Section 42.04271-----35
- Complaint Procedure37
- PARENT COMPLAINT FORM38
- CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)39
- Parent/Staff Operational Handbook Staff Acknowledgment.....40
- Parent/Staff Operational Handbook Parent Acknowledgment.....39
- Parent’s Right Acknowledgement – form 2987.....40

- **What Is Head Start**

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child and family development programs for pregnant women and children ages birth to five and their families. Head Start promotes school readiness and future success for children. Head Start, as a quality early childhood program, is inclusive of children with disabilities.

- **Statement of Services**

Kids Are First Head Start/Early Head Start program provides comprehensive services to all enrolled children in education, health, nutrition, mental health, family services, and parent engagement. We firmly believe that you, the parents, are the primary educator of your child and that the whole family, as well as the entire community, must be involved in your child's experiences at KAF HS/ EHS to have a lasting impact.

- **Infant/Toddler Early Head Start Program**

The KAF HS / EHS program emphasizes nurturing through low child-staff ratios, small group sizes, and caring teachers. We provide equipment, materials, and activities suited to the age and stage of development of the child to support and stimulate the incredibly rapid physical and cognitive development of children at this age.

As supported by our curriculum, daily routines are individualized to meet the needs of each child and to accommodate the wishes of families. Naps, feeding, diapering and toileting schedules are individualized for each child and documented daily.

Toilet training, for older toddlers, is also personalized and proceeds at a place mutually agreeable to families and staff and appropriate to the child's developmental level. In the event of a Pandemic, parents will have the opportunity to elect the Virtual Component of the Infant/Toddler Early Head Start Program.

- **Early Head Start At-a-Glance**

- Ages

Birth to 3 years

Children are grouped according to age in months.

- Ratio and Group Size

In every EHS classroom, the maximum group size cannot exceed eight children with two teachers.

One EHS teacher is responsible for a group of four infants/toddlers.

Continuity of Care is done by having the smallest number of adults possible interacting with your child; this helps build meaningful relationships.

- Safe Sleep

Infants are not to be laid down to sleep with a bottle.

To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), all sleeping arrangements for infants must use firm mattresses and no soft bedding materials such as comforters, pillows, fluffy blankets or stuffed toys are allowed. No bumper pads allowed. Infants are to be placed on their backs to sleep.

- Feeding

KAF EHS provides formula.

Feeding is "on demand." Infants are fed when their language and behavior indicate that they are hungry.

Babies are held while being fed and are not laid down to sleep with a bottle. Bottles are never to be propped up.

There will be a designated private area for mothers choosing to breastfeed their child. Parents can provide pumped breast milk for their child.

- Diapers

All center-based programs are expected to provide the diapers needed by the child.

- Home Visits and Staff-Parent Conferences

Teachers conduct two home visits and three staff-parent conferences throughout the year.

- Timelines

The EPSDT schedule is followed for healthcare requirements.

45 days from entry date: developmental, behavioral, hearing, and vision screening completed.

90 days from entry date: all health requirements are completed and documented.

- Three weeks before the program year ends, vacant slots are not filled.

Preschool Head Start Program

The KAF preschool program classrooms are based on the well-established belief that children learn through play. Your program utilizes a curriculum including individualization and emphasizes positive guidance. Classroom activities, materials and equipment support the development of problem-solving, critical thinking and logical reasoning skills.

- **Head Start At-a-Glance**

- Ages

3-5 years - grouped according to age in months.

Children are subject to move from one classroom to another throughout the program year for continuity of care and educational goals.

- Ratio and Group Size

In every HS classroom, the maximum group size depends on the age of most children (i.e., 17-20) and cannot exceed 20 children with two staff members (one of whom meets the teacher's requirements).

In a Pandemic, the child staff ratio will be lowered to a smaller group size.

- Sleeping Arrangements

Children who are tired and fall asleep are to be allowed to sleep.

- The program provides rest or nap time. Children who do not nap are provided with alternative activities.

- Feeding

Depending on the length of time a child is in the center, HS must meet 1/3 to 2/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs.

Food is served family-style whenever possible. Except in the case of a pandemic KAF staff in the classroom will plate children's meals/snacks.

Children may request seconds of food if available.

Children are encouraged, but not forced to taste all the foods offered.

- Toilet Learning

Children who are not yet toilet trained enrolled in Head Start, have toileting schedules individualized for each child to assist in toilet training.

Children who have accidents are cleaned and changed by staff. Soiled clothes are given to the family in a sealed plastic bag or washed at the program (where applicable).

Children are never ashamed, including when toilet accidents occur.

-

- Timelines

EPSDT schedule is followed for healthcare requirements.

45 days from entry date: developmental, behavioral, hearing and vision screenings completed.

90 days from the entry date; all health requirements are completed and documented. Three weeks before the program year ends, vacant slots are not filled.

- **Services to Expectant Families through Early Head Start**

The goal of serving pregnant women and their families in Early Head Start is to provide Early Head Start services to their children in the appropriate child development program. KAF HS/EHS provides resources and support to the family for a healthy pregnancy outcome. Access to comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care through a referral process to resources that provide medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition services if needed to pregnant women and families.

In the event of a Pandemic, parents will have the opportunity to elect the Virtual Component of the Infant/Toddler Early Head Start Program.

- **Program Staff**

All staff members are qualified to provide Head Start/ Early Head Start services to children and families. Teachers receive ongoing intensive training in child development, positive guidance, CPR, first-aid, child abuse and other relevant topics. The management staff are available to assist you with questions and challenges. Your family service advocates can tell you how to reach the coordinators for education, health, nutrition, mental health, parent involvement, disabilities and family services.

- **Smoke-Free Work Environment**

For the health and protection of young children (many with allergies and respiratory challenges) no one is allowed to smoke on Head Start premises or interact with the kids with the odor of strong scents such as smoke.

Hours of Operations

Hours of operation based on funding and program options:

Head Start Full Day Services are from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Early Head Start Full Day Services are from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

- Operating Months – August through June

- **Center Calendar**

Your KAF HS/EHS center will provide you with a calendar of program dates of operation and closures upon request.

- **Inclement Weather, Delays, Closures**

KAF HS/ EHS programs follow the decision of the local elementary school in determining delays and closures of our centers due to weather conditions. Other decisions regarding closure may need to be made by the CEO/Executive Director, based on circumstances that affect the center. Our staff will contact you if a decision is made to close or close early when the school district does not.

Understand the Weather

Wind-Chill



- 30° is **chilly** and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is **cold**
- 0° to 15° is **very cold**
- 32° to 0° is **bitter cold** with significant risk of **frostbite**
- -20° to -60° is **extreme cold** and **frostbite** is likely
- -60° is **frigid** and exposed **skin will freeze** in 1 minute

Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered **comfortable**
- 90° beginning to feel **uncomfortable**
- 100° **uncomfortable** and may be **hazardous**
- 110° considered **dangerous**

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)											
Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph										
	Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40		
40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27		
30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13		
20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1		
10	10	-1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15		
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29		
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43		
-20	-20	-34	-41	-45	-48	-51	-53	-55	-57		
-30	-30	-46	-53	-58	-61	-64	-67	-69	-71		

Comfortable for out door play

Caution

Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
Temperature (F)	Relative Humidity (Percent)													
	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	
	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	102	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	136							
	104	119	124	131	137									
	110	136												

Child Care Weather Watch

Watching the weather is part of a child care provider's job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? **Clothe** children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). **Beverages** help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. **Sunscreen** may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. **Shaded** play areas protect children from the sun.

Condition GREEN - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen. **OLDER CHILDREN** need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.

Condition YELLOW - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime.

Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child.

OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.

Condition RED - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk.

INFANTS/TODDLERS should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions.

OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

Blizzard Warning: There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.

Heat Index Warning: How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

Relative Humidity: The percent of moisture in the air.

Temperature: The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind: The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

Wind Chill Warning: There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

Winter Weather Advisory: Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.

Child Care Weather Watch, Iowa Department Public Health, Healthy Child Care Iowa, Produced through federal grant (MCJ19T029 & MCJ19KCC7) funds from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Maternal & Child Health Bureau. Wind-Chill and Heat Index information is from the National Weather Service.

- Teachers will conduct activities indoors when the weather does not permit children to play outdoors.
- Activities may include but are not limited to:

• Exercising	• Choosy Activities with Movement
• Dancing	• I am Moving I am Learning Activities
• Laundry Basketball Toss	• Indoor Bowling
• At Home Balance Beam (Tape on Floor)	• Hopping
• Jumping	• Skipping
• Crawling	• Tummy Time

•

• Yoga	• Stretching
--------	--------------

Holidays and Other Celebrations

KAF HS/EHS provides meaningful experiences for children that reflect and respect family traditions from all children in the classroom. Classroom staff will plan or hold holiday activities that promote holidays or any means of celebrating a holiday. Teachers will include planning in their classroom lesson plans.

• Attendance and Absences

Children who attend school regularly do better in their education and development.

Therefore, we want to encourage you to bring your child to school every day.

If your child is going to be absent, parents must contact the center director, family service advocate or teacher to tell them that their child will not attend and, if possible, when you expect them to return. If a parent does not contact the center, FSAs are required to contact parents and/or legal guardians within 1 hour of program start time to ensure the child's safety.

As required according to the Head Start Performance Standards, children are expected to have an 85% average attendance or better.

The teacher is the primary contact with the parent upon arrival and departures at the center, when parents communicate to the teacher about a child's absence, the teacher will communicate to the FSAs all shared communication by parent of child's absence.

- Within the first 60 days (about 2 months) of program operation, and on an ongoing basis, thereafter, the program reviews attendance data from Go-Engage database to identify children with patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year. An Attendance Plan of Action will be documented and agreed to by parents and staff. If the child continues to be absent, a follow up parent / staff conference will be scheduled with parents to notify parents of child being returned to the waiting list.
- Children who continue with consecutive days of absence with no parent/guardian contact, the enrolled child will be placed back on the program's waiting list.
- If a child ceases to attend the program, the FSA will conduct a home visit or Parent Staff Conference with the child's parents in efforts to re-engage the family and resume the child's attendance before recommending the child be placed back on waitlist.

• Arrival of Children

Please make sure children arrive and are picked up from the center at times agreed upon at the start of the program year and specified in the enrollment agreement.

Arrival is 8:00 am and Departure is 3:00 pm. *Parents working or attending college can drop off at 7:45 am with the required completion of a Work /Educational Verification Form.*

- Please enter and exit the building through the main entrance. To ensure your child's safety, you must accompany your child to her/his classroom. You must also sign your child in and out of the center and tell the appropriate staff member that you are arriving and leaving with your child. People, other than a child's parent, signing children in and out of the center must be at least 18 years of age and must be on the approved list of emergency contacts.
- If you have trouble bringing your child to the center or picking him/her up on time, please meet with your center director/family service advocate. Picking up a child late is upsetting to your child and challenging for staff needing to go home to their own families.

• **Departure and Release of Children**

Children will not be released to anyone not designated on the emergency contact form completed at time of enrollment. There will be no exceptions. To make changes to the emergency contact form, arrange to come to the center and make changes as necessary with the center director/family service advocate.

- At enrollment, you will provide the name of your emergency contacts. Emergency contacts include the parents and three more people you want contacted in case of emergency.
- For your child's safety, if someone else is going to pick up your child, please contact us in advance and be sure you have given us advance written authorization in person. Please do not do this by phone, e-mail, text or fax because we cannot verify that it is you who authorizes the pickup.
- If we are unfamiliar with the person picking up your child, we will ask him/her to show us a picture ID. If the individual is not listed on the emergency contact form authorizing them to pick up your child, we will not release your child to that person.

• **Late Pickup**

If you fail to pick up your child at the designated time: Staff will first attempt to locate you and, if unsuccessful, Staff will try to contact the emergency contact people.

- If one hour after the closing time of the center, you or a designated emergency person have not contacted the center, Staff will again attempt to locate you and your emergency contact persons.
- If unable to do so, your child will be left in the custody of the local police department or appropriate state agency (i.e., Child Protective Services).

-
- A note will be left on the door letting you know by whom the child was picked up and how to reach them.
- Staff is not authorized to take your child home or to continue to wait at the center after one (1) hour after closing.
- In the event of a pandemic, the KAF Inc. HS/EHS community will be following the ReOpening Response Plan. This plan will be updated according to the latest information and

guidance from the local, state, regional and national entities. This is a general plan for the agency. Plans may vary to some degree within each center o (See KAF COVID-19 Mitigation Procedure)

- **Face Mask**

KAF, Inc. will follow the latest safety guidelines from federal, state and local entities. The link below provides the information regarding the above guidelines.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schoolschildcare/index.html>

- **Child Transportation**

Kids Are First Inc. HS/EHS does not provide transportation services.

- **Transitions**

Parents and children are invited to participate in a staffing conference meeting scheduled with parents before the child with a special need enters the program to make appropriate arrangements for a successful transition into the classroom to assist them, and you, in developing secure and trusting relationships between parents and staff.

EHS to HS – Family Service Advocates assist the family in transitioning child into the Head Start when the child turns

2.6 of age (6 months before the child's 3rd birthday)

HS to Kindergarten – Family Service Advocates will assist the family in the transition process to kindergarten

Transition to another program - Family Service Advocates assists the family in transitioning child to another program.

In a Pandemic, all the activities on the transition plan may not take place.

- **Curriculum and Ongoing Assessment**

- Head Start**

The curriculum at KAF for Head Start for a preschool is based on sound early childhood education principles and developmentally appropriate practices.

Screening and assessment tools are utilized to individualize the curriculum to meet each child's developmental stage and areas of interest.

The teachers use observations, the information given by parents in interviews, home visits, conferences and helpful screening/assessment instruments throughout the year to gather information about the children to then plan activities for small groups and for individuals within each classroom.

- **Early Head Start**

Individualized and responsive care through predictable routines carried out by consistent teachers is the foundation of the Early Head Start infant/toddler classroom curriculum at KAF EHS.

Everyday routines and rituals, such as feeding and diapering, provide abundant opportunities to support infant's and toddler's development of secure relationships and self-regulation skills.

Teachers use observations, the information provided by parents in interviews, home visits and conferences to gather information for planning individualized daily experiences and activities based on the interests and needs of children.

The daily schedule in Early Head Start considers the individual, unique needs of the infants and toddlers enrolled in each group.

In the Event of a Pandemic:

Parents participating in the program's virtual component will conduct observations and provide feedback to the teaching staff for ongoing assessments.

Outdoor Play

KAF HS views the outdoor setting as an extension of the classroom and a natural, nature-based setting in which learning, and interaction can occur. The outdoor setting is seen as an "outdoor learning environment."

Unless it is raining or the weather service has issued a warning to remain indoors, all children will go outdoors daily. (See inclement weather) [Child Care Weather Watch \(c-uphd.org\)](https://www.c-uphd.org/child-care-weather-watch)

- Cold weather - your child still needs fresh air, and exercise. If you want your child to remain indoors, you must have a note from your family health care provider.
- The child is recovering from an illness - staff will honor your request to keep your child indoors for one day only, after which a health care provider's note is required.
- Clothing - Please dress your child for outdoor play and supply appropriate clothing and shoes for the season, allowing for weather extremes.

Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity Plan

KAF Inc. strongly believes and supports the need for gross motor development in children.

Children participate in daily gross motor activities, providing multiple opportunities resulting in health benefits for children. Regular gross motor activity builds healthy skeletal

and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improve self-esteem and reduce stress and anxiety.

- Infants will be given opportunities for gross motor activities, including supervised tummy time
- Toddlers aged children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.
- Pre-school children will participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.
- Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

KAF Inc. HS/EHS centers will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- Two occasions of active play outdoors when the weather permits.
- Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.
- Gross motor activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground, when weather permits.
- When participating in gross motor activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement that enables full participation in active play.
- Footwear should provide support for running and climbing.

In the event of a Pandemic:

We will be following the latest guidance from the local, state, regional, and national entities.

Water Activities

KAF HS does not participate in water activities that include swimming pools and wading/splashing pools.

Touch and Nurturing

Physical touching is an essential part of the care and nurturing of young children. Children feel loved, accepted, and supported through the sensations of touch by nurturing adults and peers. Staff will be respectful of children's body cues, and touch only occurs with the child's permission. Teachers will be sensitive to children's responses and requests for physical interaction and model appropriate nurturing touches. Children will always have the right to refuse touch. Even the very youngest children are approached with a verbal announcement and a request for permission before being picked up or moved by an adult. Children are also taught to respect adults' and other children's touch preferences.

Guidance and Discipline

KAF HS/EHS staff support the social-emotional development of all children by building trust, being responsive and fostering independence. Providing clear, consistent limits and having realistic expectations for the children also contributes to this development, as does encourage respect for others' feelings and rights and shows respect for home language/culture.

The long-term goal for children enrolled in the program is to provide a setting where children can slowly develop a sense of inner self-control or self-regulation. They can begin to understand the reasons for limits and develop a sense of both being respected and respecting other's rights and feelings.

Positive guidance techniques include:

- problem-solving
- redirection
- offering choices
- refocusing
- engaging in play
- using positive statements
- active listening

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or an instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet
- Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence of behavior
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device. When you are involved in the KAF HS/EHS program at the center, activities, or even during home visits, you are encouraged to adhere to KAF HS/EHS discipline policies.

Suspension and Expulsion

KAF Inc. Head Start / Early Head Start prohibits suspension and severely limits expulsion of children due to the child's behavior. In cases of serious threats to other children and staff, the following documentation will be presented to the Program CEO and Head Start Assistant Director for review and approval of a temporary in nature suspension of last resort.

The Mental Health/Disability Coordinator will engage parents with parental consent, with mental health consultants and other community resources to assist children, parents, and staff with intervention strategies for both the classroom and home environment.

If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, KAF Inc. HS/EHS program will help the parent and child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring the child's safety by the following:

- Continue to engage the parent/child with the mental health consultant.
- Continue to connect the parent to community resources to assist the parent/child.
- Ensure In-House Staffing outlines all actions and support needed with follow-up timelines.
- Conduct home visits as needed to ensure all outlined support actions are taking place.
- Complete referrals to local LEA or ECI, including Camino Real, are implemented, ensuring parental consent has been obtained.

KAF Inc. HS/EHS will explore all possible steps and document all actions taken to support the parent and address the child/family needs and facilitate the engagement of a mental health consultant to consider the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports ensuring not to exclude child from the program.

KAF Inc. HS/EHS will consult with the agency responsible for the child's IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support outlined in the child's IFSP or IEP plans and recommendations for the child's placement.

KAF Inc. HS / EHS will ensure all support strategies outlined are clearly documented and continue consulting with parents, child's teacher and agencies engaged including the mental health consultant on contract for progress or continued safety concerns to determine if KAF Inc. HS/EHS is the most appropriate placement for child.

Mental Health Consultation

KAF HS/EHS program provides mental health, social, and emotional well-being consultation services for all children, families, and staff either directly or through the development of contracts with licensed mental health professionals. Collaboration with the mental health consultant aims to improve the ability of staff, families, programs, and systems to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of mental health or behavioral problems among children from birth to age 5 and their families. Mental health consultation promotes staff wellness so that they can provide support to children and families in Head Start programs.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/inclusive-minds-eagle-pass-tx/1016873>

<https://letitbeeualde.com/>

Mental Health Consultation services will include:

Classroom observations to support the teacher in their efforts to provide appropriate emotional support to all children using effective methods of guidance and discipline, and developing positive teacher-child interactions.

Parenting education at parent meetings or one-on-one at the parents' request. Collaborate with parents and staff to develop plans to support individual children's social/emotional development, with written parental permission.

Refer children for additional counseling support when needed, and with written parental permission.

Rest / Naptime

KAF HS/EHS provides a rest/nap time in all our centers.

Head Start children may need nap time to help them relax and unwind from their busy morning schedule. If a child does not go to sleep during rest or nap time, he/she is allowed a quiet activity.

Early Head Start children can rest and nap based on their individual needs and sleep patterns. The older two-year-old and three-year-old may begin sleeping at a more consistent time; however, they will be permitted to take additional rest periods as needed.

Clothing, Toys, and Backpacks

A clean clothing change should be kept at the center, and exchange clothes as the seasons change, so that children are appropriately dressed.

Each child will be provided with his/her clean bed sheet. No blankets/towels from home will be accepted.

Children may not bring toys (toy guns or other weapons), including videos and computer games, to the Head Start or Early Head Start Centers. Backpacks are not allowed.

Computer Use

Appropriate early education programming for young children focuses on active learning and exploration. The Head Start children use computers, and the teacher monitors their computer time.

Videotaping or Photographing of Children

Teachers and other KAF HS/EHS staff may occasionally want to take photos of your child for program use, such as classroom displays, labeling, etc. Parents must sign a consent form before anyone can videotape, audiotape, or photograph your child.

KAF staff may not place or repost on their personal social media. Media post should be on the official KAF social media.

Required Notifications – KAF HS/EHS program must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.

KAF HS/EHS program must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.

Animals in the Classroom

No pets are allowed on KAF, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start premises.

Field Trips

All trips from the center are considered "field trips," and parents must sign a permission consent form required in advance for each trip. Prior approval for "walking" or "strolling" trips must be signed by you at the time of enrollment and will be kept on file in your child's family file. Safety is our first concern during field trips, and the chosen activity should be safe for children and families.

Family Services

The primary outcome of family services is to provide support to family members as they work to strengthen their family unit and to improve the quality of their daily lives. The program offers families a comprehensive social services program with family service advocates that serve as a link to available resources in the community to meet basic needs and parenting challenges faced by families.

Family Partnership Agreements

The family can determine what family services will be provided through the individualized family partnership agreement process with the help of the family service advocates. The process is designed to support you and your family in identifying your strengths, interests, and goals. This includes writing down strategies for the parent and FSAs, determining resources needed and timelines for achieving goals.

All family goals are categorized according to the seven HS Parent Family Engagement Outcomes in the following areas:

- Family Wellbeing – Families are Safe, Healthy, and have Increased Financial Stability
- Building knowledge of Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Building knowledge of Families as Lifelong Educators
- Parents as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community resources and better utilize available resources.

- Participate in leadership development as Families as Advocates and Leaders

Staff Relations and Communication

KAF Inc. HS/EHS believes parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We strive to create mutual respect between parents and staff and to develop a partnership for the child's benefit.

Please be aware of the following opportunities which will strengthen your relationship with program staff and support your child's progress:

- Centers are open to families during all business hours.
- Parents may expect cheerful greetings from classroom staff daily and an attentive ear to specific concerns and instructions.
- Parents will contact the center to let them know the child will be absent.
- Program staff will send notes and information about your child, including the EHS daily record, incident reports, and events of the day.
- Daily contact with staff during drop-off and pick-up times, home visits, and parent/teacher conferences.
- Home activities are sent by the classroom teacher to help parents reinforce their child's concepts and skills.
- Bulletin boards and the KAF Inc. Website www.kafhs.org are important sources of current center and program-wide information.

Staff record daily notes/anecdotal observations concerning each child's developmental progress, social skills, and any other incidents that may be helpful when planning the curriculum or sharing progress reports with parents. As the parent, you are welcome to see these notes at any time.

In the Early Head Start classrooms, staff will record and share information daily about the child's bottle and food intake, introduction of new foods, diaper changes, and developmental milestones like crawling, rolling over, etc. Parents will also want to provide information to the teacher daily as well regarding when the child last ate, how they slept, and any other observations of development the parent has noticed that they want the teacher to be aware.

Food and Nutrition Services

During enrollment, you will complete a Nutrition Screening or Assessment which includes eating patterns, cultural and religious preferences, and special dietary concerns. An Individual Health Care Plan (IHP) required for the following (Additional documentation may be necessary):

- Food Allergies
- Food Intolerances
- Nutritional issues

Infant teachers will work closely with you and your doctor (if needed) to introduce solid foods. The teacher will work with you to introduce one new food at a time, allowing sufficient time before adding the next new food, to determine if allergies occur.

Allergy

An Individual Health Care Plan is needed for any food allergies, intolerance, and menu modifications. An Individual Health Care Plan (IHP) and the Emergency Care Plan (ECP) are necessary when a child requires an Epi-Pen or medication due to food allergy reactions. Both IHP & ECP forms must be obtained from the physician and require parental signatures.

Meals

Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are provided for children enrolled in the centers. Meals and snacks are planned to meet all federal nutrition standards as outlined under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Infants may not yet be eating on a schedule they are fed on demand. Baby receiving a bottle is held when fed and not be put in a crib with a bottle and bottles will not be propped. Children of any age will not be placed in restrictive chairs such as walkers, or bouncy chairs during mealtimes or any other time while participating in the program.

Meals and snacks are all served family-style. In the event of a pandemic, staff in the classroom will plate children's meals/snacks. As a part of family-style meal service and good early childhood education practices, classroom staff and volunteers sit at the tables with children, eat the same foods as the children, and converse with the children during mealtime. Toddlers and preschool-age children will be offered child-sized chairs and sit around a table while eating. Family Style Meal Service consists of:

- Wash their hands before meals
- Setting tables for meals
- Self-help skills such as pouring & serving
- Meals are a pleasant social experience
- Cleaning up

Children are also encouraged to taste new foods (but never forced) and invited to try all of the foods served.

Parents are always welcome to eat with their children when they volunteer in the classrooms at the centers. Parents should notify the staff in advance to ensure enough food is prepared. Parents are required to follow the same CACFP guidelines. The following food and/or drinks are not allowed:

- Coffee
- Sodas • Tea
- Snack food, chips, candy, etc. into the classroom.

Breast Milk

There will be a designated private, comfortable area for mothers choosing to breastfeed their child. The program will provide a refrigerator for parents to store pumped breast milk for their use. Staff is to ensure containers of breast milk or formula are dated, clearly labeled with the child's name, and used only for the intended child.

Food and Celebrations

Please **DO NOT** bring food to school to serve in the classroom. This includes both foods made at home and purchased from a grocery store or restaurant.

Food served at celebrations will be healthy and nutritious. No candy, chips, icings, sweetened drinks, punch-or soda pop allowed.

A potluck planned for family nights or socialization activities after operational hours is allowed. Parents will be responsible for their children and can choose what their child consumes.

Health, Safety, and Emergency Services and Procedures

The goal of health services is that each child receives ongoing, continuous health care. Promotion of good health and preventative healthcare involves children, parents, and all staff.

A medical professional who has examined the child within the past year, indicating the child can take part in the childcare program, must sign the Medical Requirement Form to be in the family file at the center within one week after the date of admission.

KAF HS/EHS is to ensure that physical exams, dental exams, vision, hearing, and nutritional assessments are completed within 45 calendar days of entry into the program. These services are updated according to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program of the Medicaid agency of the state.

Through the KAF HS/EHS program, a system is established to involve the parents in accessing needed medical and dental health services for their child, to track and report completion of needed services, and to identify health concerns to be addressed through individualized plans for follow-up and treatment.

In the event of a Pandemic:

We will be following the latest guidance from the local, state, regional and national entities.

Emergencies/ Emergency Contacts / Emergency Preparedness Plan

For your child's well-being, it is critical that we always have up-to-date emergency contact information for your family in our files. In case of an emergency, we must know how to reach you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Please provide any changes in your personal or emergency contacts to your family service advocate or center supervisor to ensure that we always have the most current information.

Contact your program to learn more about the emergency preparedness procedures they will follow in case of an emergency.

The operations Emergency Preparedness Plan must specify how children younger than 24 months of age, children who have limited mobility or otherwise may need assistance will be evacuated and relocated to a designated safe area or temporary shelter in the event of an emergency. A copy of the emergency preparedness plan is provided to parents.

KAF Inc. HS/EHS centers follow a schedule for monthly fire drills with the children. In the event of a Pandemic, KAF Inc. HS/EHS Inc. Program will be following and updating the Emergency Preparedness Plan, according to the latest information and guidance from the local, state, regional and national entities.

Daily Health Check

KAF HS/EHS teachers and teacher aides conduct an informal daily health check of each child as soon as possible before the child enters the classroom. They will check for changes in appearance or behavior (lethargy or drowsiness), skin rashes, itching, complaints of not feeling well, and other signs of illness. You will be contacted regarding any immediate concern.

In a Pandemic, upon arrival, KAF Staff must conduct the initial screening at the drop-off site, including taking each child's temperature and assessing their health.

Sickness, Exclusion Policy, and Infectious Diseases

HS-124 Short Term-Long Term Exclusion Policy – KAF, Inc. HS/EHS Program will not deny entry to any eligible child, nor exclude any enrolled child from program participation solely based on his/her health care needs or medication requirements. Unless keeping the child in care poses a significant risk to the health and safety of the child or anyone in contact with the child. KAF has the right to act on a case-by-case basis, dependent on extenuating circumstances.

Parents are to notify program staff when not sending their child due to illness or infectious disease.

If your child is at the center, staff will contact you, or the emergency contacts you have provided will be contacted and asked to decide to take your child home if they show symptoms of illness. Your child will be taken to the “Get Well Area” until you, the parent, or the emergency contact person comes to the center to pick up your child.

If your child is injured or becomes severely ill and you cannot be contacted immediately, we will make sure that appropriate medical attention is given until you can be reached.

KAF HS/EHS reserves the right to send your child home and require a note from your family's health care provider, if needed, before readmitting your child into the center if he/she has been sick.

Children should always see a medical provider for diagnosis, local exclusion regulations, and release. KAF Head Start/ Early Head Start follows state childcare licensing guidelines for symptoms of illness that require short-term exclusion from services and the requirements for when a child may return. Your child's teacher may provide you with the complete listing of signs and symptoms of state childcare licensing and the Health Department of the State Health Services.

Upon readmission, your child must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and may return to the center. KAF, Inc. will take all precautions necessary to ensure the safety of staff and children.

Immunizations

Immunizations and immunization records must be as current as medically possible, not only to protect your child but also to comply with state childcare licensing regulations. Your family service advocate will support you in your efforts to keep your child current with his/her immunizations. When your child receives an immunization, please share the information with your family service advocate, who will keep a copy of it in your child's file.

TB Screening Policy and Procedure

KAF Inc. Head Start / Early Head Start Program will admit children by local, county, and or state requirements for Tuberculosis Screenings. The current Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirement for Child Care Facilities does not require a TB Screen test.

Staff Screening Policy and Procedure

In accordance with Performance Standard 1302.93 (a), KAF HS, requires each staff member and regular volunteer to have an initial health examination including tuberculosis screening and a periodic re-examination (as recommended by their health care provider or as mandated by State, or local laws) so as to assure that they do not suffer because of communicable diseases, poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others. KAF, INC., will defer to the requirements of state and local law to define the nature and extent of initial and periodic health examinations as recommended by their health care provider for KAF, INC., employees. At a minimum, initial and periodic health examinations, including screening for tuberculosis, will be required of all KAF HS employees. It is not possible for initial health examinations to test for all communicable diseases that might pose a significant risk to the health or safety of others. Therefore, employees must recognize that being in the workplace with an infectious disease creates a substantial risk to others. Any employee who becomes aware that he/she has active tuberculosis or a communicable disease that poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others must immediately discuss the condition with the Program Director to determine if the risk can be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation. If the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation, eligible employees may be placed on Sick Leave (SL), Annual Leave (AL), and FMLA (if eligible), until a medical release is submitted to the Program Director, reassigned to another position or terminated from employment.

Pandemic/Epidemic Additional Requirements

During a Pandemic/Epidemic staff the following additional requirements include but not limited to:

- Staff will be screened daily before entering their workplace.
- Staff will require more frequent and consistent hand washing and the sanitizing of common areas in their assigned workspace as often as possible.
- All staff will be required to wear PPE as mandated by the Local and State health Authority and agency policy.
- Staff showing COVID-19 symptoms, as defined by the CDC, will be evaluated by their respective supervisor (s) and instructed accordingly. Immediate Supervisors will notify HR of any staff who have any COVID-19 symptoms while at the center.
- Depending on the severity of the situation a decision and approval of CEO/Head Start Director may be made regarding the status of center operations.

Administration and Storage of Medication

Please inform staff of any medications for your child and complete appropriate forms and permissions for medication administration. Medications to control fever will not be administered by program staff. Please keep children home who are ill.

All medication (including over-the-counter medicines) needed while your child is in the center will be administered by trained program staff and require the written consent of the parent and an Individual Health Care Plan (IHP) signed by a health care provider (for all medication). All medicine (both prescription and over-the-counter) must be in the original, labeled container with the child's name, expiration date, and dosage/instructions on it. Dosages and times of medication administration will be recorded and initialed by the staff member. Medication must be signed in by the parent/guardian each day it's brought to the center.

The KAF HS medication policy and procedures serve as the minimum requirement. If the state or local requirements are more rigorous than the program, those shall prevail.

The administration of medicines at KAF HS centers is limited to:

Prescribed medications and over-the-counter medications ordered by a health care provider for a particular child, with the written permission of the parents or legal guardian, and the IHP signed by the primary care provider and the parent.

Sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper creams, and petroleum jelly will not be administered without the written permission of the parents or legal guardian and an IHP signed by the primary care provider and parent.

Note: Initial or first-time doses of medications must be given by the parent at home and WILL NOT be given by center staff.

Parents are to inform staff of the date of any medications given to their child before they leave the child at the center. Staff will notify parents of any medications given while at the center.

Staff will keep a record of all medications administered while a child is at the KAF HS program. All medications kept at the center will be in a locked box away from children's access at all times. All empty or unused medication containers are returned to the parent.

Rescue medications are not locked up. However, they must be kept out of children's reach and be accessible to staff at all times, including when children are on the playground or on a field trip. Administration of rescue medications, whether in the classroom, on the playground, or on field trips, staff must be trained in the administration of such medications following state or local regulations for training.

Hand Washing

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. KAF Inc. HS/EHS staff, volunteers, and children use proper hand washing techniques throughout the day, including when they arrive each day. Parents are encouraged to reinforce proper hand washing at home. The following is the hand washing procedure used by KAF HS:

- Use liquid soap, disposable towels, and running water
- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply liquid soap
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces for 10 seconds.
Continue rubbing hands 20 more seconds.
- Rinse hands until they are free of soap
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper towel or air dryer
- Shut off the water with a paper towel

In the event of a Pandemic:

We will be following the latest guidance from the local, state, regional and national entities.

Accidents and First Aid

KAF Inc. HS/EHS staff have both first aid and child CPR training to rely on if there is a serious injury to a child. All centers have first aid kits well supplied and kept in a designated location.

Minor accidents requiring first aid will be treated by the teacher or by staff certified in first aid. If a child sustains any head injury, bump or broken skin, you or your emergency contact will be notified by the teacher, family service advocates or center director.

We keep incident reports for each child. If your child gets a minor scratch, bump or bruise while in school, we will note it on the incident report, give you a copy that day, and put a copy in your child's file. All incident reports are kept confidential.

If a serious accident occurs in the center or on the playground, a staff member will notify you or your emergency contact. If necessary first aid is sufficient, and the child can be moved, we ask that you transport your child to a doctor or emergency room. The center director will call ahead to alert the emergency room or doctor with pertinent information.

The child transported by an emergency medical vehicle will be accompanied by a staff member if allowed by the EMS team, if you or your emergency contact is not there. We will let you or your emergency contact know immediately where your child is being taken. **Balloons** are not used in KAF Inc. HS/EHS because they can be choking hazards.

Authorization for Emergency Medical or Dental Treatment

In case an emergency occurs, and you or one of your emergency contacts cannot be located at the time of an emergency, KAF Inc. HS/EHS requires you to sign an emergency contact form with authorization for medical/dental care. The consent form is used to seek treatment until you arrive.

Dental Care

Dental care and hygiene are an important focus of Head Start health services. Preschool-age children in center-based programs are provided with toothbrushes and taught to brush their teeth after lunchtime at the center. In the Early Head Start program, infants' and toddlers' mouths and teeth are gently cleaned using age-appropriate methods.

In the event of a Pandemic: Teaching staff will be rotating the children to brush their teeth after breakfast, lunch, or snacks.

Fire Drills

KAF HS/EHS holds monthly fire drills and posts evacuation plans. Please do not be alarmed if a fire drill occurs while you are in a classroom. We suggest that families practice fire and other safety drills at home so that all family members are familiar with what to do in case of a fire.

Gang Free Zone

Parents or guardians will be informed under the Texas Penal Code during parent orientation about Gang Free Zone. The Gang Free Zone states that any area of activity within 1000 feet (about 304.8 m) of the center is a violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law. Gang-Free posters are posted on the parent bulletin boards at each center.

Child Abuse and Neglect Identification and Reporting

KAF HS/EHS staff is responsible for promoting the healthy and safe development of the children in our program. It is our goal to promote the healthy family functioning of families enrolled in Head Start.

Being a parent can bring much joy, but at times it can be a tough job, and sometimes it becomes overwhelming. If you feel that you or someone in your family needs help to keep your child safe, talk to a Head Start staff member so they can help you find assistance to keep your child safe. Together we can all make the world a safer place for children.

If Parents and Staff suspect child abuse and neglect, they may call the child abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or online at www.txabusehotline.org.

Identification and Reporting

The staff that recognizes the signs and symptoms of reportable events related to abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in the program (i.e., observing the signs they were trained to identify) is required by law to report to the appropriate state agency. The staff does not need permission to report, they are mandated by the law.

To protect children, KAF Inc. requires mandated annual training for all HS/EHS employees including parents on prevention, identification, and reporting child abuse and neglect. Training for staff and parents address recognizing the warning sign and symptoms that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect and factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse and neglect. Risk Factors include:

- Domestic violence
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Untreated mental illness
- Stress and parenting skills

Methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect include:

- Early Pre-natal care for increased chances of a healthy baby
- Assistance parents in ensuring children stay on an age-appropriate well-child schedule
- Early intervention of possible health concerns
- Identify risk factors early and refer families for assistance

KAF Inc. will support and assist the parents and families in cases where the child is a victim of abuse or neglect. KAF Inc. FSAs will make appropriate referrals to link families to local community resources and support groups available.

Reportable situations include, but are not limited to:

- Signs of malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Unexplained bruises, burns, or welts or explanations that don't fit the injury
- The child appears frightened of a parent or caregiver
- Pain, bleeding, redness, or swelling in the anal or genital area
- Sexual play with toys, self, or others that are not age appropriate
- Knowledge of sex that is not age appropriate
- Extremes in behavior ranging from overly aggressive to overly passive
- Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development
- Abandonment of a child by a parent or guardian
- The child is constantly belittled, berated, or blamed by the parent

Local Licensing Information with Contact Information

Kids Are First Inc. HS/EHS center have a licensing bulletin displaying the childcare facility's publicly accessible records allowing parents to review upon visiting the center. Parents can receive inspection reports or parents may go online at www.dfps.state.tx.us and obtain information on accessing the childcare facility's online compliance history.

Licensing Contact Information:

Center	Licensing Address	Licensing Number
Carrizo Springs & Pearsall	3635 SE Military Dr. San Antonio, TX 78223	(210) 337-3399
Seco Mines, Las Colonias, LBJ and Rosita Valley	112 Joe Carper Dr. Uvalde, TX. 78801	(830) 591-4343

Or parents may go online at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Services Provided for Children with Disabilities, Developmental Delays, or At-Risk – for Developmental Delays

KAF Inc. uses the motto "children first" to articulate the position of viewing a child as a child first (and not as their disability would describe them). Children with disabilities, developmental delays or at-risk for delays are more like their peers than different, and it is important that the child is seen from that perspective. KAF Inc. employs early childhood education approaches based on the best available research and practices in the field to benefit all children enrolled in the program.

Kids Are First, Inc. will ensure all enrolled children including children with disabilities, and their families receive all applicable program services delivered in the least restrictive environment and that they fully participate in all program activities.

KAF Inc. as an inclusive early education program, actively recruits children with disabilities. A parent who suspects the child may have a disability or delay in any of the following areas, be sure to tell a KAF Inc. staff member.

- Hearing
- Speech
- Vision
- Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Mental Development
- Learning
- Health
- Other

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Head Start programs are to develop collaborative relationships and written agreements with the Local Education Agency which provides services to children three to five years of age with disabilities (Section 619) and the Early Intervention Program for children birth through two years of age (Part C), Public Law 105–17.

Inclusion in an Early Head Start or Head Start setting provides children with disabilities an opportunity to learn, to play, and to live with nondisabled children. It helps all children develop healthy attitudes about each other and themselves and teaches them lessons of friendship, compassion and caring that they will carry for their whole lives.

KAF, Inc. operations are public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III. To learn more, visit [https:// www.ada.gov/resources/child-care-centers/](https://www.ada.gov/resources/child-care-centers/). If you believe that such an operation may be practicing discrimination in violation of Title III, you may call the ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Mental Health Services

Mental Health is an essential part of well-being. It is foundational to the ability to think, learn and grow. For young children, the term "mental health" is synonymous with social and emotional development. A definition of early childhood mental health is summed up as: The developing capacity of children from birth through age five to:

- Form close and secure relationships with adults and peers
- Experience, regulate, and express their emotions in appropriate ways
- To explore their environments, try new things, and learn – all in the context of their family, culture, and community

All aspects of development, including children's social and emotional competence, are essential outcomes of the KAF Inc. HS/EHS program. KAF Inc. provides mental health services through staff or consultants licensed or certified with experience and expertise in serving young children and their families. See the Guidance and Discipline section of this handbook for more information on Mental Health Consultation in KAF.

Confidentiality of Records

Records of Head Start/Early Head Start children are confidential. The center director in your center, your family services advocate, your child's teacher, speech therapist, mentor teacher, and other approved staff are the only individuals who have access to records.

KAF Inc. HS/EHS takes the position allowing the parent or legal guardian of the enrolled child the authority to inspect, amend records, and sign documents relating to his or her child's Head Start services. Unless the parent does not have the authority under applicable state or federal law governing, and in a situation where parents are not living together, either parent not legally barred is to have access to the child's record.

Authorization to Release Confidential Information

KAF Inc. HS/EHS will always ask before we send any information about your child's personally identifiable information (PII) or your family to any other agency. A Consent for the Release of Confidential Information will need to be signed by a parent providing consent to release confidential information.

Exceptions to the parental consent rule include:

- Information required by a subpoena or other legal process;
- Posing an immediate threat or danger to an individual or the community;
- Information disclosed as part of a statutory or legal obligation, particularly the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect and related investigative activities; or,
- Official representatives of funding, auditing, licensing, investigative and other regulatory agencies are entitled to conduct program reviews and audit activities.

Declining or Refusing Services

In the event you wish to deny any services after the staff has explained the benefits of those services, you may be asked to sign documentation of your refusal or the staff will document in your child's file your verbal refusal. Staff will always try to share with you any services that will be of benefit to your child and family.

Parent Visiting the Center and Community Volunteers

All parents are welcome to visit and examine the center facility during its hours of operation without advance approval. Parents visiting the center, upon arrival, must report to the Center Director, sign in, and then sign out upon departure.

All Parents are encouraged to become fully engaged in the program in a variety of ways. For instance, you may:

Observe your child's classroom at any time.

Have input into your child's daily experience by identifying specific goals and objectives for your child.

Volunteer in the classroom or other parts of the program as often and for as long as you wish.

Encourage friends and other family members to share their time and talents.

When parents volunteer, their time volunteering is counted as part of the local "match" required to receive funding to run the program referred to as In-kind.

All volunteers go through a training session before assisting in classrooms. If you plan to volunteer more than eight (8) hours per week regularly, a health exam, TB-test, criminal background check, and complete the pre-employment affidavit form (form #2912) for Applicants at the childcare operations, as required by the Texas Health and Human Services licensing department, is required.

In the event of a Pandemic, parents and community volunteers may not have the opportunity to volunteer at the center, depending on the pandemic crisis.

KAF Inc. Standard of Conduct

It is the policy of Kids Are First Inc. (KAF) that staff, parents, consultants, contractors and volunteers will abide by the program standard of conduct that staff, parents, consultants, contractors and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior; following standards of conduct are set out in Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.90 (c) (1) (d) (1);

- Staff, parents, consultants, contractors and volunteers do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not:
- Use corporal punishment;
- Use isolation to discipline a child;
- Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth
- Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;
- Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate child;
- Use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;
- Physically abuse a child.
- Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, or,
- Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward
- Ensure staff, parents, consultants, contractors, and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping by gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;
- Require staff, parents, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with HS Performance Standards and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws;
- No child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, parents, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care.

Prohibited Conduct: This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. There are other situations that based upon the circumstances, could result in disciplinary actions including immediate termination.

- Conduct that interferes with the operations of the program.
- Failure to report an accident regardless of the severity of the same.
- When on duty, failing to devote full time and best efforts to the performance of assigned work or interfering with the performance of work by other employees.
- Insubordination, including failure to follow KAF Inc. policies and procedures and refusal to accept direction provided by the employee's immediate supervisor or program management staff.
- Disclosure of confidential or proprietary KAF Inc. Information to an unauthorized person.
- Unauthorized use or removal of KAF Inc. equipment or property or property of another employee, a client, or a visitor.
- Failure to meet KAF performance expectations.
- Refusing to cooperate with any investigation or audit concerning the operation of the program.
- Excessive absenteeism or abuse of KAF Inc. leave policies, including unauthorized absences and abandonment of work area while on duty.
- Inappropriate engagement of Policy Council members regarding staff issues.

- Reporting on working with the smell of smoke on clothing or body that can have a second and third-hand effect on young children and adults.

Certain acts are severe enough to warrant immediate termination of employment for a single offense, without eligibility for rehire. Such actions include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Engaging in behavior determined by KAF Inc. to constitute discrimination or harassment.*
- Disregard for KAF Inc safety or security rules
- Aiding or assisting any person in gaining unauthorized entrance to or exit from KAF Inc. premises or vehicle. Illegal drugs include those not prescribed to the user.
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs on KAF Inc. premises. Illicit drugs include those not prescribed to the user.
- I agree to never be under the influence of alcohol during work hours; reporting to work under the influence of illegal drugs; or reporting to work under the effect of prescribed medications that cause impairment and not notifying the supervisor in advance.
- Engaging in acts of fraud, theft or sabotage.
- Engaging in acts of violence -or threats of violence -towards other employees, clients or visitors.
- Bringing or possessing firearms, weapons, or any other hazardous or dangerous devices on KAF Inc. property or to work activities.
- Smoking anywhere on program premises or in owned or leases vehicles of KA F Inc. or its partners.
- Criminal conviction of an offense designated under state law as excluding an individual from KA F Inc. employment, including violations of any state, federal, local or tribal statute prohibiting child abuse, child sexual abuse and /or neglect, assault, battery, domestic assault or any other crimes involving violence or threats of violence.
- Criminal, immoral or indecent conduct on KAF Inc. premises or property.
- Misrepresentation or falsification of employment application in any KAF Inc. records.
- Falsification of time records or recording time for another employee or allowing another employee to record your time without management authorization.
- Falsification of verification of an application for enrollment in any way will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

KAF HS reserves the right to remove and restrict access to KAF HS facilities to parents and volunteers who violate the above guidelines for classroom conduct and standards of conduct.

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. There are other situations that, based upon the circumstances, could result in disciplinary actions, including immediate termination. KAF Inc. reserves the right to exercise disciplinary action (including immediate termination) whenever necessary, at the sole discretion of KAF Inc., and will decide what disciplinary action is appropriate based upon the severity of an employee's actions.

It is important to understand that compliance with KAF Inc. policies is strictly enforced. If you are not sure how to handle an issue, ask before you act. Employees should always behave professionally with a positive, supportive attitude towards KAF Inc.

KAF HS reserves the right to remove and restrict access to KAF HS facilities to parents and volunteers who violate the above guidelines for classroom conduct and standards of conduct.

Parent Notification

Anytime there is a change in enrollment, standards, policies, or procedures that may affect you or your child, you will be notified at a parent meeting and through a written notice. Each family must sign and date an acknowledgment form addressing the changes.

Procedure for Parent Review of Standards

The center must also have available a copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and federal Head Start Performance Standards at the center for a parent to view upon request. A copy of the most current licensing report is posted on the center bulletin board in your state.

Program Governance

KAF HS programs include parents and community members as active decision-makers in policies, procedures, and other important issues that affect your child's education and how the program operates. This process is called "shared governance." If you are interested, you can become a member of the

- Policy Council
- Parent Center Committee
- Health Advisory Committee

Participating on the Parent Committee or Policy Council of a Head Start program is a privilege and excellent opportunity to serve your child, program, and community and to learn and grow as an individual.

Policy Council members cannot be KAF Inc. HS/EHS employees, nor can they be related to any KAF Inc. HS/EHS employee by blood, marriage or domestic partnership. There is a lifetime limit of Five (5) one-year terms to serve on the Policy Council.

KAF HS Board of Directors (Governing Board)

The KAF Inc. HS Board of Directors has the administrative and fiscal responsibility for the KAF HS program. As the governing board for the program, the KAF Inc. HS Board of Directors is a partner in the shared governance of the local KAF Inc. HS/EHS program.

Rights of Parents or Guardian – Chapter 42 – The Human Resource Code Section 42.04271

A parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

1. Enter and examine the child-care facility during the facility's hours of operation without advance notice;
2. Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
3. Receive inspection reports for the child care facility and information about how to access the facility's online compliance history; 4. Obtain a copy of the child care policies and procedures;
5. Review at the request of the parent or guardian the facility's: staff training records and any in-house training curriculum used by the facility;
6. Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
7. Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:
 - A. Video recordings of the alleged incident are available.
 - B. The parent or guardian of the child does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and
 - C. The parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives written notice from the facility before allowing a parent to inspect a recording;
8. Have the child care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent or guardian's child;
9. Be provided the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
10. File a complaint against the child care facility by contacting the local Child Care Regulation office; and
11. Be free from any retaliatory action by the child care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

Complaint Procedure

KAF Inc. HS/EHS is open to hearing your positive feedback and suggestions. KAF Inc. HS/EHS also wants to be sure that we respond to any concerns or complaints that you may have about any part of the program.

If you have a concern about your child's development, please discuss it with his/her teacher right away. Including any concerns about behavior, activities, health, or emotional well-being. The more information that you share with your child's teacher, the better we can care for your child and help him/her develop his/her learning and life skills.

We are committed to working closely with you and your child to create a positive learning experience. Please share your comments and concerns with KAF Inc. HS/EHS staff. If you are dissatisfied with any part of the program;

- Have a conversation first with your child's teacher or with the individual with whom you have an issue. Hopefully, together we can resolve the issue just by talking about it openly, courteously, and respectfully. If you still are not satisfied after that conversation, go to the next step.
- Discuss the issue with the center manager and complete the complaint form. If that conversion still does not resolve the issue, go to the next step.
- Contact the director of operations to discuss and address the concern. If that conversion still does not address the issue, go to the next step.
- Contact Program CEO to discuss and resolve the concern. The program CEO's decision is final.

We encourage you to try to resolve the problem through neutral, polite, and open conversations with the staff members involved and their supervisors.

This entire complaint process should be in a mutually respectful way. We respect your rights as parents, and we ask that you also respect the program staff. KAF Inc. HS/EHS program administrators will not tolerate staff who behave disrespectfully toward parents or parents' blatant disrespect of any staff member. Disrespectful staff shall be disciplined appropriately. Collaborative Approach: Head Start emphasizes collaboration between parents and staff. If there are issues with parental behavior, programs typically aim to address them through constructive dialogue and support services.

Kids Are First, Inc.

PARENT COMPLAINT FORM

Name of person filing this concern: _____

Address: _____
Mailing address City State Zip Code

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Please describe your concerns: (who, when, where, why, etc.)

Please state the action that you think would resolve this concern:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please deliver it to the CEO/Program Director

Kids Are First, Inc.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP) DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete all sections.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

KAF HS Program serving: _____ Center Name: _____

Please describe your specific discrimination complaint:

Please list names, titles and business addresses of persons who may have knowledge of your concern.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Kids Are First, Inc.

PARENT/STAFF OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK

Staff Acknowledgment

The employee acknowledges that:

I have received a copy and will thoroughly read the Kids Are First, Inc. Parent / Staff Operational Handbook. I agree to comply with the information in the handbook and policies and procedures contained herein. I understand that the handbook and its related policies and procedures do not cover every situation that may arise during my employment. Further, I understand that the local state childcare licensing agency may have stricter requirements that must be followed, and it is my responsibility as a KAF HS / EHS employee to have a copy of these regulations and be familiar with them. Furthermore, I will read and be familiar with the KAF HS/EHS Parent Staff Operational Handbook so that I am knowledgeable about what has been shared with parents and able, as an employee, to explain matters in the handbook to parents and comply with them myself.

Before working directly with children as an HS/EHS employee, I participated in the orientation associated with the KAF, Inc. HS/EHS Parent / Staff Operational Handbook.

Name of Employee: _____

(Please print legibly)

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Detach this page from the handbook, read, sign, and turn in.

Kids Are First, Inc.
PARENT/STAFF OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK
Parent Acknowledgment Page

My initials and signature below acknowledge that I have:

1. Been accepted by KAF HS/EHS for my child to receive services in the local Head Start or Early Head Start program, and services have been explained to me. _____
2. I can request a copy of the KAF HS Parent/Staff Operational Handbook and have been provided the QR Code for electronic accessibility of the Parent/Staff Operational Handbook. _____
3. I have been informed of the Confidentiality of Records & Authorization to Release Confidential Information Policy. _____
4. I have been informed that the KAF HS/EHS program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). _____
5. I have been informed of the Complaint Procedures of KAF HS/EHS. _____
6. I have been informed of Parental Rights contained in Public Law 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). _____
7. Been informed that KAF HS/EHS staff are required by law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate agency in the state. _____
8. Been informed that KAF HS/EHS does not provide transportation. _____
9. Been informed that KAF HS does not participate in water activities that include swimming pools and wading/splashing pools. _____
10. Received a copy of Building for the Future and WIC Information. _____
11. Received a copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan. _____
12. Agree to abide by Head Start Standards of Conduct for Staff, Consultants, and Volunteers. _____
13. Policy on HS-124 Short-Term/Long-Term Exclusion. _____
14. Received a written copy of Parents' Rights as a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at this facility. (Licensing form 2987 or Form 2987-S Spanish or English) _____
15. Obtain a copy of the Parent/Staff Operational Handbook; you can access the handbook with the QR code.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Your Child's Name: _____

Center Child Attends: _____

Staff Signature: _____



Parent's Rights

This form provides the required information per Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code (HRC) Section 42.04271.

Directions: Parents will review these rights upon enrolling their child.

Rights of Parent or Guardian

A parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

- (1) enter and examine the child care facility during the facility's hours of operation without advanced notice;
- (2) review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
- (3) receive inspection reports for the child care facility and information about how to access the facility's online compliance history;
- (4) obtain a copy of the child care facility's policies and procedures;
- (5) review, at the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:
 - (A) staff training records; and
 - (B) any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility;
- (6) review the child care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- (7) inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:
 - (A) video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
 - (B) the parent or guardian of the child does not retain any part of the video recording depicting a child that is not their own; and
 - (C) the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives written notice from the facility before allowing a parent to inspect a recording;
- (8) have the child care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;
- (9) be provided the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- (10) file a complaint against the child care facility by contacting the local Child Care Regulation office; and
- (11) be free from any retaliatory action by the child care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

I acknowledge I have received a written copy of my rights as a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at this facility.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Resources

Facility Information and Online Compliance History: <http://txchildcaresearch.org>

Child Care Regulation Contact Information: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care/contact-child-care-regulation>

Edited: 8.25.2025
Revised 8-1-
2024 Edited 10-
7-2024