

**EPIC Head Start/Pre-K and Early Head Start
(All staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers)**

Standards of Conduct

1. We will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation or family composition.
2. **We will follow program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members.**
3. **No child will be left alone or unsupervised while under our care. There must always be two staff with children.**
4. We will use positive methods of child guidance to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior.
5. We will not engage in behaviors that maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children including but not limited to:
 - A. Corporal punishment; or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in or has the potential to result in physical injury.
 - B. Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation.
 - C. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being.
 - D. Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments
6. We will adhere to the NAEYC Code of Ethics in working with children and families and staff.
7. We will follow the social media policy, which aligns with the public school system and follows State Law.
 - A. We ask that you respect and understand that you may not take photos or videos of any child other than your own. Posting pictures/videos of other children could put a child or family in jeopardy. Parents may not post pictures of activities that take place at our centers on FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM or any other social media unless it is of your child only.
 - B. Any messages that are posted to FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM or any other social media that are viewed as harassing, coercing, or threatening to our children/students, families or staff will not be tolerated. Individuals have the right to pursue criminal charges against those postings.
8. In conjunction with West Virginia Department of Education Policy 4373 "Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools" the following expectations apply whether in a classroom or center, on a school bus, at a school-sponsored activity or event, whether held on a school premises, in a building or other property being used by our educational program. Unacceptable behavior will be taken seriously and investigated to determine proper interventions for the safety of all.

- A. Adults, whether staff or parents/guardians/caregivers will express their emotions appropriately in a wide range of situations (always being mindful that children are within hearing range).
- B. If an adult has a concern or issue with the program, the adult will address with supervisory staff in person.
- C. All adults will model how to respond appropriately to daily situations.

9. Professional Communications:

- A. Use appropriate tone and language. Be clear, respectful, and concise; avoid slang, sarcasm, or overly casual expressions.
- B. Proofread before sending. Check for typos, accuracy, and correct attachments or recipients.
- C. Respect confidentiality. Do not share sensitive or internal information without authorization.
- D. Respond in a timely manner. Aim to acknowledge or reply within one to two business days unless otherwise stated.
- E. Avoid emotional or impulsive communication. If upset, draft your email and review it later before sending.
- F. Keep records as required. Retain important communications for accountability and reference, in line with company policy.

10. Following the Chain of Command

- A. Respect organizational hierarchy. Communicate concerns, requests, and issues through your immediate supervisor before escalating further.
- B. Use proper escalation procedures. If an issue cannot be resolved at your level, follow the approved reporting line (e.g., Supervisor → Manager → Director).
- C. Do not bypass authority. Reaching higher management or external parties without exhausting internal options may undermine teamwork and accountability.
- D. Encourage open communication. While hierarchy should be respected, constructive feedback and ideas can still be shared appropriately within teams.
- E. Document and communicate appropriately. When escalating matters, use clear summaries of previous discussions and actions taken.
- F. Follow confidentiality and integrity. Information shared up or down the chain must remain truthful, accurate, and professional.

Violation of these standards may lead to disciplinary action as outlined in the EPIC Policy and Procedure Manual and the Head Start Tiered Correction Policy.

Staff Signature

Date