



Per the STEPS Head Start Family Handbook the following policies must be adhered to at the STEPS Head Start facility by staff, volunteers and parents. We respect a parent's right to discipline their child, in the home environment, as they see fit. However, while participating in STEPS activities or while on STEPS property parents must follow our policies.

Inappropriate/Prohibited Actions

You will not see staff engage in the following activities:

- Corporal punishment, including rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or spanking
- Emotional abuse, including name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family, or using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child
- Yelling or raising voice (unless a child is in some type of danger, such as running into the street and traffic is coming)
- Withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom activities
- Inappropriate or untimely diapering procedures (e.g., leaving a child in a soiled diaper)
- Unsupervised isolation
- Use of restrictive environments such as play pens, high chairs, infant swings, walkers or car/infant seats for the purpose of restraining a child or isolating them
- Punishing or humiliating a child for toileting habits or lack thereof
- Any type of punishment hazardous to the physical, emotional, or mental health of the child

Parents participating in STEPS Head Start program activities are also expected not to engage in these actions.

CONDUCT IN THE CLASSROOM

All classroom volunteers, including parents, are expected to follow program standards and policies. Volunteers in STEPS Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms will:

- Receive assignments and direction from STEPS Head Start staff
- Follow through with assigned activities or projects
- Support classroom activities
- Interact in a positive and professional way with staff, children, and other volunteers
- Defer to STEPS Head Start staff in all matters concerning child guidance and discipline and follow the guidance and discipline policies of STEPS Head Start.
- Maintain absolute confidentiality - Staff and volunteers strictly adhere to program confidentiality policies
- Focus on children and facilitate their activities.
- Keep adult conversations to a minimum and be focused on supporting the children.
- Follow common sense guidelines for public behavior. Drug, alcohol and tobacco use, swearing, threatening, shouting, fighting, and firearms are all examples of common sense prohibitions.
- Express any concerns in private and take the opportunity to talk to classroom staff outside of class time. Make sure the staff has the ability to address your concern.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

STEPS Head Start and Early Head Start promotes and respects the identity of each child and child's family. Staff refrain from discriminating against families based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and disability. As a parent, you play a special role in contributing to the needs and development of your children. Therefore, we expect parents to follow the Parents Code of Conduct as listed below.

Support Your Child

Supporting your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in their classroom activities is very important. Help your child work toward skill improvement through backpack activities and volunteering in the classroom.

Always Be Positive

Parents serve as positive role models for their children. As positive role models, parents and guardians will refrain from shouting, swearing, cursing, or making physical threats to staff, other parents, or children in STEPS Head Start facilities.

Reinforce Positive Behavior

Positive reinforcement is the best way to help your child achieve their goals. Encouraging your child's efforts and pointing out the good things they accomplish are an important part of the learning process.

If at any time STEPS staff feel that a child may be experiencing any form of child abuse or neglect they are legally bound to report it to the appropriate agency.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

It is a responsibility of STEPS Head Start staff to promote the healthy and safe development of the children in our program. It is our goal to promote 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 your child's teacher so they can help you find assistance to keep your child safe. STEPS has mental health consultants on staff to provide assistance for families and staff.

Any staff that recognizes the signs and symptoms of reportable events related to abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in the STEPS Head Start Program is required by law as a mandated reporter to report. The STEPS Vice President of Early Childhood Education and the Family and Community Partnerships Manager will be advised immediately of any incidents relating to the abuse or neglect of a child.

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;
- Child appears frightened of a parent or caregiver;
- Pain, bleeding, redness, or swelling in anal or genital area;
- Sexual play with toys, self, or others that is 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