



"63,000 Moments of Truth Each Day"

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF MS.,

INCORPORATED

EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START

130 RIVERVIEW DRIVE, SUITE C

FLOWOOD, MS 39232

**FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
(PARENT HANDBOOK)**

2019-2020



DR. MARVIN HOGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA BRANCH, FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DIRECTOR

MELISA HARRIS, FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

HOWARD STEWART, PARENT/MALE INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR

Early Childhood Development & Health Services

The Early Childhood Development & Health Services Unit Is made up of five services. These are:: Education; Disabilities, Health, Nutrition and Mental Health Services.

Education Services: provide quality education program to ensure that all children are "SCHOOL READY" to enter into kindergarten and sustain educational gains through the third grade. How do we do this? By implementing the following school readiness goals to enhance children's skills in:

Language and Literacy

Language and Communication

Cognition

Math

Cognition and Self Regulations

Health and Safety

Relationships and Emotional Functioning



Disability Services: This service area ensures that children who are classified as disabled receive a Free and Appropriate Education as stipulated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Services are coordinated through the Mississippi Department of Education which is the lead agency responsible for identify and serving children from birth to age 21. Head Start/Early Head Start is for the Handicap too!

Health Services: This services area ensures for the Health and Safety of children and staff, making sure that the inside and outside learning environments are free of hazards. Secondly, children provide Medical, Dental and Vision Screenings and follow-up to children in optimal care. When children are healthy and alert, learning can take place.

Nutrition Services: The nutrition program ensures that children receive healthy, balanced meal. Children receive two meals and a snack every day. All meals and snacks meet requirements as specified by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.



USDA Non-discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Mental Health Services: Good Mental Health is ran extension of your physical health. The focus of the provision of services in mental health provide direct and indirect services to children who may be experiencing behavior concerns; social and emotional deficits which may inhibit a child from a full pre-school experience. Teachers and parents are provided hands on technical assistance for working with children and parents and staff have access to services is needed.



YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARENT:



You have the right to:

1. Take part in major policy decisions that affect the plan and operation of the program.
2. Assist in developing programs that improve daily living for you and your family.
3. Visit and participate in classroom activities.
4. Participate in the program without fear of endangering your child's rights.
5. Be informed of your child's(ren's) progress on a regular basis.
6. Be treated with Respect and Dignity.
7. Expect guidance from teachers and caregivers that enhance total development of your child/ren.
8. Learn program operations, which include information on budgets and budgeting, early childhood development and staff experience/qualifications for various positions.
9. Participate in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase your skills for possible employment..
10. Be informed about community resources on health, education and other issues that improve the family's quality of life.
11. Be notified when the program plans to evaluate, change educational placement and/or refuse to request for an education plan change.
12. Initiate an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and/or related services for your child/ren.
13. Give "Informed Parental Consent" for the evaluation and placement of your child to receive special education-consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.
14. Request for re-evaluation of your child's current educational placement.
15. Obtain an individual evaluation for your child if you disagree with findings from an evaluation provided by the program.
16. Review your child's educational record(s). The following apply for acquisition of records:

*Parents may only receive a copy of their child's record.

*Parents may request that information be changes if it is felt that information is incorrect or inaccurate.

CODE OF CONDUCT (PARENTS & STAFF)

Parents and staff will adhere to the following code of conduct while enrolled/employed in the Early Head Start/Head Start Program:

1. DRESS appropriately at all times while in and participating in center activities that represent Friends of Children of MS, Inc.
2. Serve as "POSITIVE ROLE MODELS" for children and each other.
3. Exhibit and encourage appropriate adult and professional behavior.
4. Not use cell phones while at the centers.
5. Not bring/carry weapons of any kind on the premises—the only exception to this policy is law enforcement.
6. No gossiping.
7. Speak in positive terms and exhibit appropriate bodily action representative of the program-using kind and encouraging words to each other.
8. Honor promises made, keeping them faithfully.
9. Be cheerful.
10. Work closely together (staff and parents).
11. Participate/engage (parents) in the education/school readiness process of the child and family development process.
12. Be respectful of others' interests, pursuits, welfare, home and family.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

As parents in the program your role and responsibility is to act/serve as:

Participant: In Early Head Start/Head Start activities such as orientation, open-house, classroom activities, education and parent committee sessions, recreational and social events.

Learner: Observe classroom activities, participate in joint parent education groups, sign up for skill development sessions (workshops/seminars, GED training, etc.).

Contributor: Volunteer in numerous capacities, contribute thoughts and ideas, give time to the program, parent child dyad, etc.

Supporter: Get other parents to participate, integrate the Early Head Start/Head Start in the broader community, support staff in their efforts, and assist in center activities when needed.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES CONT'D.:

Evaluator: Participate in annual self-assessment, identifying methods and strategies for program improvement.

Planner: Initiate and/or plan activities of interest to parents, identify goals, assist in the planning process in policy groups, and participate in the refunding process.

Decision Maker: Participate in/attend policy group sessions in the city, county and at the statewide policy group level.

Primary Educator: Become engaged in, participate and assist your child in achieving their school readiness goals by reinforcing what he/she has learned in the Early Head Start/Head Start program at home.

Child Advocate: Understand your child's needs and meet them, protect your child from injury and bodily harm, know and protect your child's rights, and be an advocate for your child and other children in the community.

Paid Employee: Apply for openings within the Early Head Start/Head Start program, become qualified for various positions within the program, and be an effective and sensitive staff person.

Leader: Become engaged in your community (school, government, health and human service activities, etc.), and use leadership skills to become a strong community leader.

TRANSPORTATION:



ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

1. Children are to arrive at the center by 8:00 a.m. each day. Parents/guardians are to park their vehicle and walk their child to his/her unit each morning and pick them up in the afternoon unless otherwise directed by the Center Manager.
2. If you are transporting your child, **YOU MUST** sign-in and sign-out each day with your child teacher. **THIS IS AN IMPORTANT LEGAL AND SAFETY CONCERN AS WELL AS PRECAUTION.**
3. Children will only be released to the person(s) listed by the parent on the pick-up list with proper identification. Parent must go to the center in person to add or remove an individual to or from their child's pick-up list.. **(THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS AND NO TELEPHONE CALLS).**
4. Agency staff are not allowed to transport children in their personal vehicles at any time for any reason. Please adhere to this policy.

TRANSPORTATION CONT'D.:

LATE & NON-PICK-UP PROCEDURE

1. Child pick-up begins at 2:00 p.m. for Head Start. Late pick-up begins at 2:05 p.m.
2. Child pick-up for Early Head Start begins at 3:00 p.m.. Late pick-up begins at 3:05 p.m.
3. Parents/guardians who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to their child being reported to local police officials. **PLEASE PICK YOUR CHILD UP AS SPECIFIED BY POLICY.**

TRANSPORTATION POLICY:

FCM, Inc. provides transportation "to and from" centers in certain areas. For children who are transported there **"MUST BE"** a designated, responsible person at the bus stop for pick-up loading and unloading all children. **TRANSPORTATION IS NOT PROVIDED WITHIN CITY LIMITS.**

Policy is as follows:

Parents/Guardians **"MUST"**:

1. Fill out a transportation consent form at the beginning of each school year giving FCM, Inc. permission to transport their child by school bus only on a daily basis.
2. Notify their child's Teacher/Caregiver or the Center Manager when a child will not be attending class, especially when there is only one child at a bus stop/pick-up point.
3. Notify the Center Manager and/or teacher/caregiver one (1) week in advance if/when moving. You **"MUST"** also give notice of the new address.
4. Children must be dressed and ready when the bus arrives. Bus drivers and monitors are not permitted to come to your door. If/when a child misses the bus, it will be the parent/guardian responsibility to bring the child to the center, to the classroom, and sign the child in.
5. Be at the designated bus stop/pick-up point ten (10) minutes before the scheduled bus stop time. This is a precautionary measure for times if/when a bus may arrive early. As a special note, the bus schedule will be irregular at the beginning of the year until routes have been established. Your patience will be appreciated.
6. Identify to the bus monitor who they are picking up from the bus. Adult is defined as someone at least eighteen (18) years of age or older. Younger children are not to be alone at the bus stop to pick up a child.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONT'D.:

7. Fill out an **"Child Pick-up List"** form with the names of people who are designated to pick up their child.

Designated persons **"MUST"**:

*Show a form of photo identification for staff to release a child,

*Be made aware by the parent/guardian that they have been designated to pick up the child

*Ensure that their child knows the individual designated and that they may be picking them up.

8. When circumstances dictate a change in pick-up persons, parents/guardians **"MUST"** fill out a **"Child Pick-up List"** form. Changes will not be acknowledged until the change form is completed and in the hands of agency staff.
9. Children will not be released to anyone not listed on the **"Child Pick-up List"** form. If no adult is authorized to pick up the child at the bus stop/pick-up point the child will be returned to the center. It will be the parent's/guardian's responsibility to come to the center and pick up his/her child.
10. If no one is at the bus stop/pick-up point the child will be returned to the center. It will be the parent's/guardian's responsibility to come to the center or have someone pick up the child. If no communication is received from the parent/guardian regarding pick-up arrangements by the end of the work day, the child will be taken to the local police authority.
11. If a child has to cross the street to get on or off the bus an adult **"MUST"** accompany him/her. The child **"MUST"** cross in front of the bus.
12. The bus will only pick up and drop off children at designated bus stops. Parents/guardians are not to request staff to do otherwise.
13. If a parent/guardian picks up a child from the center, the adult should come to the center fifteen (15) minutes before the bus leaves. Please inform teachers/caregivers and sign the child out.
14. **ONLY FCM, INC. CHILDREN AND BUS MONITORS** are allowed to ride the bus to and from the center.
15. There is to be **NO EATING, DRINKING, OR SMOKING** on the bus. Please do not give your child candy or food when they board the bus.
16. There will always be a bus monitor on the bus.
17. Children are not to bring **book bags, toys or any items** to the center unless special circumstances or events exist and prior arrangements/notification have been made.
18. No child will be released to an intoxicated individual at designated pick-up points, nor at the center.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONT'D.:

18. All passengers are required to wear seat belts while riding on FCM, Inc. buses. Children **"MUST"** be properly buckled in a safety restraint system before the bus begins its route.
19. Parents/guardians who transport their children **"MUST"** accompany them to the classroom and sign in. When returning to pick up a child, the parent/guardian or designated adult **"MUST"** come into the unit and sign the child out.
20. When there is inclement weather, parents/guardians will be advised to listen to the radio or watch television to find out if school has been cancelled or delayed. Cancellations/delays are coordinated with each school district.

WHEN NO ONE IS HOME TO RECEIVE THE CHILD/REN

FIRST OFFENSE: The Center Manager or designee will hold a conference with the parent/guardian to ascertain why the policy was violated. Without an acceptable excuse, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the child to and from the center.

SECOND OFFENSE: Will result in a recommendation for enrollee replacement.



CONFIDENTIALITY:

All family and child information is kept strictly confidential. Only authorized access will be granted. FCM, Inc. is obligated to receive written, parental consent prior to sharing information with any other source. Only the following persons have access to records:

1. Administrative staff of FCM, Inc. on a "need to know" basis;
2. Official representatives of the Office of Health and Human Services, and USDA Officials, and
3. Auditors for FCM, Inc.

ATTENDANCE & ABSENTEEISM:

Children **"MUST"** be at the center by 8:00 a.m. to receive a full day of services. If there are times when your child will arrive later than the scheduled time or will be absent, **YOU MUST CALL** the center and inform staff.

Regular attendance supports early childhood development and greatly enhances a child's school readiness abilities—readiness for kindergarten. **All children are expected to attend five (5) days per week, Monday through Friday. If you are unable to maintain this schedule, please consult with the Center Manager.**

ABSENTEEISM & ATTENDANCE CONT'D.:

You are expected to notify your Center Manager when your child will be absent. If you do not have access to a telephone, or if your child becomes suddenly ill, we ask that you meet the school bus and explain the absence to the bus driver. Please send a note explaining the child's absence and when he/she will return.

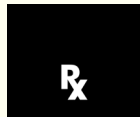
If a child has been absent for four (4) consecutive days without notification from you, and/or if the child is frequently absent, your Family Service/Case Worker will contact you to determine the reason(s) for the absence and work closely with you to develop a plan to ensure regular attendance. Although we will work with your family, if chronic absenteeism persist, it may become necessary for the child to be placed on the "waiting list" to allow another child the benefits of the program. If because of other personal circumstances (e.g. moving, etc.) it may become necessary for you to withdraw your child. In such cases, please notify the Center Manager as soon as possible.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT:

Friends of Children of Mississippi, Incorporated's philosophy and Federal Guidelines in working with infants, toddlers, and preschool age children clearly states that the use of "CORPORAL PUNISHMENT" is strictly forbidden in our facilities.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT:

Mississippi law mandate that all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect be reported to the Mississippi Department of Human Services Division of Child Protective Services. FCM, Inc. staff receive training each calendar year on how to recognize signs of abuse and neglect, how to provide appropriate intervention strategies, family support services and assistance to families.



MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION:

In cases where it becomes necessary to administer medication during in-school hours, per the directives of a physician, the following procedures will be strictly adhered to:

- *Only prescribed medications will be administered,
- ***Medication must be in the original container with the child's name and procedure for administration, and**
- *Parents/guardians must complete a consent form for administration.

CHANGE OF CUSTODY PROCEDURE:

If/when a child's legal custody changes, for whatever reason, a court order or legal document(s) "**MUST**" be provided. If no court order or document is provided, both parents will have access to the child.

There are two (2) types of custody arrangements. These are:

1. **Sole or Exclusive Custody:** This is when the parent or legal guardian make all decisions in regards to the child. The other parent has no decision making responsibility. The parent who holds the latter position is classified as the "**Visiting Parent.**"
2. **Joint Custody:** This is when both parents or legal guardians have the right to make decisions about the child.

CLOTHING & OTHER PERSONAL OBJECTS:

In order to meet your child's/ren's personal needs, parents/guardians are requested to provide the following items:

*One (1) complete change of clothing (underwear and outerwear).

*Two (2) bath towels which will be sent home each Friday for washing.

*Parents/guardians are encouraged to dress children in appropriate attire daily. Please make sure that children are wearing sturdy shoes to prevent slips, trips and falls. **Flips flops are not permitted.**

*Children are not to bring **book bags, toys or any items** to the center unless special circumstances or events exist and prior arrangements/notification have been made.

LIABILITY COVERAGE:

Friends of Children of MS, Incorporated provide liability insurance coverage on all children and volunteers.

GRADUATION:

Graduation is not developmentally appropriate for preschool children. Therefore, FCM, Inc. does not conduct graduation exercises. FCM, Inc. encourages parents and staff to plan and participate in developmentally appropriate closing activities (e.g. picnics, family day outings, etc.).

PARENT COMMUNICATION:

PROBLEMS! QUESTIONS? CONCERNS! All staff of Friends of Children of Mississippi, Incorporated are committed to assuring that parent contacts are beneficial and stress free. The Center Manager and their staff are available to discuss any and all matters with parents and guardians relevant to the child's infant/toddler and preschool program, as well as family concerns. Your child's teacher/caregiver in most cases will be able to answer questions you may have regarding unit activities and interactions. Your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions are always welcome.

We at FCM, Inc. will make every attempt to resolve questions and concerns. The following outline the Parent Communication Procedure:

"Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start will be just and fair in its day-to-day operation of the agency. However, we recognize at times parents may feel that some of our policies and/or procedures maybe unfair or unjust. In the event a parent/guardian has a complaint or concern in reference to a policy, procedure, statement, regulation and/or any phase of the agency's operation, the inquiry should be written and addressed to the Center Manager."



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc. is a highly efficient, team-based, 501 C-3 tax exempt, private nonprofit human service agency. Our Mission is to strengthen children and families through community partnerships by:

- Providing a comprehensive child development program which enhances social competence,
- Assisting families' to become self-sufficient and
- Serving as advocates for children and families.

We increase the families' capacity to support and nurture their children by developing a compassionate partnership between staff and families, which recognize parents as primary educators of their children. In support of that partnership, Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc. provides opportunities for continuous staff growth and development, and creates an environment which promotes job satisfaction and community service.



CENTRAL OFFICE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Central Office (601) 321-0960

Should you have questions or concerns regarding services and/or activities at your center a list of Center Managers and telephone numbers is provided below:

Dr. Marvin Hogan, Executive Director

Dr. Cathy Gaston, Deputy/Early Head Start Director

Mrs. Helen Griffin, Program Design & Management Director

Ms. Barbara Branch, Family & Community Engagement Director

Mr. James Cropper, Finance Director

Ms. Precious Garner, Human Resource Manager

*Mrs. Sharon Barnes, Early Childhood Development & Health
Services Director*

Ms. Melisa Harris, Family Engagement Coordinator

Mr. Howard Stewart, Parent/Male Involvement Coordinator

Mr. Roy Brown, Facilities Director

Mr. Albert Carter, Facility Coordinator

Mr. Oliver Sims, Transportation Coordinator

Mr. Charles Matthews, Information Technology Coordinator

Ms. Nekella Blackmon, Disability Services Coordinator

Ms. Tonya Anderson, EHS Child Care Partnership Liaison

Mrs. Irene Booker, Nutrition Coordinator

Mrs. Bobbie Posey, Health Coordinator

Ms. Shirley Moore, Compliance Officer/Development Specialist



CENTER MANAGEMENT STAFF CONT'D

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START

AREA I

Riven Oak HS Center: Ms. Peggy Clark

Telephone: (662) 247-2206

Ripley-Blackwell HS Center: Ms. Tiney Anderson

Telephone: (662) 873-4972

Banks-Straughter and White EHS Center: Ms. Natalie Rucker

Telephone: (662) 247-4288

AREA II

Dr. Marvin Hogan HS/EHS Center: Mrs. Mary Richards

Telephone: (601) 879-3469

AB Devine/CO Chinn/WE Garrett HS Center: Mrs. Arlena Riley

Telephone: (601) 859-6259

Winson and Dovie Hudson HS Center: Ms. Charlotte Sanders

Telephone: (601) 267-4205

EHS-Wonderful World EHS Center: Ms. Gail Cook:

Telephone: (601) 253-0080

AREA III

New Hope HS Center: Mrs. Patricia Givens Telephone: (601) 936-5319

St. James HS Center: Mrs. Patricia Griffin Telephone: (601) 932-6029

McCall HS/EHS Center: Ms. Ms. Seaton Telephone: (601) 854-8463

Brushy Creek HS Center: Mrs. Alice Davis Telephone: (601) 892-3826

Early Intervention EHS Center: Ms. Delphine Henry

Telephone: (601) 892-5991

Mt. Sinai HS Center: Mrs. Yolanda Perkins Telephone: (601) 894-1742

CENTER MANAGEMENT STAFF CONT'D

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START

AREA IV

Crossroads HS Center: Ms. Angie Wesley Telephone: (601) 683-3161

DeKalb HS/EHS Center: Ms. Deborah Spencer

Telephone: (601) 743-2607

Newton EHS Center: Ms. Meosha Mitchell

Telephone: (601) 683-0205

AREA V

Manuel-Goff HS/EHS Center: Ms. Lisa McCarty

Telephone: (601) 776-6016

East Jasper HS/EHS Center: Ms. Darlene Thomas

Telephone: (601) 787-4638

L.N. Payton HS Center: Ms. Betty Jenkins

Telephone: (601) 764-3470

AREA VI

EHS/Jones Center: Ms. Annie Jackson

Telephone: (601) 426-1013

King Star HS/EHS Center: Gloria Gammage

Telephone: (601) 649-6503

Queen Olive HS Center: Ms. Patricia Bruce

Telephone: (601) 425-5849

Queen Olive II HS Center: Mrs. Patricia Bruce

Telephone: (601) 425-5849

Bryant-Turner HS Center: Ms. Jessie McCarty

Telephone: (601) 735-9844

Union-Greene HS/EHS Center: Ms. Theresa Lacey (Interim)

Telephone: (601) 989-2734

Thank you for entrusting your child's early childhood education

with

"Friends of Children of MS., Incorporated"

