



Early Head Start/Head Start Staff Manual

We are:

Kind

Safe

Positive



Dear Early Childhood Services Staff,

CEO's Early Head Start/Head Start program creates partnerships and develops opportunities for social and economic growth and empowerment in individuals, families and communities. We are a federally funded program that provides comprehensive early childhood services to children and families throughout Rensselaer County. We promote school readiness of children ages birth to five by supporting the development of the whole child. CEO's Head Start programs support children's growth and development in a positive learning environment through a variety of services, which include:

- **Early learning:** Children's readiness for school is fostered through individualized learning experiences. Through relationships with adults, play, and planned and spontaneous instruction, children grow in many aspects of development. Children progress in social skills and emotional well-being, along with language and literacy learning, and concept development
- **Health:** All children receive health and development screenings, nutritious meals, oral health and mental health support. We connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure that children are receiving the services they need.
- **Family well-being:** Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals. We support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning and development.

We are very excited to have you be part of our program and begin the school year with us!

To learn more about CEO please visit us at : <https://www.ceoempowers.org/>

You can also follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ceocap>

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 518-272-6012 ext. 209.

Here is to a great 2021-2022 school year!

Tia Nunziato

Tia Nunziatio

Early Childhood Services Director



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Early Childhood Services Locations and Collaborations

Director of Early Childhood Services: Tia Nunziato (518) 272-6012 Ext. 209

Community Resource Center Annex

2320 Fifth Avenue

Troy, NY 12180

Contact: Heather Gallerie

Phone: 518-272-6012 Ext. 272

Rensselaer Family Resource Center (RFRC)

1641 Third Street

Rensselaer, NY 12144

Center Manager: Tracy Baker

Phone: 518-694-9915

Hours of Operation: Mon – Fri 8:00am – 2:00pm

Community Resource Center (CRC)

2328 Fifth Avenue

Troy, NY 12180

Center Manager: Teresa Raso

Phone: 518-272-6012 Ext. 276

Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri 8:00am - 4:00pm

Schodack Family Resource Center (SFRC)

24 New Road

Nassau, NY 12123

Center Manager: Melissa Fuss

Phone: 518-766-4120

Hours of Operation: Mon – Fri 8:00am – 2:00pm

Urban Training Center (UTC)

2347 Fifth Avenue

Troy, NY 12180

Center Manager: Ashley Saupp

Phone: 518-272-6012 Ext. 417

Hours of Operation: Mon – Fri 8:00am – 2:00pm

Lansingburgh Family Resource Center (LFRC)

754 Fourth Avenue

Troy, (Lansingburgh) NY 12182

Contact: Jason Sadlemire (HS) or Dana Flores (EHS)

Phone: 518-235-9035

Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri 8:00am 2:00pm

Hoosick Falls Family Resource Center (HFFRC)

75 River Road

Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

Center Manager: Carlee Fiorillo

Phone: 518-686-5045

Hours of Operation: Mon – Fri 8:00am – 2:00pm



Early Childhood Services Locations and Collaborations Continued

Please contact Pam Maxstadt for any of the following collaboration sites:

Troy Public School 2

470 10th Street
Troy, NY 12180
(or direct line: 518-271-5410)

Troy Public School 12

475 1st Street
Troy, NY 12180
(or direct line: 518-328-5083)

Hoosic Valley Central School District

2 Pleasant Avenue
Schaghticoke, NY 12154
(or direct line: 518-753-4458)

Rensselaer City School District

25 Van Rensselaer Drive
Rensselaer, NY 12144
(or direct line: 518-436-8561)



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Staff and Support

Please note, because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, services referenced in this handbook may be temporarily unavailable. Please see the center manager for any updates.

Support: On your first day as a CEO staff member, you will be introduced to a lot of new people and information. In CEO's EHS/HS program there is a lot of information to learn and we want to set everyone up for success. During your onboarding experience with us we have supports available to provide you with the tools and information to be successful. If you have any questions, please ask!

Mentors: Mentor teachers are assigned to new staff to be available on an ongoing basis to answer questions, review expectations, policies and procedures, help solve problems, and provide encouragement and support. You will meet with your mentor on an ongoing basis during our orientation period.

Center Managers: The Center Manager/Site Supervisor is your direct supervisor. Each site/center has a site supervisor or Center Manager that oversees the site staff and ensures the daily operation of the location.

Coaching: As part of Practice-Based Coaching, staff will participate in a self-reflection process during the fall, identifying and documenting areas of strength and needed support. Any staff member identified through self-reflection as wanting individualized coaching will be provided with the opportunity to receive coaching.

Teaching and Support Staff: each CEO location has a combination of some or all of the following staff members: Infant and Toddler Teachers, Head Start Teachers, Head Start Teacher Assistants, Universal Pre-Kindergarten Teachers, Custodians, Cooking Staff, Nurses, Foster Grandparents, Family Advocates, Program Assistants and Substitutes. All staff are knowledgeable and have a wealth of information to offer. Please make sure to reach out to any of the staff at your building if you have a question or are in need of support.

Content Area Managers: Content Area Managers support and monitor the various content areas of the program. Content Area Managers conduct periodic site visits, ensure compliance in each content area, and provide additional support and resources to all staff.



Professional Development / Trainings

CEO Early Childhood Services offers a wide range of training and professional development in order to support and enhance the knowledge of staff. Some typical offerings are:

- In-service training at the beginning of the school year
- First Aid / CPR
- MAT training
- Curriculum Training
- Pyramid Social/Emotional Training
- Behavior Management training
- Infant and Toddler Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Preschool Teacher Assistant Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Professional Development Planning (PDP) and goal setting
- Off -site training based on interest
- Staff will utilize and maintain their Aspire account

Positive

Different Ways the Program Works

Early Head Start

Early Head Start provides, early, continuous and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and pregnant women and their families.

To learn more about Early Head Start please visit the Early Childhood Services and Learning Center at:
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/about-early-head-start-program>

Head Start

Head Start serves children three to five years of age from low-income families. Its aim is to prepare children for success in school through an early learning program that focuses on the entire child.

To learn more about Head Start please visit the Early Childhood Services and Learning Center at:
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/head-start-programs>



Program Options

Center Based – children are provided services in a center or school district classroom five days per week. Breakfast and lunch are provided.

Extended Day- programming is offered from 8:00am-4:00pm at our CRC location for full time, working families.

Home Based – a home visiting program for infants and toddlers that includes weekly 90 - minute home visits, as well as bi-weekly opportunities to participate in family socialization / activities. Home Based includes all the comprehensive services of Early Head Start and Head Start.

Babies in Waiting – a home visiting program for pregnant women providing pre and postnatal education, opportunities to meet other expectant families and information / access to supportive services throughout the community.

Collaboration Classrooms

Universal Pre- Kindergarten- Universal Pre-Kindergarten classrooms for three and four (by December 1st) year old children are located within the Troy, Hoosic Valley, and Rensselaer School Districts.

Integration- Capital District Beginnings is a special education pre–school provider for children ages birth – five. CEO collaborates with Capital District Beginnings to provide support services as well as integrated classrooms for children with special needs. All children designated for the receipt of integration are referred through the Committee on Pre-School Special Education (CPSE).

Education

The CEO Early Childhood program uses a nationally recognized curriculum for teaching young children. The **Creative Curriculum** helps teachers and parents plan each child’s educational growth. The curriculum includes:

- Developmentally appropriate learning goals and guidance on how to use them for the individualization of learning experiences based on children's strengths and needs
- Comprehensive guidance on ongoing child assessment
- Strategies and resources to support parent and family engagement
- Specific adaptations for children with disabilities, suspected delays, or other special needs

What are teaching staff responsible for in classrooms?



- Daily classroom schedule
- Utilizing Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Developmental age appropriate learning experiences
- Activities sent home to promote school readiness and the home to school connection
- Weekly lesson plans and newsletters
- Home Visits and Parent Teacher conferences throughout the school year
- Developmental and social/emotional screening for each child within 45 days of entry into the program:
 - ASQ – developmental screener
 - DECA – social/emotional screener
- Transition planning. CEO will work with each family to make school transitions are as easy as possible. Several activities will take place throughout the year including:
 - Parent meetings and information sessions on various transition topic
 - Transition planning for children moving into a different CEO classroom
 - Teacher and/or Family Advocate home visits
- All teachers are required to use positive reinforcement and redirection as the primary means of discipline.
- All teachers are required to practice confidentiality of family and child information
- (additional requirements not listed above)
- CEO School Readiness Goals are developed in accordance with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, NYS Early Learning Guidelines, staff input, family input, and child assessment from Teaching Strategies GOLD. Goals are reviewed on an annual basis. CEO implements the Pyramid Model of Social and Emotional development as the basis of School Readiness.

School Readiness/Social Emotional Development- School Readiness Goals are the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals. CEO's School Readiness Goals are developed in accordance with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, NYS Early Learning Guidelines, staff input, family input, and child assessment from Teaching Strategies GOLD. Goals are reviewed on an annual basis.

Special Services- Integrated classrooms are present throughout the program and service providers often visit to engage in speech, physical, and / or occupational therapy with the children in our centers. CEO staff complete developmental and social / emotional screeners of every child in program to determine if there may be need for intervention. CEO does not diagnose children, but if you suspect that a child in your classroom may benefit from additional support, please reach out to your Center Manager, Family Advocate, the Preschool/Disabilities Specialist or any appropriate individual to discuss your concerns. A formal referral process must be followed in order for children to be evaluated. CEO Staff work with the families to initiate and support this process, as well as communicate with service providers on a regular basis to ensure consistency for those children who are receiving services.



Safe

Supervision of Children Policy

Safety is the number one priority of the Early Childhood Program. Each staff member is expected to, at all times, maintain the highest level of supervision and safety. Staff are responsible for understanding and applying of the following supervision practices:

- Scanning the classroom environment to be aware of location and whereabouts of children at all times
- Positioning your body to ensure that you are in optimal placement to be able to see all children
- Sweeping the classroom before leaving to ensure that there are no children left behind
- Monitoring and being aware of any areas of the classroom environment that could be areas of vulnerability
- Communicating with classroom staff to ensure that all children are accounted for
- Clearly identifying responsibilities and expectations for all staff members

Counting of Children- All staff working within a classroom are required to immediately know the accurate number of children present in their classrooms at all times.

Completion of the Daily Head Count Sheet- The Teacher of designee is required to complete the head count sheet every half hour and when leaving the classroom or another location (i.e. the classroom to go to the playground, the gross motor room to the classroom, etc.)

All classrooms are subject to “head count sheet” spot checks to ensure compliance.

Mandated Reporter Policy

All CEO Early Childhood Staff are considered mandated reporters under the NYS Social Services Law. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when they are presented with a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment. These reasons may include, but are not limited to, a child verbally reporting an incident or visible signs of abuse or neglect on the child. Staff are responsible for understanding and applying the following mandate reporter practices:

- When calling the public hotline, staff will have the child’s emergency card available. This will enable them to have all contact information ready to provide.
- Immediately upon completion of the call, and if the call was accepted by the hotline, staff will complete the LDSS-2221A form and mail to their regional CPS office.
- Staff will inform their center manager that they made a call to the hotline.
- If staff inform the manager of a concern, but do not call the hotline, or the manager has reason to believe a call was not made; the manager must call the hotline.



- Staff will comply with any and all directives from CPS, local authorities and/or court orders to ensure the child's safety.
- All CEO early childhood staff are fingerprinted and screened through the State Central Registrar (SCR) as a part of pre-employment qualifications. Staff members are fully cleared before they are permitted to work in classrooms or early childhood centers.
- All staff is required to complete mandated reporter training annually.
- Additionally, all new staff are required to complete five-hour, online Foundations of Health and Safety Training within their first three months of employment
- All staff are required to review and stay in compliance with the agency discipline policy, ensuring that they maintain appropriate staff-to-child interactions at all times.

Behavior Management and Discipline Policy

- To ensure the safety, health, and well being of children and staff CEO has developed the following guidance for staff to have a clear understanding of appropriate practices and strategies to implement when interacting with children.
- The approaches staff will utilize are in alignment with the Teaching Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social and Emotional Development of Young Children (<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>).
- Staff will provide nurturing and responsive care to children within quality, supportive environments.
- The use of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden by CEO and OCFS regulations.
- Any discipline measure that may frighten or humiliate a child is strictly forbidden by CEO and OCFS regulations.
- Prohibiting or delaying food as a form of punishment is strictly forbidden by CEO and OCFS regulations.
- Prohibiting or delaying outside time as a form of punishment is strictly forbidden by CEO and OCFS regulations, but may be used as a reward.
- All staff are required to use positive reinforcement and redirection as the primary means of discipline. It is important that staff begin with prevention strategies and look at the classroom environment, setting, schedule, or etc. that may be creating or maintain a child's challenging behavior.
- All children are to be treated in an equal and consistent manner. Discipline measures must be applied equally to all children within the classroom.
- Teachers must use an appropriate tone of voice at all times. Yelling, obvious frustration, and sarcasm are forbidden. Teachers are expected to maintain a calm tone whenever dealing with discipline issues.
- Classroom rules will be developed collaboratively between all classroom staff and children. Rules will be reviewed daily and should be consistent with the pyramid model for social-emotional development.
- Teachers must recognize that certain actions (i.e. rough housing) are a normal part of development. While these actions may require redirection for safety reasons, they do not necessarily require discipline measures.



- Teachers must make children aware that their behavior is inappropriate BEFORE any discipline measure is imposed.
- Teachers must have developmentally appropriate conversations with children prior to, during, and after any discipline measure.
- The use of time-out is restricted. A child may be separated from the group if the teacher accompanies them to discuss the situation.
- A quiet area in the classroom may be used to deescalate the child as long as appropriate materials and supplies are available (i.e. bean bag chairs, books, sensory materials, Pyramid Model strategies including feeling charts, mirrors, etc.).
- Any ongoing behavioral issues must be brought to Education Team's attention. If necessary, mental health support staff will be asked for assistance.
- The use of physical restraint is prohibited.

Release of Children

Families are required to fill out an Emergency Card at the time of enrollment. Time is spent early in the program year getting to know the family members of each child in program.

Parents/guardians/caregivers quickly become familiar to Teachers, Family Advocates and Managers.

When parents/caregivers enter CEO centers to pick a child up the following protocol must be executed:

- Staff will only release children to an individual who are known and/or identified on the child's Emergency Card.
- When any person who is not known to program staff attempts to pick a child up for the first time, the following protocol must be executed:
 - The individual is asked their name and to produce identification before they enter the center.
 - Program staff will then check the child's Emergency Card to determine whether the person has been approved by the child's parent/guardian.
 - If the individual is not listed on the child's Emergency Card, a phone call must be made to a parent/guardian before the child can be released.
 - Staff may accept verbal permission for an unlisted person to pick up from a parent/guardian ONCE. Parent/guardians must then make necessary written changes to the child's Emergency Card.

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OCFS Regulations

As a licensed daycare center, each CEO center must abide by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulations. Listed below are the examples of OCFS regulations that must be in compliance at all times.

- Supervision of Children (**Children cannot be left without competent direct supervision at any time**).



Age of Children	Staff/ Child Maximum Ration (*)	Maximum Group Size (**)
Under 6 weeks	1 : 3	6
6 weeks to 18 months	1 : 4	8
18 months to 36 months	1 : 5	12
3 years	1 : 7	18
4 years	1 : 8	21
5 years	1 : 9	24

*Head Start requires 1: 4 ratio for toddlers

**When children three years of age or older are cared for in mixed age groups, the staff / child ratio and maximum group size applicable to the majority of the children in the group must be followed.

- Garbage receptacles must be covered and cleaned as needed after emptying.
- The following items must be used and stored in such a manner that they are not accessible to children: handbags, backpacks or briefcases belonging to adults, plastic bags and toys and objects small enough for children to swallow.
- Daily supervised outdoor play is required for all children in care, except during inclement or extreme weather or unless otherwise ordered by a health care provider.
- Except while sleeping, awakening or going to sleep, an infant must not be left in a crib, playpen or other confined space for more than 30 minutes at any one time. Other than at meals or snack time, a child must not be left in a high chair for longer than 15 minutes.
- Appropriate sleep, rest and quiet periods which are responsive to individual and group needs must be provided so that children can sit quietly, lie down to rest, or begin or continue their night's sleep. For children unable to nap, time and space must be provided for quiet play. Children must not be forced to rest for long periods of time.
- The child day care center must establish written disciplinary guidelines and provide copies of these guidelines to all staff and parents of children in care at the center. These guidelines must include acceptable methods of guiding the behavior of children. Corporal punishment, withholding food, rest or sleep as punishment is prohibited.
- All staff that work in CEO centers are Mandated Reporters and must follow the agency policy / procedure for reporting child abuse / neglect.
- Universal precautions must always be utilized. Gloves must be worn at all times when handling bodily fluids. Only staff that are MAT certified may administer medication.
- The day care center must provide plentiful and nutritious snacks to children. The center must ensure that each child in care for more than four hours a day receives a nutritious meal. Where meals are furnished by the child day care center, food preferences for personal, religious or medical reasons may be accommodated.



- Children must be helped to gain independence in feeding themselves and should be encouraged to learn acceptable table manners appropriate to their developmental levels.
- Providers must obtain a written statement from the parent of each infant in care, setting forth the formula and feeding schedule instructions for the infant. All containers or bottles of formula, breast milk or other individualized food items must be clearly marked with the child's complete name. Infants six months of age or younger must be held while being bottle fed.
- Protective caps, covers or permanently installed obstructive devices must be used on all electrical outlets that are accessible to children. Safety straps must be fastened around children who are seated in high chairs.

Attendance

The routines that children develop in CEO's Early Head Start / Head Start program will continue throughout their school career. Families enrolled are expected to maintain 85% monthly attendance. CEO encourages and promotes families arriving to school by 9: 00 am so the child does not miss out on the most important part of the day and does not cause disruption to the rest of the classroom. If a child has low attendance or chronic tardiness, please connect with your Center Manager and Family Advocate so the family can be contacted to determine what level, if any, support is needed to help increase attendance.

Health and Nutrition

Achieving positive health outcomes for children and families is an integral part of the CEO Early Childhood experience.

Health requirements which must be completed before children begin program are:

- Physical examination
- Up-to-date immunizations (Accepted NYS exemptions can be discussed)
- Asthma/Allergy Statement

Strongly encouraged:

- Dental exam
- Anemia Screening
- Lead Screening

Exclusion Due to Illness Policy - determines if a child is well enough to participate in programming. Please refer to CEO's *Exclusion Due to Illness* policy to determine what symptoms would be reason for a child to be excluded from programming.

Incident Reporting - any time a child is injured during program, staff must fill out and complete a Child Incident Report. Please make sure to notify your Center Manager and Program Nurse of any serious incidents that need immediate medical attention or notification of a family member.



Meal Time – outside food is not permitted in Early Childhood classrooms. The program provides breakfast, lunch and snack to children (all food is provided by the program). For infants, formula and baby food are provided. Infants will never be introduced to new foods at school; and families should be sure to update infant and toddler teachers in regard to new foods being tried at home.

All meals should be served Family Style. Meal times should consist of children participating in serving themselves, as well as conversation that is appropriate for the age group.

Only MAT trained staff members are able to provide medication to children in program.

When medication has been prescribed a Medication Administration Form must be completed and signed by a doctor. Medication cannot be transported between home and school by a child.

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Family Engagement

CEO Early Head Start/Head Start encourages all families to play an active role in their child's Early Childhood experience. Families and staff work together toward the goals that families choose for themselves and their children. Children are at the heart of meaningful family engagement.

CEO's Head Start and Early Head Start staff create partnerships. The more knowledge and energy families can give to CEO, the better the program will be!

- Family Engagement is everyone's job!
- CEO Staff will communicate with families on a daily basis through conversations, weekly newsletters, conferences, center events, etc. Please remember that information shared with you is confidential and should only be shared with individuals who need to know.
- Interactions and conversations with families must remain professional at all times. Families are our customers, and we have to ensure that boundaries are not crossed.
- If you have any concerns about a family or need to share information, please make sure to discuss this with your Family Advocate and/or Center Manager.
- The goal of staff members is to work with families and keep them informed of their child's growth, progress and overall development in order to prepare them for success in school.
- CEO staff offer multiple opportunities for families to come to the center and participate in Family Fun Days that revolve around a variety of topics that promote School Readiness and Family Engagement. Please encourage families to participate in these events and volunteer in the classrooms.

In-Kind- CEO is required to raise donations to match Federal Head Start funding. All donations of time help us to meet our goal! All volunteer time and activities can be counted as "In-Kind". Please be sure to document meaningful time spent in the program through CEO's In-Kind process.



If every family could donate five hours of their time per school year, CEO can easily surpass our goal!

Policy Council- Policy Council is made up of parents and members of the community who are interested in supporting the Early Childhood program, as well as working toward making positive change in the community. Policy Council parent representatives are elected within the program by other parents. Community representatives are identified as positive partners and/or resources to the program. The Policy Council is responsible for providing assistance in budgetary, personnel, and planning decision-making as well as the development and support of CEO Early Childhood program enhancements.

