

Laguna Department of Education



DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

FAMILY HANDBOOK
2026-2027

Approved by Policy Council: June 20, 2025.
Approved by LDoE Board: July 23, 2025.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Classroom Teachers: _____

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LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Head Start and Early Head Start Families,
Welcome back! We are so excited to begin a new program year with you and your children. We hope you and your family have had a safe and enjoyable break, and we are looking forward to a year filled with learning, growth, and joyful experiences.

At Head Start and Early Head Start, we remain committed to supporting your child's development in a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment. Our team is dedicated to helping children build strong foundations in early learning, social skills, and emotional development—while also collaborating with you every step of the way.

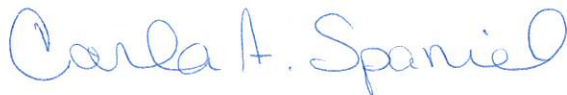
We believe that families are a child's first and most important teachers. Your involvement and support make a huge difference in your child's success. Throughout the year, we encourage you to participate in family events, conferences, and activities that strengthen the connection between home and school.

As we begin the New Year, please remember:

- * Stay connected with your child's teacher and program staff
- * Keep your contact information up to date
- * Share any questions, concerns, or ideas with us—we value your voice

It is our honor to be part of your child's early learning journey and look forward to building a strong partnership with your family. Thank you for trusting us with your child's care and education. Together, we will make this a wonderful and successful year!

Warm regards,



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New Experiences + Teaching Applications x Love = Growth

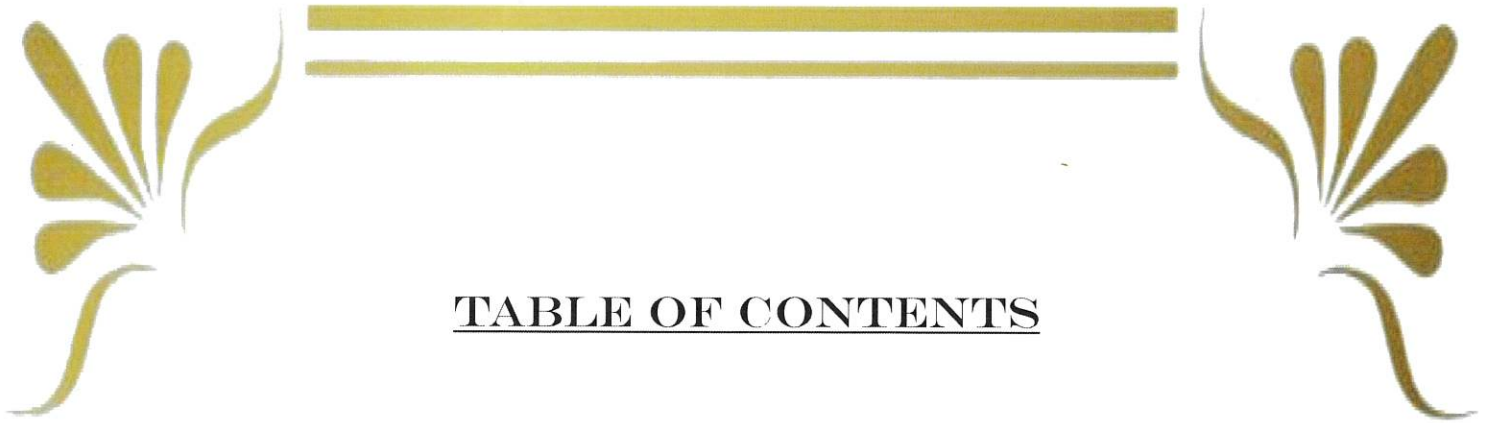
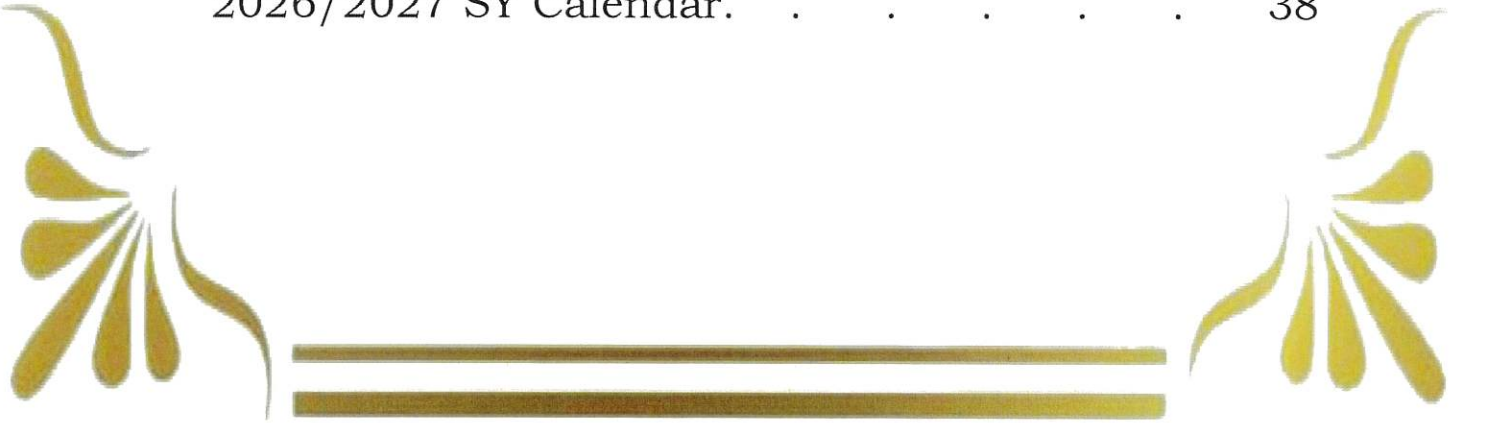


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PREVENTION, A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Throughout the day, staff clean frequently touched areas.
- At the end of day, frequently touched areas are cleaned and sanitized.

PARENT ACCOUNTABILITY

- Keep your child at home if demonstrating **symptoms of illness**.

How teachers will support children attending school

Routines: Having a consistent, predictable routine provides children with a sense of safety and security. Being ready for the day with weather appropriate attire supports a healthy routine. Teachers introduce new routines to practice each day.

Expect Behavioral Changes: Knowing that behavior communicates a message; teachers are prepared to see behavioral changes in children as they return to school. Teachers emphasize posted visuals of classroom rules throughout the day. Children feel safe when they know the expectations and rules.

HEALTHY TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING BACK TO SCHOOL

Families can begin to prepare their children for the transition back to school by previewing, practicing routines, and reassuring children that they will be safe.

Reassuring: You or your child may be feeling anxious about returning to school. Let them know its okay to feel nervous, remind them of the fun they have at school. Remember, kids cue off of your feelings, the calmer and more positive you are feeling about going back to school, the better they will feel about it.

Self-care: It is also important that parents check in with their own emotions and levels of anxiety. Young children notice our stress and worries. We can help them in these moments by labeling our feelings and modeling a strategy. (For Example, “Mom is feeling a little worried right now, I am going to take five (5) big deep breaths to help the worry leave my body”).

Resource: National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Transitioning back to School



PROGRAM OPERATIONS

**Laguna Division of Early Childhood
Chain of Command**

- 1. DEC Staff**
- 2. DEC Director**
- 3. LDoE Director of Academics**
- 4. LDoE Superintendent**

Daily Operations Information

PRESCHOOL HEAD START

- ♦ Head Start is a center-based program for children ages 3-5.
- ♦ Head Start is in session from 7:45 a.m.—2:45 p.m. on Monday through Friday and follows the Laguna Division of Early Childhood calendar.
- ♦ The DEC calendar aligns with the LDoE calendar in regards to holidays.
- ♦ Breakfast is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., breakfast upon request after this time.
- ♦ Lunch is from 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, lunch upon request after this time.
- ♦ Afternoon snack served between 1:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- ♦ At 2:40 p.m., Monday through Friday, children board buses and transported home.

EARLY HEAD START

- ♦ Early Head Start is a center-based program for children 6 months to age three.
- ♦ Early Head Start is in session from 7:45 a.m.—2:45 p.m. and follows the DEC calendar.
- ♦ The DEC calendar aligns with the LDoE calendar in regards to holidays.
- ♦ Breakfast is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., breakfast upon request after this time.
- ♦ Lunch is from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., lunch upon request after this time.
- ♦ Afternoon snack served between 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- ♦ Home-Based services are for pregnant mothers to children age 3.
- ♦ Home-Based services provide the family one home visit per week for one hour and a half. A minimum of 46 visits per school year.
- ♦ Home-Based services provide a minimum of 22 group socialization activities per school year. (45 CFR Chapter XIII Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.22 (c)(1)(i)(ii))
- ♦ Home-Based services follow the LDoE calendar in regards to holidays.

CHILD CARE

- ♦ Any child enrolled in Head Start may acquire Child Care Service.
- ♦ Parents/Legal Guardians **must be employed or be in school to utilize Child Care services.**
- ♦ Child Care service is available Monday—Friday from 2:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- ♦ DEC will not provide Child Care service on staff development days.
- ♦ Child Care provides P.M. snacks for all children enrolled.
- ♦ DEC does not offer drop in service.
- ♦ In case of inclement weather or school closure, cancellation of Child Care occurs.

UNSCHEDULED CLOSURES AND DELAYS

DEC announces program closures and delays on local TV and radio stations.

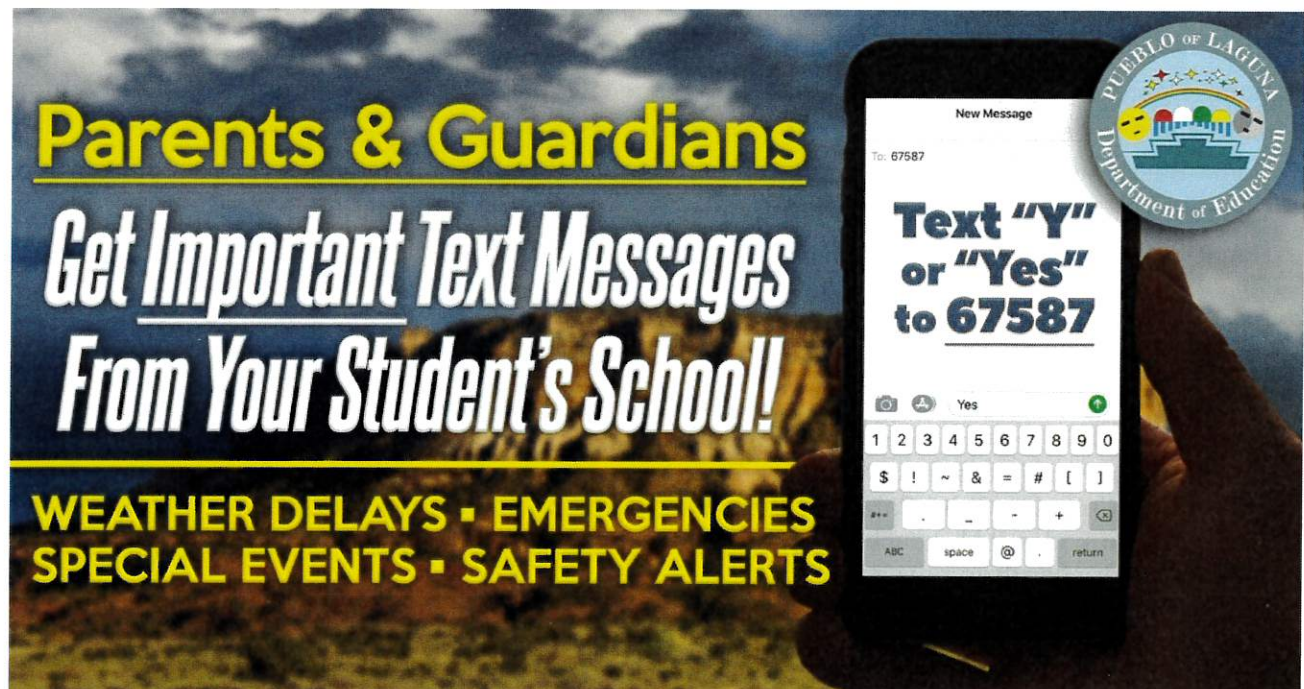
Please make sure DEC has your current contact information as early program dismissals are unexpected and contacting parents occurs.

Safety of the children is a priority for all staff. Weather related closures that apply to Laguna Elementary or Laguna Middle School also apply to the Division of Early Childhood programs.

MESSENGER

DEC uses a messaging system for special circumstances to inform parents/families/legal guardians via phone call, text and/or email. Please be sure your contact information is always up to date with the DEC office.

Opt in to Messenger:





WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

PROCEDURE FOR WITHDRAWING A CHILD FROM PROGRAM:

A parent may withdraw their child from program by filling out the appropriate form. Please come into the front office to fill out the withdrawal form or work with your Family Services Provider to fill out the form. This allows DEC to open the slot for another child to enroll for services.

*Forms are available in the front office and with Family Services Providers.

CHILD CUSTODY

Legal documents must provide clear instructions regarding custody matters.

Parents/Legal Guardians must provide a current court order indicating legal custody. All legal court matters must be current when changes occur. All confidential records will be stored in the child's file and brought to attention of the staff to avoid confusion.

Foster Parents must provide a court order indicating legal custody or a formal letter from Laguna Social Services indicating child placement, extent of authority and duration.

All staff are required to sign confidentiality statements that prohibits staff from discussing child and family information with anyone other than the legal guardian or custodial parent. Parents must provide written consent to release confidential records to other professionals or agencies.

If you believe there has been a breach in confidentiality, please contact the Program Director @ 505-321-6969.

POLICY COUNCIL
MEETS MONTHLY

Members shall be parents, legal guardians or stepparents of children presently enrolled in Head Start.

PRESCHOOL HEAD START

There will be one representative elected from each Preschool classroom with no less than five (5) Representatives for PHS.

EARLY HEAD START

There will be one representative elected for every two (2) EHS classrooms and one representative for the Home Based program.

HSPS 1301.3

VOLUNTEERS

The Laguna Division of Early Childhood defines a Volunteer as “an unpaid individual who is trained to assist in ongoing program activities on a regular basis under the supervision of a Laguna Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood staff”. DEC welcomes volunteers who would like to share their time or talents with our students. Please note that anyone who volunteers for 16 or more hours must complete a background check. This includes but is not limited to participation in student field trips.

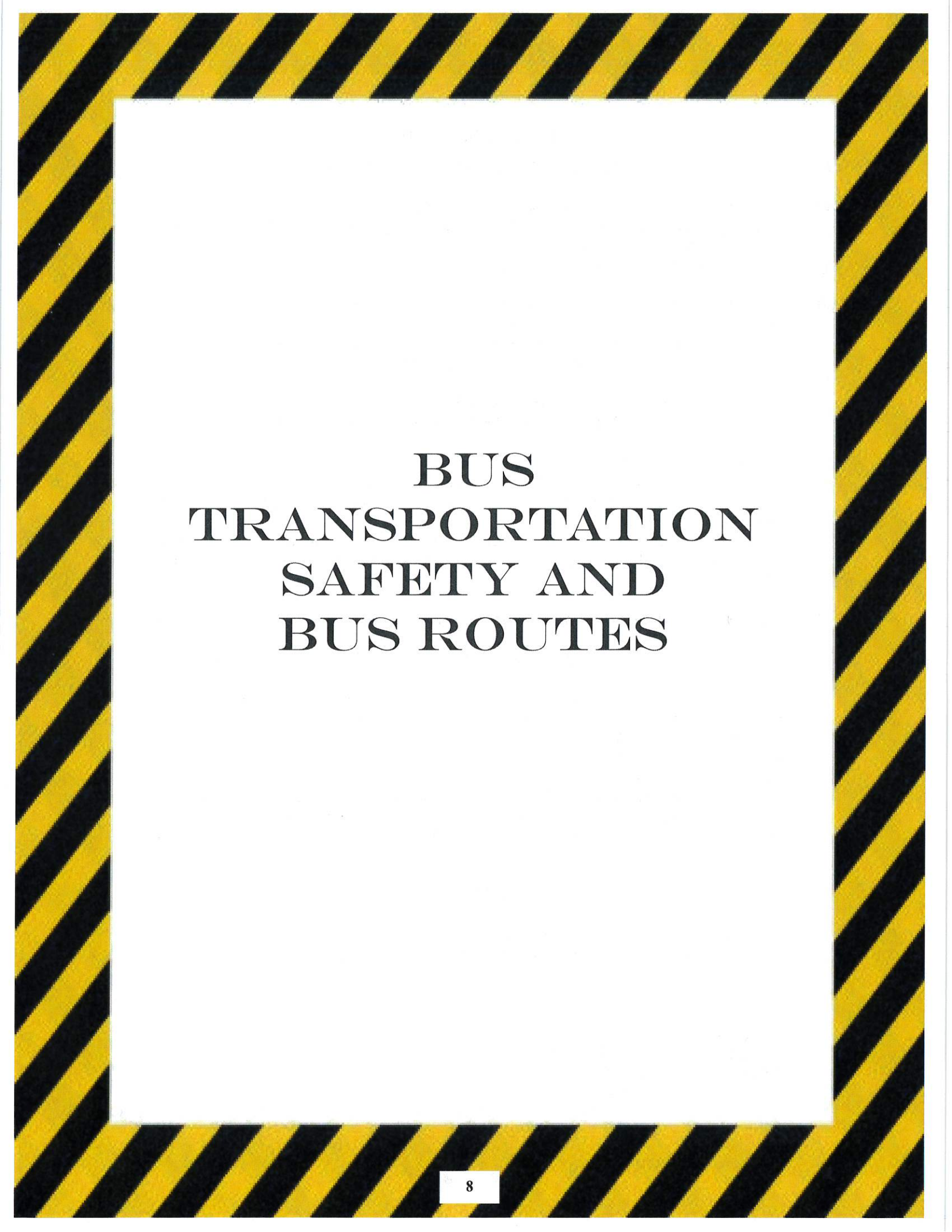
An individual must be at least 18 years of age to volunteer for our program. Volunteers are required to have a clear background check, drug screen, and fingerprinting in addition to completing the required forms. A copy of the volunteer’s Driver License is also required.

All volunteers are mandated reporters. Any suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported immediately. All volunteers will receive training on suspected child abuse, neglect, corporal punishment and reporting procedures.

Requirements:

1. Head Start Volunteer Form
2. DEC Confidentiality Agreement
3. DEC Code of Ethics
4. Volunteer Acknowledgement of Training for Child Abuse and Neglect
5. Proof Volunteer is free of any communicable diseases.
6. Tuberculosis Screening

Only when all requirements are met, and acceptable results are received, the volunteer receives a written notification of approval to begin volunteering.



BUS TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND BUS ROUTES

BUS TRAFFIC SAFETY

RULES FOR FAMILIES NEAR A SCHOOL BUS

WHEN APPROACHING A SCHOOL BUS WITH FLASHING **YELLOW** LIGHTS:

- When approaching a school bus with flashing **YELLOW** lights, all vehicles must approach with caution and slow down.

YELLOW lights signal the bus is approaching a designated stop.

WHEN APPROACHING A SCHOOL BUS WITH FLASHING **RED** LIGHTS:

- All vehicles must come to a complete stop.
- When approaching a school bus with the FLASHING **RED** lights and the stop arm extended, children are loading or unloading from bus.

PRESCHOOL HEAD START BUS TRANSPORTATION *CHILDREN MUST BE 3 YEARS OLD TO RIDE THE BUS*

HELP US TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN AS THEY TRAVEL TO AND FROM HEAD START BY
OBSERVING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

- ❖ Parents, be waiting at your designated bus stop ten minutes prior to pick-up/drop-off time.
- ❖ Wait for bus to come to a complete stop and doors open, before approaching the bus.
- ❖ Please have your child ready, jackets and backpacks on and standing in line at the bus stop.

NOTE: Bus monitors will be present to assist children entering and exiting the bus at all times.

RULES FOR CHILDREN ON THE BUS

1. Please, keep seat belt and restraint buckles on at all times while bus is in motion.
2. Please, stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
3. Please, keep hands and feet to yourselves.
4. Please, keep hands, feet and backpacks out of aisle.
5. Please, use inside voices.
6. Please, have your child hold the handrails while stepping up and stepping down.
7. Please, encourage your children to step down off the steps and discourage jumping.
8. Please, keep food and drinks at home. DEC provides breakfast upon arrival to school.

HAZARDS

Clothing can create a safety hazard when getting on/off the bus.
Do not send your child to school with any of these safety hazards.

- Long dangling jackets or sweatshirts
- Loose shoestrings
- Rolling backpacks
- Long scarves or loose clothing
- Shoes with heels or wheels
- Open toed shoes such as flip-flops or crocs.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND STAFF

- ❖ Parents are required to keep contact information updated.
- ❖ If your child has been absent three (3) consecutive days from the bus without notification to the school and bus driver, the bus driver will discontinue stopping until the parent calls the program to notify when the child will resume riding the bus.
- ❖ Buses will depart Head Start at 2:45 p.m.
- ❖ Please call the front office NO LATER than 1:30 p.m. If you are going to pick up your child and would like them held off the bus. There is no extra staff to supervise children once buses depart. Therefore, parents must be at the center before children board the bus at 2:35 p.m. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- ❖ Bus Orientation is required of all parents or legal guardians for all Head Start children three years of age and older.
- ❖ Any family member putting on or taking the child off the bus should attend Bus Orientation or be given a copy of the bus orientation information.
- ❖ Individuals on checkout list must be 18 years of age or older and have a valid ID.
- ❖ Please inform program staff of any existing medical conditions that could affect their bus transportation.
- ❖ Parents are required to call the school if their child will not be riding the bus.

PARENTS:

- ❖ NOTE THAT ALL TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND WEATHER, WAIT FOR BUS 10 MINUTES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL.
- ❖ IF A PARENT IS NOT AT THEIR DESIGNATED BUS STOP AND THE CHILD IS RETURNED TO THE CENTER, AFTER THE THIRD TIME, THE FOLLOWING MEASURES WILL OCCUR:
 1. Verbal Warning by pertinent DEC staff
 2. Written Warning signed by Program Director
 3. Social Services is contacted for follow-up

NOTE: Be reminded that children of this age can experience neglect and feel traumatized when a parent or guardian is not there to receive them off the bus.

EARLY RELEASE BUS PROCEDURES:

If an early dismissal is determined:

- ❖ Notification to parents occurs via phone call and/or text message. If DEC does not acquire contact with parents, DEC will attempt to contact individuals on the family's emergency contact list.
- ❖ Bus Drivers will follow their regular routes and procedures to deliver children home.
- ❖ If there is no one at the bus stop to receive the child, bus driver will proceed through the remaining stops of the route and child will be returned to the center. Parent must pick up the child immediately, thereafter.
- ❖ All bus safety procedures and rules apply.

BUS ROUTES

Bus times are subject to change throughout the year due to enrollment, attendance and weather.
Be waiting 10 minutes prior to your bus stop time.

BUS # 1

Morning Departure: a.m.

Afternoon Departure: p.m.

**SCHOOL
BUS
STOP**

BUS #2

Morning Departure: a.m.

Afternoon Departure: p.m.

Bus #4

Morning Departure: a.m.

Afternoon Departure: p.m.

•)

SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR DROP-OFF & PICK UP

BEFORE COMING TO THE CENTER

Parents/Legal Guardians must ensure they are prepared to be responsible for their children with the importance and knowledge of illness prevention in regards to Influenza, RSV and Covid-19, just as you would with other infectious diseases.

Parent/Guardians must keep children home if:

- Any person experiencing one or more of the following symptoms (loss of taste or smell, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, or muscle pain) should consult with a medical professional when such symptoms occur and obtain a Flu, RSV and Covid-19 test in accordance with their advice.
- Any person who tests positive for the Flu, RSV and/or Covid-19 (from either a PCR or a home rapid test) must be fever free for a 24-hour period and upon return at teacher's discretion, wear mask while on DEC campus.
- Please contact the school to inform that your child will not be attending school.

DROPPING OFF

We ask that you follow these drop-off guidelines to ensure safety for all:

- Families are encouraged to arrive and depart from center at 5 MPH, "crawling" pace in their vehicles.
- Early Head Start drop off begins at 7:30 a.m. Parents may park in the front parking lot; walk their child to their classroom until 8:30 a.m. At 8:31 a.m., parents must sign in their child in at the front office. Parents will attain a "Pass to Class". Present the pass to classroom teachers as verification you signed in your child at the front office.
- Preschool Head Start drop off begins at 7:30 a.m. Parents may park in the front parking lot; walk their child to their classroom until 9:00 am. At 9:01 a.m., parents must sign their child in at the front office. Parents will attain a "Pass to Class". Present the pass to classroom teachers as verification you signed in your child at the front office.
- Avoid designating those considered at high risk, such as elderly, or those who have underlying health conditions.

It is the expectation that families bring children to school on time.

Parents be reminded, children need adjustment time, be prepared to support your child during their transition period.

RELEASING CHILDREN FROM THE PROGRAM

PROCEDURE FOR RELEASING CHILD FROM PROGRAM:

The Laguna Division of Early Childhood sets forth and establishes a sex offender policy to ensure the safe and healthy operation of all DEC programs and program activities for children, families, employees and community.

- It is DEC policy that any individual listed on a sex offender registry may not have the responsibility for a child's care.
- DEC prohibits the release of a child to an individual on a sex offender registry.
- DEC policy prohibits any individual listed on a sex offender registry to participate in DEC program activities or events on or off campus.

DEC staff will not release a child to anyone suspected of being under the influence or possession of alcohol or controlled substances.

DEC will not release a child without an age appropriate car seat.

Only adults 18 years of age or older on the child's approved checkout list may sign child out of program.

**To authorize additional individuals to pick up a child, the parent or legal guardian must fill out the proper form in person with signature. Forms are available in the front office, on the buses and with the Family Services Providers.*

PICKING UP

Parents/Legal Guardians, we ask that you follow these pick up guidelines to ensure safety for all:

- *Parents are required to be on time to pick up their children. Early Head Start ends at 2:45 p.m. Monday through Friday and Preschool Head Start ends at 2:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. The DEC office closes at 3:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. Child Care ends at 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.*
- *Individuals on approved checkout list will park in the front parking lot. Come into the front office and sign the child out of program. Parents will attain a "Sign Out" pass to present to teachers for verification of checking-out child. Teachers may ask you to sign your child out in the classroom as well.*
- *Parents picking up their child from Child Care may go directly to the Child Care classroom and sign them out there.*

Be reminded that children of this age can experience neglect and feel traumatized when a parent or guardian is not there to pick them up.

If a child remains on campus after the time school has ended, DEC will implement the following procedure:

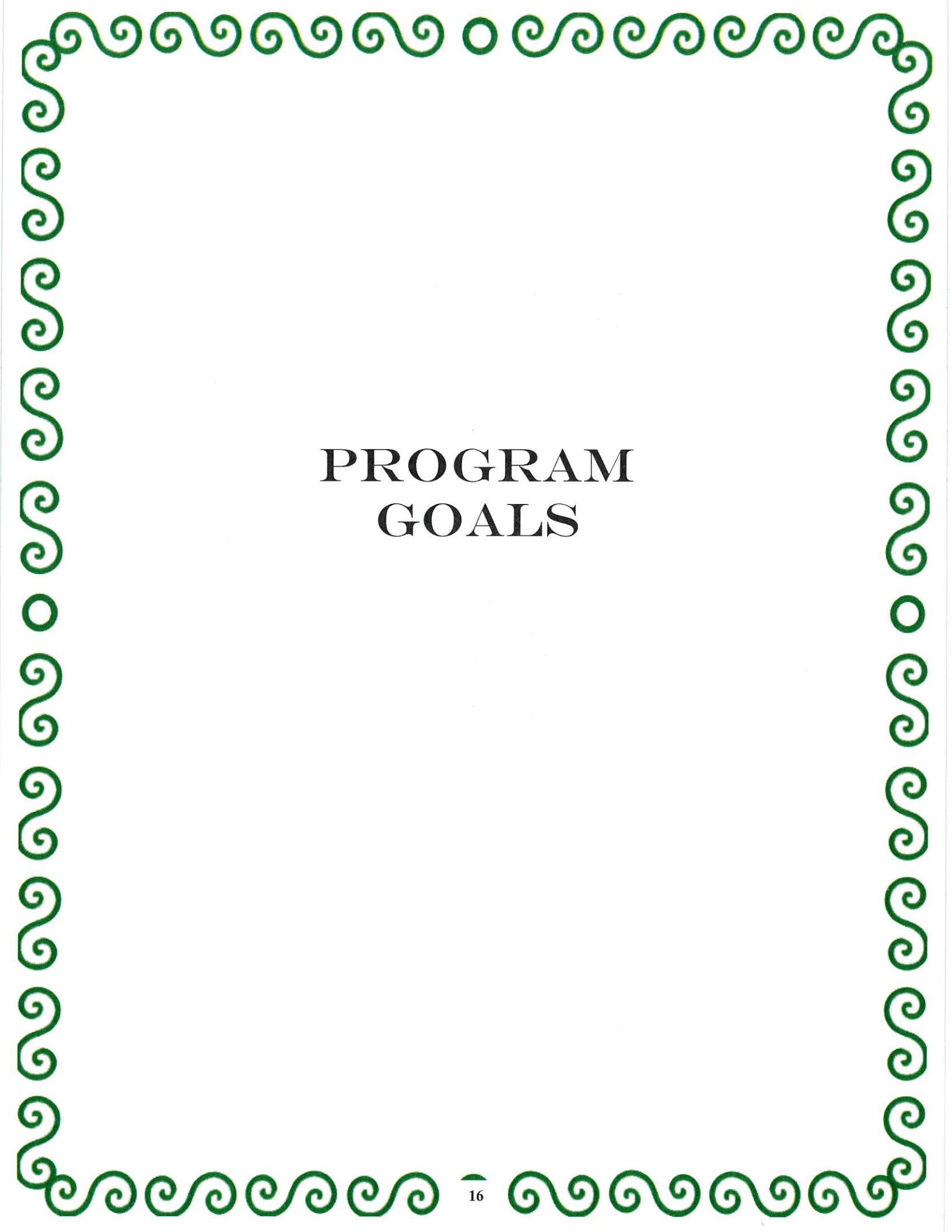
- 1. Verbal warning by pertinent DEC staff.*
- 2. Written Warning with Program Director's signature.*
- 3. Contact to Social Services for follow-up.*

UNEXPECTED EARLY RELEASE

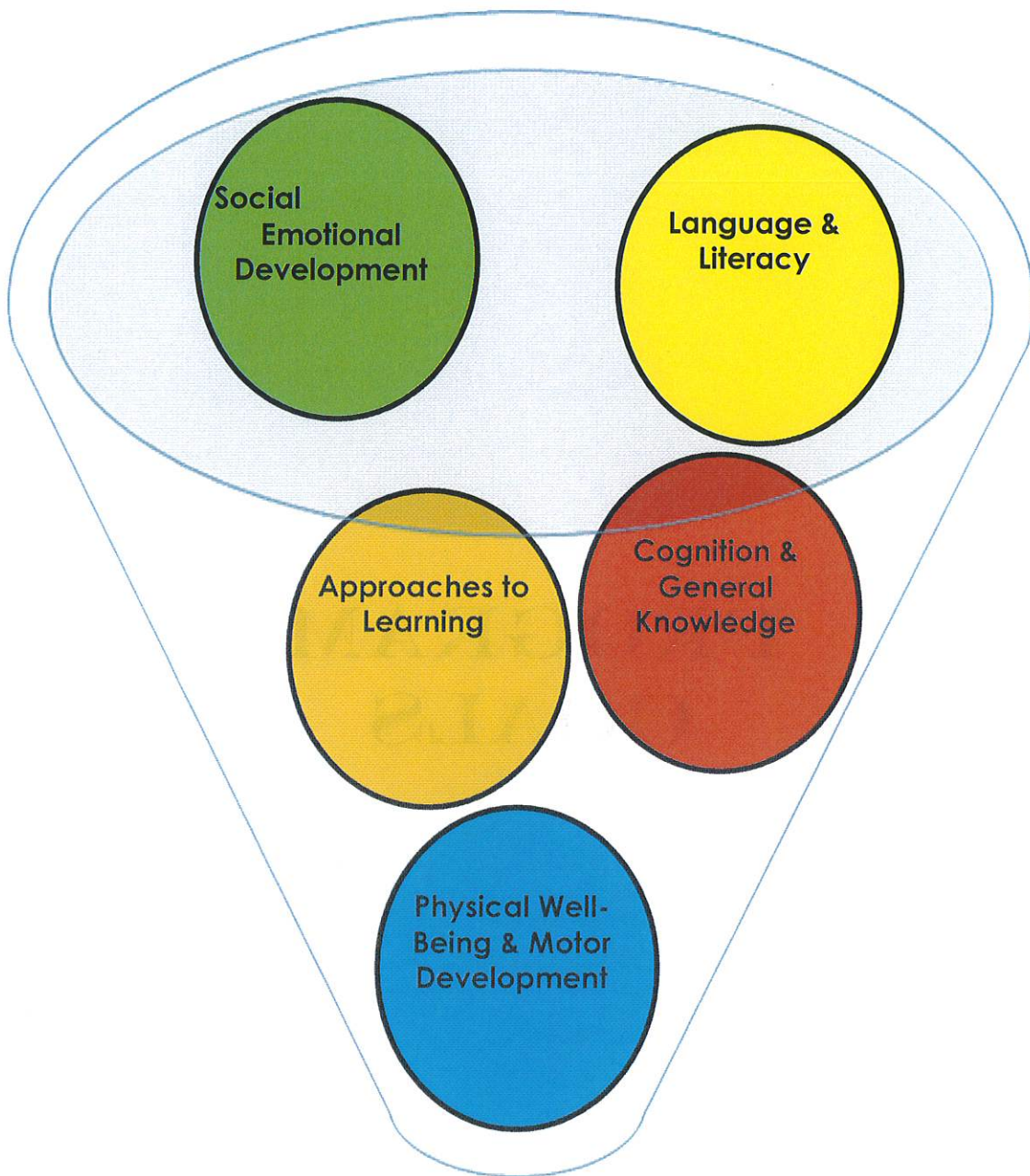
We ask that you follow these early release guidelines to ensure safety for all:

- If DEC receives notification of an “Early Release” for any reason, we make every attempt to contact all parents. DEC provides parent notification via Messenger, text message or phone call (please ensure contact information is current).
- *Parent has up to 30 minutes to pick up their child once an early release has been determined (times vary depending on the reason for early release).*
- Children utilizing bus services will follow regular boarding and bus route procedures home, at the indicated time of early release. See protocol for children who ride the bus under Bus Transportation, Safety and Bus Routes. Page 10
- In the event there is no one to receive your child off the bus, the child will return to program. Child must be picked-up immediately upon return.
- DEC Child Care services are canceled when an Unexpected Early Release is in effect. Parents must pick-up their child within a half hour of the time of Early Release. We will release children to authorized individuals on the child’s checkout list.





PROGRAM GOALS



School Readiness

School Readiness—Overview

School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Learn more about the approach.

- Physical, cognitive, social and emotional development are all essential ingredients of school readiness.
- DEC views school readiness as children possessing the skills, behavior, and knowledge necessary for success in school and for later learning.
- DEC must establish school readiness goals that are appropriate for the ages and development of enrolled children according to the following Early Learning Outcomes (ELOF) Framework and New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines (NMELG's)
 - *Approaches to Learning*
 - *Social and Emotional Development*
 - *Language and Literacy*
 - *Cognition*
 - *Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development*
- Implementing and measuring progress, toward school readiness goals, helps DEC to individualize and ensures what children need to be ready for kindergarten.
- DEC is required to consult with parents in establishing school readiness goals and to respect parents as their children's primary nurturers, teachers, and advocates, as described in the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE).
- As children transition to kindergarten, DEC and Laguna Elementary School work together to promote school readiness.





Language

Tribal Language Preservation & Revitalization

Some examples of how the Laguna Division of Early Childhood is working diligently to incorporate Laguna language and culture into the curriculum are through:

Outdoor Classrooms (planting, harvesting, S.T.E.A.M. Activities)

Cultural Life Ways (baking/cooking, dancing, morning prayer, Feast Days)

Language Daily oral language exposures between teachers, staff and children. Oral language classes when available.

HSPS 1302.36



ATTENDANCE



ATTENDANCE

If the child's monthly attendance falls under 85%, the child can be dis-enrolled. DEC makes good faith efforts to help the child return to school. If good faith efforts are unsuccessful, the child can be dis-enrolled.

- ⇒ Head Start attendance goal is set at 85% attendance.
- ⇒ Family Service Providers work with families to establish and maintain the attendance goal for Head Start children.
- ⇒ The attendance plan outlines the expectations for attendance. Please remember to call the center if your child will not be attending for the day.
- ⇒ We will work together to increase our attendance and make sure all children are safe, and getting the most out of their Head Start experience.

DEC ATTENDANCE PLAN

Attendance will be collected from each classroom by 8:30 a.m.

If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of start time, DEC may attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being.

If a child has two unexplained absences, the family service provider will conduct a home visit.

Families of children with patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing 10% of program days per year will meet with Family Service Providers to develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance.

HEAD START ATTENDANCE

(a) Promoting regular attendance. A program must track attendance for each child.

(1) A program must implement a process to ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being.

(2) A program must implement strategies to promote attendance. At a minimum, a program must:

(i) Provide information about the benefits of regular attendance;

(ii) Support families to promote the child's regular attendance;

(iii) Conduct a home visit or make other direct contact with a child's parents if a child has multiple unexplained absences (such as two consecutive unexplained absences; and,

(iv) Within the first 60 days of program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, use individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year and develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children, such as direct contact with parents or intensive case management, as necessary.

(3) If a child ceases to attend, the program must make appropriate efforts to reengage the family to resume attendance, including as described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section. If the child's attendance does not resume, then the program must consider that slot vacant. This action is not considered expulsion as described in §1302.17.

(b) Managing systematic program attendance issues. If a program's monthly average attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate. The program must use this data to make necessary changes in a timely manner as part of ongoing oversight and correction as described in §1302.102(b) and inform its continuous improvement efforts as described in §1302.102(c).

(c) Supporting attendance of homeless children. (1) If a program determines a child is eligible under §1302.12(c)(1)(iii), it must allow the child to attend for up to 90 days or as long as allowed under state licensing requirements, without immunization and other records, to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. A program must work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible in order to comply with state licensing requirements.

If a child, experiencing homelessness, is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program facility, the program must utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.

SCREENINGS

HEAD START SCREENINGS

The purpose of screening children is to be able to identify areas of concern in development, health or sensory. Developmental screening is a brief process using standardized health and developmental screening instruments. Screenings are tools to make determinations about children in the event a referral is necessary for further evaluation.

(HSPPS Child Screenings and assessments, 45 CFR § 1302.33)

- ◆ Screenings occur with the consent and collaboration of the parents.
- ◆ Programs complete or obtain, in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and in collaboration with the local agency, a current developmental screening to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills within 45 calendar days from when the child first attends the program or, for the home-based program option, receives a home visit.
- ◆ A program that operates for 90 days or less must complete or obtain a current developmental screening within 30 calendar days from when the child first attends the program.
- ◆ A program must use one or more research-based developmental standardized screening tools to complete the screening.
- ◆ As part of the screening, a program must use additional information from family members, teachers, and relevant staff familiar with the child's typical behavior.
- ◆ If warranted through screening and additional relevant information, and with direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional, a program must, with the parent's consent, promptly and appropriately address any needs identified via referral to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA for a formal evaluation to assess the child's eligibility for services under IDEA as soon as possible, and not to exceed timelines required under IDEA.
- ◆ Partnership with the child's parents and the relevant local agency to support families through the formal evaluation process.

The following screenings are completed for each Head Start child within 45 days of their enrollment.

- ◆ Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3
- ◆ Ages and Stages Questionnaire - Social Emotional
- ◆ Height/Weight
- ◆ Hearing
- ◆ Vision
- ◆ Dental (Proof of dental services is required within 45 days of enrollment).

CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS

The Laguna Division of Early Childhood program provides quality services to children with disabilities in an inclusion setting per the federal law titled Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for children birth to individuals up to the age of 21.

By law, programs must provide special services to eligible children with diagnosed disabilities and or developmental delays, also known as special education and related services. See below for a summary of Basics of the Special Education Process under the IDEA.

1. Identification of children requiring special education and related services by a referral or request for an evaluation by:
 - A. A school/program professional (parent permission is **always** required) OR
 - B. A parent may also contact their child's teacher or Support Services Coordinator with any concerns regarding their child and request an evaluation.
2. Evaluation – Conducted by a professional, focuses on the individual child in each area of concern such as speech therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy. An evaluation must assess the child in all areas related to the child's suspected disability or delay. **Parent permission required.**
3. If a child has been determined with a disability, as defined by IDEA, a team of school professionals and the parents/legal guardian must meet to write an **Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** for infants/toddlers or an **Individual Education Program** (for children ages 3 and above). IFSPs and IEPs are tailored plans to support each child's learning in an inclusive environment.
4. After the IEP or IFSP is developed, local professional agencies such as Native American Professional Parent Resources (NAPPR), La Vida Felicidad and contracted CES vendor through the Laguna Department of Education Director of Special Education coordinate delivery of services to the child. Parents receive written progress reports for each encounter of service area on the IFSP/IEP.
5. An IEP is reviewed and revised periodically, typically annually, to ensure the child's needs are being addressed. The review of an IFSP is every six months and at least once a year. Parents may request an IEP/IFSP meeting as deemed necessary. Essential team members are typically present and others with knowledge or expertise may be invited.



Learning Knows No Bounds

HEAD START EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the Framework have been fundamental to the Head Start program from its inception. They underlie the program policies and practices that prepare young children for success in school and beyond.

Each child is unique and can succeed.

Children are individuals with different timelines and paths of development. Children are uniquely influenced by their prenatal environment, temperament, physiology, and life experiences. With the appropriate support, all children can be successful learners and achieve the skills, behaviors, and knowledge described in the Framework.

Learning occurs within the context of relationships.

Caring families, teachers, and other adults matter in a young child's life. Responsive and supportive interactions with adults are essential to children's learning.

Families are children's first and most important caregivers, teachers, and advocates.

DEC treats families with respect and supports parents as the primary influence in their child's early learning and education. Their knowledge, skills, and cultural backgrounds contribute to children's school readiness.

Children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure.

Nurturing, responsive, and consistent care helps create safe environments where children feel secure and valued. In these settings, children are able to engage fully in learning experiences.

Areas of development are integrated, and children learn many concepts and skills at the same time.

Any single skill, behavior, or ability may involve multiple areas of development. For example, as infants gain fine motor skills, they can manipulate objects in new ways and deepen their understanding of cause and effect. As preschoolers gain new verbal skills, they can better manage their emotions and form friendships that are more complex.

Teaching must be intentional and focused on how children learn and grow.

Children are active, engaged and eager learners. Good teaching practices build on these intrinsic strengths by providing developmentally appropriate instruction and opportunities for exploration and meaningful play.

Children have diverse strengths rooted in their family's culture, background, language, and beliefs.

Responsive and respectful learning environments welcome children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Effective teaching practices and learning experiences build on the unique backgrounds and prior experiences of each child.

FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER

Role of DEC Family Service Provider

Goal:

To support families as they nurture the learning and development of their children in the context of their family, culture, and school readiness.

Objectives:

1. Engage Families in school readiness by promoting:
 - Regular child attendance
 - Child and family physical, social and emotional health
 - Culture identity and practice
2. Assist families in identifying and working towards family goals
3. Connect families to local resources

Service Provider Role:

- Contact families at least one time per month
 - (Re: Family welfare check, attendance, program information or as needed.)
- Conduct a minimum of four (4) in person visits per program year
- Complete a Family Partnership with families:
 - Family Strengths and Needs Assessment
 - Family Goals and follow-up
- Plan and coordinate monthly parent committee & parent education meetings, four (4) quarterly father involvement activities and events, including research based opportunities and suggestions:
Suggestion for activity: _____
- Provide resources based on the family's needs and requests
- Assist in recruitment of children for the Division of Early Childhood Program
- Maintains confidentiality
- Serves as a mandatory Child Abuse and Neglect Reporter
- Takes into consideration any existing plans for the family made with other community agencies and availability of other community resources to address family needs, strengths, and goals, in order to avoid duplication of effort
- Transition:
 - EHS to PHS
 - PHS to Kindergarten
- School of choice: _____

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

- a) *Family partnership process.* A program must implement a family partnership process that includes a family partnership agreement and the activities described in this section to support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability, to support child learning and development, to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities, and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their children. The process must be initiated as early in the program year as possible and continue for as long as the family participates in the program, based on parent interest and need.
- (b) *Identification of family strengths and needs.* A program must implement intake and family assessment procedures to identify family strengths and needs related to the family engagement outcomes as described in the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework, including family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and the local community, and families as advocates and leaders.
- (c) *Individualized family partnership services.* A program must offer individualized family partnership services that:
- (1) Collaborate with families to identify interests, needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes described in paragraph (b) of this section;
 - (2) Help families achieve identified individualized family engagement outcomes;
 - (3) Establish and implement a family partnership agreement process that is jointly developed and shared with parents, and families, to review individual progress, revise goals, evaluate and track whether identified needs and goals are met, and adjust strategies on an ongoing basis, as necessary, and;
 - (4) Assign staff and resources based on the urgency and intensity of identified family needs and goals.
- (d) *Existing plans and community resources.* In implementing this section, a program must take into consideration any existing plans for the family made with other community and availability of other community resources to address family needs, strengths, and goals, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent Committee:

Within the parent committee structure, a program may determine the best methods to engage families using strategies that are most effective in their community.

Parent Education: (Researched based)

Strategies that support positive relationships between parents' involvement in their child's education. This school year six (6) sessions are scheduled.

Father Engagement:

Engaging fathers in Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) programs can have a deep impact on children, their families, and the community as a whole.

Engaging fathers builds a lasting impact on fathers' connection and involvement in their children's development and well-being, leading to a larger impact on the family as a whole as well as on the entire local community. Activities will be scheduled.

Family Engagement

Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) organizes and plans for an appropriate, fun and welcoming environment for all children and families to attend events "on site" and/or through "At Home Activities" monthly.



HEALTH/NUTRITION



HEALTH GOAL

DEC programs and families work together to ensure that children are up-to-date on developmental, dental, vision, hearing and health screens and receive the necessary follow up services based on screening results. **HEALTHY CHILDREN ARE READY TO LEARN!**

SCHOOL READINESS GOAL NUTRITION

Nutrition Goal: Provide children with a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack when they are in program for the day that is low in fat, sugar, and salt and high in nutrients! **WE DO NOT ALLOW ANY OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS.** Thank you for helping to keep Laguna Head Start children healthy and protected from allergens!

HSPS 1302.44



MEAL PATTERNS



INFANT MEAL PATTERNS

AGES BIRTH THROUGH 5 MONTHS

BREAKFAST, SNACK, LUNCH & SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

Milk	4-6 oz	breastmilk ¹ or formula ²
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AGES 6 MONTHS THROUGH 11 MONTHS

BREAKFAST, LUNCH & SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

Milk	6-8 oz	breastmilk ¹ or formula ²
Grain/ Meat/Meat Alternate	0-1/2 oz eq	infant cereal ² or
	0-4 tbs	meat, fish, poultry, whole egg, cooked dry beans, or cooked dry peas or
	0-2 oz	cheese or
	0-4 oz	cottage cheese or yogurt ³ or
	0-4 oz	a combination of the above ⁴
Fruit/Vegetable	0-2 tbs	vegetable or fruit or a combination of both ^{4,5}

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Milk	2-4 oz	breastmilk ¹ or formula ²
Grain	0-1/2 oz eq	slice bread ⁶ or
	0-1/4 oz eq	crackers ⁶ or
	0-1/2 oz eq	infant cereal ^{2,6} or
	0-1/4 oz eq	ready-to-eat breakfast cereal ^{4,6,7}
Fruit/Vegetable	0-2 tbs	vegetable or fruit or a combination of both ^{4,5}

oz eq = ounce equivalents

¹ Breastmilk or formula, or portions of both, must be served; however, it is recommended that breastmilk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months. For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breastmilk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breastmilk may be offered, with additional breastmilk offered at a later time if the infant will consume more.

² Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.

³ Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.

⁴ A serving of this component is required when the infant is developmentally ready to accept it.

⁵ Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served.

⁶ A serving of grains must be whole grain-rich, enriched meal, or enriched flour.

⁷ Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal).



Fluid Milk



Vegetable



Fruit



Meat/Meat Alternate



Grain



Visit cacfp.org for more nutrition education resources.
CACFP is an indicator of quality child care. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



MEAL PATTERNS

BREAKFAST

Serve Milk, Vegetable or Fruit, Grain*

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Vegetable, Fruit or Both	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Grain*	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq

* Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week, oz eq = ounce equivalents

LUNCH / SUPPER

Serve All Five Components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	1 cup*
Vegetable	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Meat/Meat Alternate	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz	2 oz
Grain	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq

* A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults. oz eq = ounce equivalents

SNACK

Select Two of the Five Components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Vegetable	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Meat/Meat Alternate	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Grain	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

oz eq = ounce equivalents

Refer to USDA FNS Exhibit A for further guidance on grain serving sizes.



Fluid Milk



Vegetable



Fruit



Meat/Meat Alternate



Grain



Visit cacfp.org for more nutrition education resources. CACFP is an indicator of quality care. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

IMMUNIZATIONS, AND WELL CHILD CHECKS AND DENTAL EXAMS

- ✓ Head Start and all school systems require your child to be up to date on all immunizations within the guidelines listed below.
- ✓ You may get a note from your doctor if your child is on another schedule of immunizations.
- ✓ The note is an indicator for your child's immunization schedule.
- ✓ If your child is not up-to-date on immunizations, Head Start may dis-enroll until they are current.
- ✓ Well-child check documentation must be current and turned in to the Health Aide after each visit.
- ✓ Most recent dental exam must be submitted during the enrollment process and is to remain current after each visit.

Vaccine or Preventive Antibody	Birth	1 Month	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	7 Months	8 Months	12 Months	15 Months	18 Months	19 Months	20-23 Months	2-3 Years	4-6 Years
RSV antibody	Depends on mother's RSV vaccine status						Depends on child's health status							
Hepatitis B	Dose 1	Dose 2		Dose 3										
Rotavirus		Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3										
DTaP		Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3				Dose 4						Dose 5
Hib		Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3			Dose 4							
Pneumococcal		Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3			Dose 4							
Polio		Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3									Dose 4	
COVID-19														
Influenza/Flu				Every year. Two doses for some children										
MMR							Dose 1							Dose 2
Chickenpox							Dose 1							Dose 2
Hepatitis A							2 doses separated by 6 months							

REPORTING

CHILD ABUSE NEGLECT REPORTING

- * DEC employees are required to report any suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect to the Pueblo of Laguna Police Department.
- * The police will then investigate the report.
- * If a staff member calls the authorities to report suspected child abuse or neglect, he or she is doing so as a job requirement.

ILLNESS

The Division of Early Childhood program strives to keep children in program daily. However, if a child is ill, they will be more comfortable at home. Children should NOT come to school if they are not feeling well. Parents monitor for illness daily and keep children at home if they are experiencing symptoms. Parents should notify school if their child is ill.

- Fever of 100.4 F or higher.
- Symptoms such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or wheezing.
- A child with uncontrolled diarrhea (water that cannot be controlled inside a diaper or water stool happens 2-3 times within one hour).
- Vomiting during program hours.
- Sudden onset of rash.
- Other illness based on a child's health condition on a case-by-case basis.

PROCEDURES WHEN A CHILD BECOMES ILL WHILE AT DEC PROGRAM

If your child is having symptoms of illness while at the program, DEC will follow this procedure:

1. Classroom calls Health Aide with a concern. Health Aide will complete assessment and make a determination as to whether or not the symptoms fit within the exclusion criteria outlined in our policy. This is on a case-by-case basis.
2. If the symptoms DO NOT fit within the exclusion criteria, the child may stay at the program. DEC sends an Incident/Injury/Illness report home to notify parents/guardians of the illness and to recommend further monitoring of symptoms at home.
3. If the symptoms DO fit within the exclusion criteria, the Health Aide will make a report and call the parent/guardian to pick up the child. If we cannot contact either parent, we will proceed with the family's emergency contact numbers until we make contact. Please note that we look at every option before a parent is contacted to pick up a child. Once we contact the parent, child pick up is within 30 minutes of notification. Please go to the front office to sign child out.
4. If DEC sends a child home with symptoms of a contagious/communicable illness, a doctor's note clearing the child will be required for the child to return to the program to ensure the health and safety of all DEC children and prevent the spread of illness.

Be reminded:

1. *Washing hands with soap and water is the number one way to prevent infection/illness.*
2. *Keep contact numbers up-to-date and voicemails cleared; in case there is a concern regarding your child while they are at the program, we are able to reach you.*
3. *When coming to pick up the child from program, whether it be parents or others on the child's contact list, please ensure that the child has a car seat. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping DEC children healthy and safe. Should you have any questions/concerns please call the school @ (505)552-6544 ext. 5103.*

LICE

- Head Start will notify parents if they see what looks like lice or nits on your child.
- Teachers will document by filling out the Incident, Injury, and Illness report form.
- We ask that parents do a lice treatment on their child's head and then continue to comb thoroughly each night until the nits are no longer present on the child's head.
- If we call you in regards to your child having lice, we recommend that you pick them up to contain and treat. You may administer treatment upon the child's arrival home.
- Custodians clean and sanitize the classroom after a case has surfaced.

BED BUGS

- * If staff discover a suspected bed bug on a child or their belongings, an examination of the child, their clothing and belongings will occur.
- * The staff will assist the child to change into their extra clothing. Staff will place soiled clothing/belongings into a sealed plastic bag.
- * Contact to parents/guardians to notify of bed bug incident and to pick up their child within 30 minutes. Health Aide will send informational/instructional material home with the child.
- * Custodians clean and sanitize classroom/bus once incident has been determined.
- * Refer to DEC Health & Safety Plan in the event of a second occurrence.

ILLNESS/INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS **EVERY INJURY MUST BE EXPLAINED**

Though DEC staff make every effort to keep children safe, accidents and injuries do occur.

- * We know that active children do have accidents and often bump or fall resulting in minor injuries such as cuts, bruises, bleeding or swelling. If you notice any injuries, marks or abrasions on your child when he or she returns home at the end of the day, please notify the Director immediately at 505-321-6969.
- * If an accident or injury occurs at DEC, your child's teacher will contact you via phone call. Keep your contact information current in case of an emergency, so we may contact you.
- * You will also receive an Incident Report at the end of the day to inform you of the situation.
- * The Director or Individual delegated Proxy is required to sign any report going home; a delay of notice of one day may occur.
- * Always call the Director if you have any questions or concerns.

TRANSITION

EARLY HEAD START TO PRESCHOOL

TRANSITION PLAN

- ♦ An Early Head Start program must implement strategies and practices to support successful transitions for children and their families transitioning from Early Head Start to Preschool Head Start.
- ♦ Early Head Start must implement transition planning for each child and family.

Transition Schedule Details;

- ♦ Six (6) months prior to 3rd birthday (may be less than 6 months if child enrolls later), a meeting will be scheduled with parent and Family Service Provider, to discuss the plan.
- ♦ Two (2) months prior to 3rd birthday. A meeting with the ERSEA Manager to discuss the Transition Plan.
- ♦ On the first school day after the child's 3rd birthday, the Selection Committee will meet to determine eligibility of the child and assign a classroom. ERSEA Manager notifies parents of selection. Head Bus Driver will schedule parent bus orientation.
- ♦ Seven to ten days after 3rd birthday, upon completion of steps, child may start Preschool on her/his 3rd birthday.
- ♦ Children must transition into Head Start or another program as soon as possible after the child's third birthday.

HSPS 1302.70

PRESCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN

TRANSITION PLAN

- ♦ For children who will enter kindergarten in the following year must participate in the transition process to support a successful transition to kindergarten. Head Start children will visit a kindergarten classroom at least once during the spring.
- ♦ An evening presentation of kindergarten curriculum at Laguna Elementary School for families of transitioning children.

HSPS 1302.71

CLASSROOM AND PLAYGROUND SAFETY

TOYS/PERSONAL ITEMS

Please do not send personal items such as toys, stuffed animals, or electronics with your child to school unless teacher requests it for a special activity. This avoids loss and damage to the item.

If the teacher does request a personal item for an activity, please mark the item clearly with your child's name so it may be returned home at the end of the day.



CLASSROOM AND PLAYGROUND SAFETY

- * Please dress your children so they may participate in a day of physical activity and learning.
- * Children will run, climb, step, and engage in physical activities throughout the day.
- * Children will engage in “messy” play such as water, mud and paint.
- * To prevent classroom and playground injuries, please refrain from sending your child to school with hoodies with drawstrings, Crocs, flip-flops, sandals or open toed, wheels or heeled shoes.
- * Please do not send personal items such as blankets, toys or stuffed animals with your child to school.
- * For hydration, please send an empty water bottle for your child to use for the duration of the school year.
- * You may want to label your child's clothing to prevent lost items
- * Use sidewalks in inclement weather as a precaution to avoid slipping.

LAGUNA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

APPROVED BY LDOE SCHOOL BOARD 5/20/26

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
AUGUST 2026							
1							
2							
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31							

SEPTEMBER 2026						
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	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		5	6	7	8	9
2	3	4	12	13	14	15
9	10	11	18	19	20	21
16	17	18	25	26	27	28
23	24	25	31	1	2	3
30	31					

DECEMBER 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

JANUARY 2027						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY 2027						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

APRIL 2027						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	3	4	5	6	7	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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30	31					

JUNE 2027						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

 NO SCHOOL / DOE CLOSED		
NATIONAL HOLIDAYS		LAGUNA FEAST DAYS
JUL 4, 2026	INDEPENDENCE DAY (3RD)	AUG 15, 2026 MESITA FEAST
SEP 7, 2026	LABOR DAY	SEPT 8, 2026 ENCINAL FEAST
OCT 12, 2026	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY	SEPT 19, 2026 LAGUNA FEAST
NOV 11, 2026	VETERANS DAY	SEPT 25, 2026 PAGUAITE FEAST
NOV 26, 2026	THANKSGIVING DAY	OCT 17, 2026 PARAJE FEAST
DEC 25, 2026	CHRISTMAS DAY	MAR 19, 2027 LAGUNA FEAST
JAN 1, 2027	NEW YEAR'S DAY	
JAN 18, 2027	MARTIN L. KING DAY	RELIGIOUS DAYS
FEB 15, 2027	PRESIDENTS' DAY	JAN 6, 2027
MAY 31, 2027	MEMORIAL DAY	MAR 26, 2027
JUNE 19, 2027	JUNETEENTH	MAR 29, 2027
		RELIGIOUS DAYS LAGUNA FEAST DAYS THANKSGIVING 2026 NOV 23-27, 2026 WINTER 26-27 DEC 21 - JAN 5 SPRING 2027 MAR 15-19, 2027 PD/WORK DAYS
		FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH, EXCEPT AUG/26/JAN/27/JUN/27

PAYDATE	HALF
SEPT: 18	
OCT: 30	
NOV: 20	
DEC: 18	
JAN: 29	
FEB: 26	
APR: 30	
MAY: 14	

	1ST DAY OF SCHOOL	AUGUST 7, 2026
	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL	JUNE 11, 2027
	STAFF 1ST DAY	AUGUST 3, 2026
	STAFF LAST DAY	JUNE 15, 2027
DEC PROMOTION EVENT: JUNE 10, 2027 8:30AM - LES GYM		

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES	OCT 22/23, 2026	HOURS	STUDENTS:	STAFF:
	MAR 24/25, 2027		7:45AM-2:45PM (MON-FRI)	7:15AM-3:15PM (MON-FRI)

Receipt of Parent Information

- I have received a copy of the Parent Information booklet.
- DEC staff members have reviewed this information with me and I understand the expectations and procedures for the Laguna Division of Early Childhood.

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

