



**Bradford-Tioga
Head Start, Inc**



PARENT HANDBOOK



**5 Riverside Plaza, Blossburg, PA 16912
(570)638-1400 (570)638-1425 (fax)**

www.bradfordtiogahs.org

or find us on Facebook.



**Bradford-Tioga
Head Start, Inc**



PARENT HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Welcome, Vision & Mission Statements, Curriculum | 3 |
| Typical Day, Staff Qualifications | 4 |
| Communication, Confidentiality | 5 |
| CACFP Non-Discrimination Statement..... | 6 |
| Funding, Attendance, Meals, Food Allergies, IHP's | 7 |
| Supportive Services, Head Lice, Sunscreen, Child Illness..... | 8 |
| Health, Screenings, Inclusive Services | 9 |
| Positive Guidance, PBIS | 10 |
| Child Abuse, Photo/Video, Social Media, Inclement Weather/Closings. | 11 |
| Transportation..... | 12 |
| Safety Zones, Pedestrian Safety | 13 |
| Volunteering..... | 14 |
| Tobacco Free, Weapons Free | 15 |
| What to Bring to School..... | 16 |
| How to support your child, Moving/ Transferring, Policies, Closing..... | 17 |
| Bradford-Tioga Head Start Inc. Centers/Contact Information | 18 |



Welcome to Bradford -Tioga Head Start, Inc.

We are so excited that you have chosen Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. for you and your child. We recognize you are the child's most important teacher and play a key role in your child's school readiness. We encourage you to be involved with your child's education, by volunteering, attending parent meetings, training, conferences, and actively participating with your child, both at home and at school. Our staff are here to assist you and your child every step of the way.

Vision Statement: All families are successful members of the community, and every child is ready for school.

Mission Statement: Our highly competent staff provides exceptional educational opportunities and high-quality supportive services, which empower children and families to grow and thrive.

Curriculum

Bradford- Tioga Head Start, Inc. provides:

- A variety of hands-on learning experiences
- Activities to foster school readiness.
- Small class size (3:17)
- The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is used in Head Start classrooms. This curriculum is research-based and focuses on all areas of child development, including-social/emotional, physical development, math, science, language and literacy.
- Teachers use their own experiences, and children's interests to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual students.
- Social emotional development is the foundation for learning. Learning about feelings, how to get along with others, becoming more independent and following instructions are a large focus in becoming school ready. Becoming more

independent and following instructions are a large focus in becoming school ready.

- Children learn through play. Play allows children to learn about the world and themselves. As children play, they learn new skills, develop friendships and test new ideas.

Typical Day

Components and requirements that are common to all classrooms:

- **Large Group Instruction:** Large group activities include welcome message, song, weather, calendar, story time, literacy activities, etc.
- **Small Group Instruction:** teachers work with children in small groups and teach specific skills.
- **Music & Movement:** singing, dancing, using instruments, & exercise
- **Choice Time:** children choose where they would like to play. Interest areas are set up throughout the classroom (science, library, art, blocks, housekeeping, sand, STEM, etc.)
- **Outside Play/Gross Motor:** Classrooms have a playground with age-appropriate equipment that allows children to run, jump, climb and play.
- **Quiet Learning:** Children rest and participate in quiet learning activities. Children work with puzzles, read books, or play games with lights dimmed and calming music.
- **Individualization:** Teachers provide individualized instruction to work on goals that the parent and teacher set for the child
- **Tooth brushing** occurs daily.
- **Meals:** Each day breakfast and lunch are provided. Children eat family style, learn to set tables, serve themselves and clean up after the meal. Staff eat with the children and engage in conversations during mealtimes to create a learning experience.

Staff Qualifications

Highly qualified teachers meet State and Federal requirements.

Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to your child's success. It is important to keep us informed of any changes that may affect your child.

- **The Website:** You can access lots of great information on our website. Please visit: www.bradfordtiogahs.org
- **ClassDojo-** is an important communication tool that will provide information about closings, delays, and other important updates. It is important to enroll in ClassDojo right away.
- **InTouch Electronic Messaging System:** shares important information about closings, delays, emergency information, and important events. It is important that we have an up-to-date cell phone number.
- **Facebook:** Follow us on Facebook. Our Facebook page highlights class photos, articles, job openings, and announcements.
- **Printed Communication:** It is important to check your child's backpack or folders each day.
- **Phone calls:** Staff call you to discuss important topics (i.e., illness, incidents, child absences, successes, and struggles, etc.)
- **Conferences and Home Visits:** Staff schedule home visits and conferences with you throughout the school year to discuss your child's progress and development and set goals to support learning.
- **Classroom Bulletin Boards:** Each classroom has a bulletin board with important information for parents.



Confidentiality Bradford- Tioga Head Start Inc. takes confidentiality seriously and makes every effort to protect each family's privacy.

Communications among staff and parents about children should always be kept confidential. If a

parent has a question or concern, we suggest that the parent contact a staff via phone, or in person to schedule a time to discuss.

Non- Discrimination Statement

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc does not discriminate in their admission policy, meal service, use of facilities, employment, or delivery of care. All meals are served to children under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Funding: Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services through the Office of Head Start, the PA Department of Education, and Child and the Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Attendance

Regular attendance is required and makes a great difference in a child's academic and social progress.

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. has an Attendance Policy, which supports parents to ensure children attend the program on a regular basis and meet at least 85% attendance. Children's attendance, reasons for absences, and excused/not-excused attendance is tracked and reported monthly.

In the event of irregular attendance (*4 or more consecutive absences or an absence trend*), a plan will be developed to support your child's attendance. You can request a copy of the Child Attendance Policy (CAR-150) from Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. staff.

Meals: Children are encouraged but never forced to eat. Food is never used as a reward or punishment. To ensure proper sanitation, food handling, and precautions for food allergies, food is not accepted by volunteers, parents or staff. The classrooms are required to order meals from approved vendors to follow regulations of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Food Allergies/Modifications

Please let us know immediately if your child has a food allergy, or requires food modification. An Individual Health Plan will be completed and signed by you and your healthcare provider. At your healthcare provider's request, we will make reasonable substitutions to the menu based on your child's allergies/modifications.

Individual Health Plans

If your child has a health condition (asthma, seizures, or food allergies) that has been diagnosed by a health care provider we are required to complete an Individual Health Plan (IHP) ***prior to the first day of school.*** An IHP is a step-by-step plan written specifically for each health condition that must be followed. You and your child's health care provider must sign the IHP. All classroom staff are aware of any IHPs in case of an emergency.

Supportive Services

Some children enrolled may have health care needs that require a skilled nurse or aide to work with the child. We will work with an agency to ensure that care is always provided so every child can fully participate in every aspect of the day. If your child has health care needs that you feel may need the assistance of a skilled nurse or aide, please talk with your Family Advocate who can assist you in the process.

Head Lice/Nits

Each child is checked for head lice/nits the first day each week that they attend. If lice or nits are found, you will be notified, and your child will need to be picked up for the day. Your child may return when free of lice and/or nits.

Sunscreen: Outdoor experiences are a large part of your child's day. Sunscreen is provided by the program and applied (when applicable) before outdoor play. Parent Permission must be granted. If you prefer to send sunscreen, it must be in the original container and labeled with your child's initials.

Child Illness and Exclusion

The program must ensure protection from contagious illnesses, including appropriate inclusion and exclusion when a child is ill.

Staff will notify parents/guardians:

- Immediately of emergencies or urgent issues related to illness
- When a child develops signs or symptoms of illness

- When a child with symptoms requires exclusion, parents/guardians need to remove the child as soon as possible.

Health Services

Upon enrollment, you will learn about requirements regarding a child's health status. Items include:

- A current physical examination (within 1 year) that includes a blood lead level and hemoglobin level (according to the PA EPSDT schedule)
- Up-to-date Immunizations (according to the PA immunization schedule)
- A current dental examination (within 1 year)

Having these services in place will assist staff in best meeting the needs of your child and ensuring their health and safety.

Screenings and Referrals

Children will be screened within 45 days of enrollment to identify any developmental, behavioral, motor, language, cognitive, social/emotional, hearing and vision concerns. Staff will communicate your child's screening results and let you know if any follow-up or additional information is needed. If concerns arise, we will recommend your child receive further evaluation. Parental permission will be obtained before a referral for an additional evaluation is made. We will be a resource through the referral process.

Inclusive Services

We believe that all children benefit from learning, and each is special, unique, and has important things to share. The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 ensures all children with disabilities are a regular part of the classroom. If your child has a special need, they will participate in all the classroom experiences. Sometimes it is necessary to have additional support staff to assist a child with special needs. We make necessary accommodations to best support every child.

If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), we will assist you to ensure that your child receives the appropriate services and support. We will also assist you and your child in the transition to kindergarten to provide a smooth process. Information is available to you on your rights as a parent and how to advocate for your child.

Positive Guidance

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. uses positive discipline techniques to guide and teach children how to be in control of their own behavior and to problem solve. Young children are in the process of learning acceptable behavior, and it is our role to support and nurture this developing process. Children are supported and encouraged to learn self-control and problem-solving skills. Remember if this is your child's first preschool experience, they may need time to adapt. Ongoing communication between you and the staff will be essential in supporting your child's social and emotional development.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

PBIS is an approach to support social development in children as well as preventing challenging behaviors. We use PBIS in the classroom and will spend time educating and encouraging you to use the strategies in your home.

A PBIS Strategy called, Head Start Heroes, is used to teach children to be accountable for their actions in a positive way and provide them with the tools needed to be successful. The children learn three basic rules:

- Be Safe
- Be Kind
- Be Responsible

Stars and other incentives are used as a positive reinforcement, when children are seen being safe, kind, and responsible, they get to place a star on their hero's cape.

Child Abuse Reporting

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. staff are mandated reporters; they are required to report suspected or identified child abuse (the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (Act 151, 1994) and federal/state regulations). Confidentiality of all records pertaining to child abuse in accordance with the state law are preserved.

Photographs and Videos

Only cameras provided by the program are allowed to be used for taking pictures of any child during the classroom day. **Personal cameras including cell phones or smartphones are not allowed due to safety concerns.** Parents sign a permission form to allow themselves and their child to be photographed or videotaped. We ask each parent/guardian to respect and understand that taking photos or videos could jeopardize a child or family's wishes and/or safety if we do not have permission. This includes screenshots from ClassDojo.

Social Media

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. wants to ensure that the use of all social media platforms, during work time and non-work time, respect and protect the privacy and safety of staff and the families we serve.

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. strongly discourages staff from responding to "friend" requests from enrolled families to ensure a professional relationship is maintained throughout the service period. Please remember that the information posted on social media is not private and can often be viewed by anyone who logs onto your page.

Inclement Weather, Closing, and Make-up Days

You will be given a program calendar. The program calendar will list days in session as well as make-up days. Please keep in mind that your child's safety is of utmost concern during inclement weather.

- If the local school district is closed due to the weather, your classroom will be closed.
- If the local school district is delayed or dismisses early due to weather, your classroom may delay or close early.

- There may be times when the classroom will close, delay and/or dismiss early and the district is not closed due to specific facility or safety concerns.

You will be notified of all closings, delays, or early dismissals through the electronic parent notification system using your cell phone number, as well as ClassDojo.

If the Classroom is closed, a make-up day will be listed on the program calendar and staff will inform you in advance of the makeup day as a last resort, there may be a need to provide a virtual make-up day; if this occurs staff will work with you to support you through the process.

Transportation - Transportation to the classroom may be done in two ways:

Self-Transportation: You or a designated person will transport your child to and from school. You will drop off and pick up your child at designated times. For safety purposes, each child must be escorted into and out of the building and handed off to a staff member.

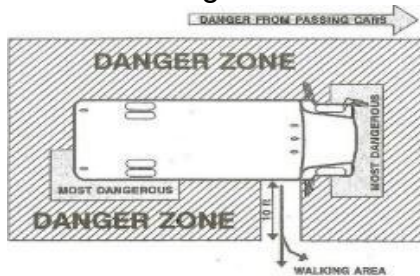
Bus Transportation: The bus will pick up and drop off your child at the bus stop. The bus is staffed with a Driver and Bus Monitor to ensure your child's safety. All buses are equipped with five-point safety seats.

- **Routes** are established at the beginning of the year. It may take 1-2 weeks until bus times are finalized.
- **Pick-up/Drop-off Process**
 - Be ready and waiting for the bus.
 - Wait for the bus at least 10 feet from the road.
 - Wait for the bus doors to open before moving towards the bus.
 - Hold your child's hand as they enter/exit the bus.
 - Hand your child to the Bus Monitor
 - Do not board the bus with the child.

- Do not move your vehicle until the bus has pulled away.
- **Emergency Contacts**
 - There may be times that you may not be able to pick-up/drop-off your child. It is important to let staff know who is authorized to pick up your child. **These persons must be listed on the Emergency Card** as an “acceptable person” and will be asked for identification if a staff member is unfamiliar with them. **If a person comes to pick up your child and is not listed on the Emergency Card, your child will not be released to them. It is required to be in written form. This is to protect the safety of your child.**

In an emergency, if no one is at the designated spot for your child, staff will notify you to pick up the child. The Driver will continue the route. When the route is completed, the Driver will go back to the designated location, the classroom, or to an emergency contact’s home if it is within the area. The Driver will only release the child to an acceptable person from the emergency card:-

Safe Zones: Diagram shows danger zones of the bus.



Pedestrian Safety

When walking with your child, talk about pedestrian safety. It is important to be aware of surroundings and practice pedestrian safety. Be a good example for your child. **Safety tips to review with your child:**

- Never cross the street or walk in a parking lot alone.
- Always hold an adult’s hand to cross a street & in a parking lot.

- Stop, look, and Listen - Stop at the curb and look both ways before crossing the street.
- Walk; do not run, when crossing the street or parking lot
- Always cross at corners using crosswalks and following traffic signals
- If you are walking, make sure to walk facing traffic.
- Make sure drivers see you before crossing in front of them.
- Do not play in driveways, streets, parking lots or an unfenced yard by the street.
- Wear white clothing with reflectors if walking at night.
- Always cross at least 10 feet in front of a bus
- Review traffic signs and their meaning

Volunteers

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. takes additional precautions in the interest of protecting children and families. All volunteers are required to complete the Pennsylvania Disclosure Statement, Application for Volunteer, and clearances prior to volunteering in the classroom or to attend field trips. The Family Advocate/Family Partner will assist you through this process and notify you when/if you have been approved. We encourage you to volunteer in the classroom if you are able. For safety reasons, children are never left alone with volunteers and staff are the only ones allowed to open entry doors to the classroom.

Ways that you can volunteer:

- Assist with classroom activities.
- Attend Policy Council Meetings
- Attend Parent Activity Days
- Help with special classroom projects.
- Read to children.
- Assist on a field trip.

Ways to be a successful volunteer:

- Have fun and play with the children.
- Be friendly; listen and talk to the children.
- Get on their level; sit on the carpet or at the tables.

- Encourage children to do things on their own.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Model healthy habits (handwashing, healthy eating)
- Model kindness and positive attitude
- Offer praise and encouragement.
- Tell your child ahead of time that you are coming to volunteer.
- Ask staff how you can help and be ready to follow directions.
- Find out what to do in an Emergency.
- Keep everything you hear and see confidential.

Please Avoid the Following While Volunteering

- Avoid visiting with staff and other volunteers.
- Avoid talking about children.
- Avoid comparing children.
- Never discipline a child. It is the role of staff to provide support and guidance.
- Avoid use of your cell phone.
- Avoid coming to the classroom if you are sick.
- Avoid bringing younger or older siblings.



Tobacco-Free

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. is a tobacco free zone. You may not use tobacco products or electronic cigarettes, in or on the grounds, including outdoor areas.

Weapons Free

Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on program property. It is a violation of Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. policy for any person to possess a weapon on program property, program-provided transportation or other facilities being used for Head Start activities.

What to Bring to School



Dress: Remember to label each item that your child brings

- Dress your child for active play. Clothes may get dirty.
- Have your child wear sturdy shoes (sneakers are the best)
- Dress appropriately for the weather
- In the winter, hats, mittens, coats, snow pants and boots

Extra Clothes: Accidents happen. Please send in a complete change of clothing including socks and underwear to be kept in the classroom. We also ask that you send a sweatshirt or sweater that can be kept in the classroom. Make sure to put your child's initials on the clothing before sending it in.

Photos: Some children have a hard time transitioning to the classroom. It may be helpful to have a family photo they can bring with them. We encourage you to send in a photo to be kept in the classroom.

Backpack: A backpack is not required for your child, but it may be helpful to transport your child's belongings to and from the classroom.

What NOT to Bring to School

- ✓ **Toys and personal items:** We ask that your child not bring toys, electronic devices, food, or personal items such as blankets to the classroom.
- ✓ **Food:** Bradford- Tioga Head Start, Inc. cannot accept any food brought in by a parent or volunteer, whether it be homemade, or store bought. Please do not send food or drinks with your child.

How to Support Your Child's Success

You can help your child to be ready to learn by:

- **Sleep:** Preschoolers require 10-12 hours of sleep a night
- **Routine:** Keeping a routine will help your child know what to expect
- **Healthy Habits:** Eating healthy foods, bathing, and going to the doctor.
- **Come to school:** Regular attendance is required.
- **Communication:** Tell staff about special or unusual events at home such the birth of a new baby, major family illness or deaths.
- **Medications and Health:** It is important to let staff know if your child is on medication and or is having health issues. Staff can observe for side effects or changes in your child's behavior.

Moving Away or Transferring

If you move during the school year, please contact your Family Advocate immediately. If your child is moving from one classroom to another, your child's file and all their information will go to your child's new teacher. If you are transferring to another Early Childhood Program, we can provide you with copies of items in your child's file upon written request.

Policies & Procedures

If you have any questions about the information provided in the handbook or would like to view the entire policy, please ask one of the staff and they can provide you with a written copy.

Closing

Thank you for choosing Bradford-Tioga Head Start, Inc. If you have any questions about any of the information in the Parent Handbook or have questions/concerns throughout the year, please reach out to us.

CONTACT INFORMATION

| Location | Address | Number |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| Bradford-Tioga Head Start Inc. Central Office | 5 Riverside Plaza, Blossburg, PA 16912 | 570-638-1400 |
| Athens 1 & 2 Head Start | 116 Walnut St., Athens, PA 18810 | 570-888-2370 |
| Athens 3 Head Start Lynch Bustin Elementary | 253 Pennsylvania Avenue, Athens, PA 18810 | 570-882-6272 |
| Blossburg 1 Head Start | 228 Main Street, Blossburg, PA 16912 | 570-638-1415 |
| Blossburg 2 Head Start Blossburg Elementary | 133 Hannibal St Blossburg, PA 16912 | 570-638-2146 ext. 2 |
| Canton 1 Head Start | Gleckner Building, 125 Sullivan St, Canton, PA 17724 | 570-673-8298 |
| Canton 2 Head Start Canton Elementary | 545 East Main St Canton, PA 17724 | 570-673-5078 |
| East Smithfield 1 & 2 Head Start SRU Elementary School | 3 Church Street, East Smithfield PA 18817 | 570-882-6271 570-731-0156 |
| Elkland 1 & 2 Head Start | 117 Court Ave Elkland, PA 16920 | 814-258-7490 |
| Mansfield Head Start, W.L. Miller Elementary School | Dorsett Drive, Mansfield, PA 16933 | 570-513-0895 |
| Northeast Bradford 1 & 2 Head Start Northeast Elementary School | 526 Panther Lane Rome, PA 18837 | 570-744-2521 |
| Towanda Head Start | 23 James St., Towanda, PA 18848 | 570-485-5087 |
| Troy 1 & 2 Head Start | 141-143 Canton St, Troy, PA 16947 | 570-297-4300 |
| Wellsboro Head Start | 29 East Ave, Wellsboro, PA 16901 | 570-724-5290 |
| Wyalusing Head Start, Wyalusing Valley Elementary | 11450 Wyalusing New Albany Rd, Wyalusing, PA 18853 | 570-746-1807 |



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