

2025-2026

Early Head Start/Head Start

Parent Handbook



Step Inc. HS/EHS Program Vision Statement

To provide exceptional services to young children and their families, empowering them to take control of their lives and reach their potential.



Agency Mission

Our mission: STEP, and our partners, facilitate solutions that empower people to overcome their barriers to economic, educational, and developmental success with the communities we serve.

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Welcome Parents and Families!

Welcome to STEP, Inc. Head Start & Early Head Start birth to age 5 child development programs. We believe our program will offer your child a quality, comprehensive, infant, toddler, and preschool experience in a loving, caring, safe environment.

WE BELIEVE THAT PARENTS ARE THEIR CHILD'S MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER!

This handbook is designed to begin your partnership with Head Start/Early Head Start by providing information that will allow you and your child to have a positive experience with us. If we can do anything to make your child or family's year in our program a better experience, please let us know.

We are committed to providing quality comprehensive services for enrolled children and families. Our activities are geared toward nurturing the growth and development of the children enrolled, engaging parents in the program and providing them with opportunities to enhance their understanding and knowledge.

We look forward to working with you and your child during the upcoming year!

STEP, Inc. Head Start & Early Head Start Staff

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

We believe if we invest now as a team, we all benefit later. Research has proven that many factors affect a **child's readiness for school**: academic readiness, social and emotional development, and strong family and community engagement. Our program is designed to address all of these areas.

Our goal is to offer a comprehensive developmental program that meets the needs of your child. You, the parent or guardian, as the primary influence in your child's life, are a very special and important part of our program. Therefore, we need to work together with you and with others in our community to make this an excellent early childhood education experience for your child.

Program Mission:

It is our mission to empower young children and their families to make positive life choices and reach their full potential by providing exceptional services.

Serving both Franklin and Patrick County

Program Management Staff:

Position	Staff	Location	Telephone Number
HS/EHS Program Director	<i>Tanya Huff</i>	Franklin & Patrick	540-483-5142 ext. 3015
HS Education Manager	<i>Mary Quesenberry</i>	Franklin	540-483-5142 ext. 3045
EHS Education Manager			540-483-5142 ext. 3035
Health Services Manager			
HS/EHS Education Manager	<i>Kathleen Kilgore</i>	Patrick	276-694-2239 ext. 4214
Quality Assurance Manager	<i>Christina Johnson</i>	Franklin & Patrick	540-483-5142 ext.

Important Timeline

The completion of the required screenings and documentation is based on your child's first day of enrollment according to the chart below.
(FA=Family Advocate/HA=Health Advocate)

Documentation Needed	Completed By	Prior to Enrollment	Within 20 working days after enrollment date	Within 30 calendar days after enrollment date	Within 30 working days after enrollment date	Within 45 calendar days after enrollment date	Within 60 calendar days after enrollment date	Within 90 calendar days after enrollment date
Enrollment Paperwork	Parent	✓						
Up-to-date Immunizations	Parent	✓						
Parent Training Survey	Parent & FA		✓					
Children's Physicals	Parent			✓				
Family Partnership Plan	Parent & FA					✓		
FA Home visit	Parent & FA						✓	
Completion of Health Screenings *	Health Manager or HA					✓		
Developmental Screenings **	Teachers					✓		
Dental Exam	Parent or Health Manager / HA							✓

* Health Screenings required: height, weight, vision, hearing, and nutrition
** Developmental Screenings required: speech, Brigance assessment, and social-emotional checklist

Now that your child is enrolled:

- ✓ Please give any medical history for your child so we can safely serve your child.
- ✓ If you decline the required screenings, you are responsible for the screenings within 45 days of enrollment.
- ✓ **At least two (2) responsible people** to contact in emergency situations are required at all times.
- ✓ Please submit the names of persons who can and cannot pick up your child or receive your child from the bus. Legal custody documentation must be provided, if applicable.
- ✓ Any **additional persons or changes** need to be **in writing only**. A driver's license or other positive identification will be required for persons unknown to the center staff when picking up a child.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS



- ✓ Up-to-date immunizations are needed before enrollment. Ex: DTP, Polio, and Hepatitis B, MMR, and HIB vaccine.
- ✓ Physical exams for HS and Well-baby checks for EHS must be presented before enrollment.
- ✓ Physical exams and Well-baby checks must be on a VA State Physical Exam form. * **See chart below**

Well Baby Checks due:	Birth / 2mo. / 4mo. / 6mo. / 9mo. / 12mo. / 15mo /18mo.
Physicals due:	2 yr. / 3 yr. / 4 yr. / 5 yr. / As needed
Lead screening	12 and 24 months or 36 months
Hemoglobin/Hematocrit	12 months

Training, Planning, and Mental Health

Training is essential to maintaining quality staff. Having the time to plan is also crucial to quality services. We provide regular training opportunities and planning time for all staff.

The program will not have children on certain days in an effort to prioritize mental health and well-being in the program to improve the personal lives of staff, hoping it will lead to greater job performance, productivity, and engagement.

Parents please expect and plan for closures due to staff training, planning, and scheduled closure to help with mental health.

Off to a Successful School Year!

- Please report any change of address or phone number to the Head Start/Early Head Start staff immediately.
- Plan to work with the staff and other parents in a cooperative way.
- Offer constructive criticism of the program by participating in parent surveys and our program self- assessment process.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the following committees:

Menu Review Committee	Health and Disabilities Services Advisory
By-laws Committee	Annual Self-Assessment Team
Screening Applications	Policy Council
Parent Committee	Interview Team

Please Keep In Touch

Because you are such an important part of your child's education, it is important that we keep an open line of communication with you about how your child is progressing and what we are doing at HS/EHS. We will keep in touch with you through:

- Notes, Daily or Weekly Classroom Report,
- Telephone calls, emails, as needed.
- ClassDojo

Code of Conduct for Parents

- Make every effort to bring your child to the center on time, no later than 8:30am unless prior communication of an appointment. For our Patrick Springs site, please have your child at school by 8:15am.
- Please pick your child up from the center at the designated time. Please come no earlier than 2:30pm.
- Sign your child in and out daily.
- Please treat all children, other parents, and staff with respect at all times.
- **Please refrain from using inappropriate language, violating health or safety issues, as well as endangering yourself, others, or any property. Depending on severity, failure to adhere to the policies will result in the following:**
 - Meeting with a program Manager or Director.
 - Discussion of other options.



No Cell Phone Zone



Cell phones are prohibited in the presence of the children in the classroom, and especially at drop off and pick up times. This is a crucial time for parents to engage with the teacher and exchange vital information concerning the child.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

STEP, Inc. HS/EHS acknowledges the unique needs of our Dual Language Learners and their families. We have adopted strategies to meet your individual needs. Families are asked to participate in a "home language" survey to help staff assist parents in their language. Interpretive services will be provided as needed.

STEP, Inc. HS/EHS reconoce las necesidades únicas de nuestros estudiantes que aprenden en dos idiomas y sus familias y hemos adoptado estrategias para satisfacer sus necesidades individuales. Se pide a las familias que participen en una encuesta sobre el "idioma materno" para ayudar al personal a ayudar a los padres en su idioma. Se proporcionarán servicios de interpretación según sea necesario.

Parents Have A Right!

You have a right:

- to take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and the operation of this program.
- to choose whether or not you participate, without fear of endangering your child's right to be in the program.
- to always be treated and treat others with respect and dignity.
- to be welcomed, informed regularly, and expect guidance from your child's teacher which will help his/her total individual development.
- to be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education, and the improvement of family life.



Rights of the Custodial Parent

Code of Virginia 63.2-1813. Visitation by parents or guardians in child care programs: A **custodial parent or guardian** shall be admitted to any child care program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child care program.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

Parent and family engagement are essential to quality early child care and education. Evidence demonstrates that when the parent-staff partnership is strong, children form better relationships, feel good about themselves, and do better in school.

There are **key activities** within our program that we hope will help us build relationships, and engage with our families:

CLASSROOM	FAMILY ADVOCATE	PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
Share ideas & talents	Parent Meeting/Events	Serve on Policy Council
Father/Male Activities	Attend community workshops	Serve on STEP Board
Goal setting for child, self, and family	Recruit new families	Screen child applications
Submit requested documentation	Make positive life changes	Participate in Self-Assessment
Give feedback on trainings & meetings	Attend Parenting Classes	Seek employment if qualified
Help meet in-kind goals	Engage during home visits	Volunteer in classroom

Classroom Home Visits & Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Head Start and Early Head Start Teachers are required to complete at least **2 scheduled home visits and 2 parent/teacher conferences** during the school year.
- Arrangements for such visits will respect your wishes and convenience.
- The home visits should occur in the home and may be coordinated with other service area staff whenever possible.
- The teaching staff will devote time to discuss your areas of mutual interest and concerns in order to identify home activities and ways to expand the experience for you and your child.
- Parent/Teacher conferences should occur at the site, taking into consideration the parent's needs.

The objective of parent conferences:

- Plan ways parents and staff can work together
- Share information about your child's development
- Share activities parents can do with their child at home to help support what he or she is learning at school
- Work together to help ensure that your child has experiences at home and at school that make him or her feel successful

Parent Committee



The parent committee is made up of HS/EHS parents or legal guardians. Relatives or community representatives also may attend parent meetings. Only parents or legal guardians can vote or hold office. All parents are invited and encouraged to attend HS/EHS parent meetings. Details of each office and its responsibilities will be given during the first parent committee meeting. This is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer.

Parent Committee officers needed:

1. The Chairperson and Alternate
2. The Vice-Chairperson and Alternate
3. The Secretary and Alternate
4. The Treasurer and Alternate

The Policy Council



The STEP, Inc. HS/EHS Policy Council works along with the Board of Directors and Early Childhood Education Director to make decisions for the program. Each center elects one representative from the Parent Committee to serve on the Policy Council. The Policy Council has monthly meetings. This council elects its own officers, and sends representatives to local, state, regional, and national meetings. The Policy Council is made up of no less than 51% parents.

Non-Federal Share (In-Kind) Donations



It is a federal requirement for each Head Start program to obtain 20 % of its operational budget from local, non-federal sources. One of the most effective ways we achieve this goal is through ***in-kind donations***. In-kind donations are goods or acts of volunteering that parents, and members of our community donate to our program. Our "greatest resource" of volunteering is our **PARENTS**. You can contribute to our in-kind goals by:

- **Volunteering at the center, classroom, and program level.**
- **Participating on any committee, parent meetings, Policy Council, Board, and Parenting classes.**
- **Donating various items that the classroom or program may need, if affordable.**

Education & Early Childhood Development



Our goal is to create a developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment in which children from all cultures and abilities can learn and grow **socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively**. Individual needs of the children are discussed with the parents during daily contact, in-school conferences and home visits, and plans are made to ensure that each child is given an opportunity to have successful experiences every day.

Classroom Ratio:

Early Head Start - 2 Infant/Toddler Teachers to 8 students.

Head Start - 1 Teacher, 1 Teacher Assistant up to 20 preschoolers.

Hours of Operation



Each center/classroom is required to meet for at least seven hours per day Monday through Friday. Please see the chart below with your assigned center for hours of operation.

FRANKLIN COUNTY			PATRICK COUNTY		
STEP Agency Office Hours: 8:30 - 4:30 pm M-F			STEP Agency Office Hours: 8:30 - 4:30 pm M-F		
Name	Location	Hrs. of Operation	Name	Location	Hrs. of Operation
Early Head Start Classrooms					
STEP 1-Infants	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm	EHS 1 Infants	EHS Building	8:00-3:00pm
STEP 2 -Toddlers	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm	EHS 2 Toddlers	EHS Building	8:00-3:00pm
STEP 3 -Toddlers	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm	Patrick Springs	Elementary School	7:45-2:45 pm
STEP 4 -Toddlers	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm	Stuart	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm
STEP 5 -Toddlers	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm	Stuart VPI-HS	Elementary School	8:15 - 3:15 pm
Head Start Classrooms					
STEP 6 -Preschool	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm			
STEP 7 -Preschool	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm			
STEP 8 -Preschool	STEP Building	8:00-3:00 pm			
Lee M. Waid VPI-HS	Elementary Sch.	7:45-2:45 pm			

Attendance Policy

- Regular attendance is important!
- HS/EHS is required by the federal guidelines to maintain 85% attendance each month in each **classroom**.
- Teaching your child to attend school on a regular basis at an early age is an important lesson that needs to be learned for success in elementary school and later in life.
- Good attendance plays a huge part in school readiness.
- If your child is sick, please notify your child's teacher immediately, and keep the teacher informed of your child's ongoing condition. Please bring a doctor's note if applicable.
- Any day your child is absent, and the teacher has not been informed in advance, you will receive a phone call.
- Any child is absent for three consecutive days or if they display irregular attendance, you will be contacted by your Family Advocate.
- **Children who arrive after 8:30 are considered tardy (8:15 at PS)** and will not be permitted in the classroom without medical documentation. Multiple tardiness may result in an attendance action plan.
- Failure to adhere to the daily attendance policy will result in an **attendance action plan**.

School Readiness and Attendance Go Hand in Hand!

Too many absences can cause children to start school behind their peers.

Students can fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.

Absences & tardiness impact the whole classroom.

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP BE ON TIME & PRESENT:

- Set a regular bed and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack a backpack the night before.
- Make sure you know the school calendar.
- Ensure your child has the required health documents before school starts.
- Don't let your child stay home unless he/she is truly sick.
- Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about school, talk to your teacher/Advocate for advice on how to make him/her feel more comfortable.
- Develop back-up plans to get to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Ask program staff for suggestions to help with tardiness.

Car Rider Policy & Procedures

Arrival Policy

- Arrival time begins at 8:00 am daily. The cutoff for arrival is 8:30 am. For our Patrick Springs (PS) site, arrival time is 7:40 am and cut off is 8:10 am.
- **Students who arrive after 8:30 AM (8:10AM @ PS) will not be admitted without parent notifying staff in advance, but only for appointments, not just calling to say you are late.**
- For children who do not arrive by 8:30 AM, (8:15 @ PS) a classroom staff member will attempt to contact the parent/guardian to ensure the child's well-being. It is important that you call the center by the time your child is expected to arrive.
- Parents are expected to bring their child into the classroom and sign him/her in for the day. (Patrick Springs parents use the car rider lane.)
- **A child should NEVER be left unattended in vehicles while parents are dropping off or picking up a child in our program.**
- If a young child is left unattended in a vehicle in our parking lot, a staff member (mandated reporter) will speak to you; if left unattended again, a call to the local DSS will take place.

Departure Policy

- Please, pick up your child no later than 3:00 pm on regular days and 12:00 noon (Patrick Springs will vary) on early dismissal days. (Patrick Springs car riders will start dismissing at 2:50 pm and end at 3:00 pm.)
- For children who have not been picked up by 3:00 pm, every effort will be made to contact the parents and/or those authorized on the pick-up list. If we are unsuccessful getting in touch with anyone, DSS will be notified as our last resort.
- If you must pick up your child early, when possible, please plan to arrive after 2:30 to ensure they get the full day experience.
- Any person who picks up your child must be at least 18 years of age.
- Parents or guardians are required to list any names of all persons who are permitted to pick up their child on the Emergency Information form.
- A photo ID may be required for a child to be released to parents, guardians, or designated persons.
- No one else can pick up your child from school without your written permission.
- We understand that at times emergencies occur and parents cannot make it to the center on time to pick up their child. If the **parent has to be contacted for late pick up more than three times**, a conference will be scheduled
- **WE WILL NOT TAKE VERBAL PERMISSION TO RELEASE YOUR CHILD TO SOMEONE THAT IS NOT ON THE AUTHORIZED PICK UP LIST.**

Bus Transportation Policy & Procedures (Patrick Springs Only)

Weekly gas stipends will be distributed to families who transport their children to HS/EHS (1 card per family).



Any 4-year-old child enrolled in the Patrick Springs Head Start site can be transported by the Public-School System if eligible.

- Please be ready to receive your child in the afternoon.
- No one else can receive the child off the bus without your written permission.
- Please **DO NOT SMOKE or VAPE** at the Bus Stop **in sight of the children**.
- If you or an authorized person does not meet the afternoon bus to receive your child, he/she will be returned to the school and it will be your responsibility to pick up your child. If efforts to reach you are unsuccessful, as a last resort, DSS will be notified.
- If you pick up your child during bus loading times, you must return to the classroom to sign the child out for the day.
- We adhere to all bus rules and regulations that are set by the public-school system.
- Any questions or concerns about transportation should be addressed with your Family Advocate.

Each child transported in a school bus will receive instruction in:

- ★ Safe riding practices.
- ★ Safety procedures for boarding and leaving the bus.
- ★ Safety procedures in crossing the street to and from the bus at bus stops.
- ★ Recognizing the danger zones around the bus.
- ★ Emergency evacuation procedures including an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the bus.
- ★ You or an authorized adult should be at the bus stop 10 minutes early

Supervision of Children

It is the responsibility of the HS/EHS program to provide Active Supervision as a part of quality care. Therefore, we adopt, as policy, the mandates set forth in the licensing statutes that govern STEP, Inc. HS/EHS will provide annual training for staff and volunteers on the Supervision of Children and will provide a tip sheet to refer to throughout the year.

NOTE: Children enrolled in STEP, Inc. HS/EHS are our greatest asset. Our priority is that children are protected and not harmed in any way. STEP, Inc. Head Start employees who compromise the safety of our children by leaving a child unattended will be subject to automatic termination.

Below is an example of what a typical day may look like for HS and EHS:

A Sample Daily Schedule			
Head Start Classroom		Early Head Start Classroom	
8:00 - 8:30	Children's arrival/free play	8:00 - 8:30	Children's arrival/Choice play
8:30 - 9:00	Breakfast	8:30 - 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:30	Clean up	9:00 - 9:30	Clean up/Diapering
9:30 - 9:45	Circle Time	9:45 -10:00	Free play
9:45 -10:45	Center Time	10:00 -10:30	Choice Play
10:45 -11:00	Clean up Center Time	10:30 -11:30	Outside Time
11:00 -11:30	Outside Time	11:30 -12:00	Lunch
11:30 -12:00	Prepare for Lunch	12:00-12:15	Diapering/Toileting
12:00 -12:30	Lunch	12:15-2:00	Nap/Quiet time
12:30-1:00	Small Group/Outside Time	2:00 - 3:00	Diapering/Snack/Goodbyes
1:00-2:00	Nap/Quiet time	<i>Infant schedules may vary due to feeding and napping on demand.</i>	
2:00 - 3:00	Wake up/Snack/Goodbyes		

Outdoor Play Safety



“ABSOLUTELY NO FLIP FLOPS, CROCS or HOODIES WITH STRINGS”

- Outdoor activities must be provided at least 60 minutes every day for the children in all classrooms. This is necessary for children's health and large motor development.
- Weather permitting, the children will go outside every day.
- Emergency/First Aid kits will be accessible at all times.
- To ensure your child's safety and ability to participate in all activities, your child should wear shoes that securely fasten to their feet, such as tennis shoes or other shoes with a **closed toe and closed heel**.
- Also, please no hoodie with strings.
- Children will be taught outdoor play safety rules.

Air/Wind Quality Index

Classroom staff use the air quality index reading on a daily basis to check if the air quality is safe enough for the children to engage in outdoor play activities. Indoor large motor activities will be planned in lieu of outdoor activities under the following conditions:

- Icy or rainy weather
- Extreme cold or extreme heat warnings issued by the National Weather Service.
- Other dangerous conditions on the playground, as determined by the Teacher.

Please note: During cold weather, your child may participate in outdoor play, so please provide him/her with a sweater or coat, hat, gloves, and boots during cold weather, as appropriate.

STEP Head Start/Early Head Start Cold Weather Outdoor Policy states that all classes go outside each day unless the temperature drops under 33 degrees or exceeds 90 degrees, including the wind chill.

Extreme Behavior Policy



Extreme Behavior & Handling Procedure:

Behavioral guidance shall be constructive in nature, age and stage appropriate, and shall be intended to redirect children to appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts. Any behavior or action by a student that has been determined to be excessive, that endangers/threatens the child, others, or property would follow these steps, but only after the teacher has implemented at least 3 documented strategies to help the student subdue the behavior: *Attendance Policy still applies.*

1. **First Incident:** The parent/guardian will be made aware of the incident verbally, and in the child's folder.
2. **Second Incident:** The parent/guardian will be made aware of the incident verbally, and in the child's folder, and/or private message on ClassDojo, and the Education Manager will be informed for support.
3. **Third Incident:** The teacher will be required to start a “Behavior Tracking” form and the results from two weeks of using this form will determine if a “Behavior Support Plan and Intervention” is needed. If the parent does not follow the agreed upon “Behavior Support and Intervention Plan” will result in suspension.
4. If a child displays behavior that could potentially harm themselves, other children, staff or damage property, the parent will be asked to pick up the child until safety measures can be put in place.
5. Suspension continues to be a measure of last resort only when there is a serious safety threat. STEP Head Start/Early Head Start will first engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents/guardian, and use appropriate community resources. STEP Head Start/Early Head Start will explore and document all steps taken to address the behaviors and supports needed to facilitate the child's safe re-entry and continued participation in the program.
6. **Examples of these behaviors could include, but not limited to:**
 - Excessive hitting, kicking, pushing, pinching, scratching, spitting, or biting.
 - Abusive or inappropriate language.
 - Health/safety issues
7. These steps will be repeated if the behavior continues to be an issue.



We Are Mandated Reporters! - Reporting Responsibilities

All staff are required, by the **Code of Virginia, Chapter 12.1, Child Abuse and Neglect Law**, to report any and all suspected cases of Child Abuse and/or Neglect.

Accident and School Insurance/Injury Procedure



For your child's safety, STEP, Inc. provides student accident insurance coverage for the children enrolled in HS/EHS whenever they are participating in HS/EHS activities. If your child is injured at the center, the teaching staff will follow the Emergency Injury and Illness Procedures, as posted in each classroom. Any child injury requires the parent/guardian to be notified. An accident report will be completed. The accident report will be sent to the parent through ClassDojo.

Emergency Procedures



Children whose centers are within or on public school property will abide by the instructions of their respective schools. **Each classroom or center will maintain a copy of their schools' Emergency Preparedness Plan.**

Children who attend the STEP Rocky Mount or Stuart Head Start Center will abide by the STEP, Inc. agency plan. Patrick Springs Head Start will follow Patrick Springs Primary School Crisis Plan. A parent may receive a copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan upon request.

Emergency Communication to Families:

For the delivery of emergency information, we will rely on your contact information provided. Modes of delivery will be by phone call, texts, and/or ClassDojo. Patrick Springs will also use notifications sent out by PCPS and the superintendent.

Weather-Related Closings



- In the event that schools are closed due to inclement weather, announcements will be made on ClassDojo about when HS/EHS will also be closed for children (This will include any delayed openings or early dismissals).
- If your child's center has to close due to other emergencies (flooding, no heat, no air, fire, etc.) parents will be notified through ClassDojo as soon as possible and are expected to respond.
- Parents must plan to pick up their child from the center.
- An example: if your child's class begins at 8:00 AM, then if school is two hours late, it would be 10:00 AM when the delayed schedule begins. **(NO breakfast is served on two-hour delays.)**
- Please be attentive to ClassDojo to assure you get the most current information.

WE DO NOT FOLLOW THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL SCHEDULE UNLESS THE CENTER IS IN THE SCHOOL.

EDUCATION SERVICES

Our Curriculum

Early Head Start: *"The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos"* a research-based curriculum that provides a comprehensive, yet easy to use framework for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate practice. When you visit your child's center, you will see a created environment that help children develop social, language, literacy, physical, math, science, and intellectual skills.

Head Start: *"The Creative Curriculum for Preschool"*, a research-based curriculum where children are immersed in learning through purposeful play-based experiences on topics they're familiar with from their everyday lives.

Developmental Screening of all Children

- Within 45 days of your child's enrollment in HS/EHS, he or she will be assessed with the Brigance Early Childhood Development Screening Tool which includes both developmental screening and social emotional screening.
- The results of these screenings will allow us to plan for your child's individual growth and needs.



VALLS - Virginia Language & Literacy Screener (4-year-old/mixed delivery only)

Our program uses the Virginia Language & Literacy Screening assessments is a scientifically based phonological awareness and literacy screening that measures preschoolers' developing knowledge of important literacy fundamentals and offers guidance to teachers for tailoring instruction to children's specific needs.

VKRP - Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (4-year-old/mixed delivery class)

Our program also participates in the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program. VKRP assessment is an initiative focused on building a more comprehensive understanding of students' skills. It adds measures of mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills to complement Virginia's statewide assessment.



Child Development Assessment and Outcomes

Throughout the school year, your child's teacher will routinely observe and assess your child using The **Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment Tool**. This will allow the teachers to track your child's individual growth and development in these developmental areas: Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Creative Arts, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, and Physical Health and Development. The assessment outcomes are analyzed quarterly for program planning and professional development. In turn, this will improve your child's educational experience.

School Readiness Goals

Our program's School Readiness Goals are annually updated and *aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Outcomes Framework, State early learning guidelines*, our curriculum and the *requirements and expectations of the public schools*. These goals are based on the outcomes of the child development assessments. Our SRG is inclusive for our Dual Language Learners.

Language & Literacy

Our mission is to build read-aloud routines in your home as well as school, thereby fostering early brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills. We encourage all parents to participate in daily literacy activities we send as suggested home activities (located on In-Kind form). You are encouraged to read a book to your child and do activities together that are related to a book or the theme of the week. The classroom teacher gives information throughout the school year, so all are informed of the class's activities.

Confidentiality

TOP SECRET

All records and conversations are confidential. Records are stored in a locked file or area inaccessible to anyone other than the appropriate HS/EHS staff. Your child's record is available upon request.

Fee Policy



There are **no fees** or charges for your child to be enrolled in the HS/EHS program but there are certain income and age criteria that must be met.

Transition

A smooth transition is important to ensure each child continues to receive enriching early child development services and each family continues to receive the support services necessary to promote healthy family development. Our transition process begins with EHS Infants to EHS Toddlers classrooms, Toddlers to Twos, EHS to HS, and HS to public school systems, or any other high-quality program or support service.

Health, Safety, & Nutrition

HS/EHS recognizes the importance of good health, nutrition, and a safe environment to the overall development of the child. **As a result, STEP, Inc. enforces a: WEAPON-FREE, DRUG-FREE, ALCOHOL-FREE, SMOKE-FREE, and VAPE-FREE Policy:**

Smoking and vaping are not allowed in any of HS/EHS centers or on the premises of STEP, Inc. This includes all of our sites and any event which STEP, Inc. sponsors.

Morning Health Inspection

Your child will receive a daily, visual health assessment upon arrival. This helps ensure that symptoms of infectious disease are caught early, thus limiting exposure to other children in the classroom.

A Sick Child

- Parents are asked not to bring their child to the center when their symptoms are contagious.
- Children who arrive sick or later develop contagious symptoms of illness **will not be allowed to remain at the center.** The parent or guardian will be called right away to pick up their sick child.

Exclusion Policy & Symptoms

These are important symptoms to look for in your child.

- If your child is exhibiting any of the first ten symptoms, they will be separated from the other children and placed under observation and a parent or guardian will be called for pick-up.
- If any of the remaining systems are observed with a fever thermometer reading of 100 degrees (or more) under the arm or using touch-free thermometer, the parent will be contacted to pick-up the child. If a fever is absent with symptoms eleven through sixteen, the child will be monitored. Parents or guardians will be called if those symptoms worsen or their child develops a fever.

List of Symptoms:

1. FEVER: Temperature 99 degrees or greater under the arm. (When the temperature is taken under the arm, a degree is added. This means the fever is actually 100 degrees.) A child may not return to school until they are fever-free without medications for 24 hours.
2. DIARRHEA: This means more than two abnormally loose stools. Therefore, observe the child after the first abnormal stool for additional loose stools or other symptoms. A child should be diarrhea-free for 24 hours in order to return to school.
3. VOMITING: Combined with an elevated temperature may be indicative of either viral or bacterial illness. A child should not have vomited for 24 hours in order to return to school.
4. SEVERE COUGHING: If the child gets red or blue in the face and makes a high pitch croupy or whoopee sound when they cough.
5. DIFFICULT OR RAPID BREATHING: This is especially important in an infant under six months of age.
6. YELLOWISH SKIN OR EYES: This could be indicative of a more serious illness such as hepatitis.
7. PINK EYE: Tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation followed by swelling and discharge of pus (drainage). If a child is diagnosed with a contagious form of Pink Eye, there must be no discharge from the eye and no itching of the eye.
8. UNUSUAL SPOTS OR REDNESS: Observe as to appearance, location and type of rash with or without drainage.
9. SORE THROAT OR DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING: Combined with an elevated temperature may indicate a strep infection.
10. INFECTED SKIN PATCHES: Crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of skin.
11. UNUSUALLY DARK OR TEA COLORED URINE: This could be indicative of a more serious illness.
12. GRAY OR WHITE STOOL: This could be indicative of a more serious illness.
13. HEADACHE AND STIFF NECK: Combined with an elevated temperature may be indicative of early signs of meningitis.
14. UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR: Child is cranky or less active than usual, cries more than usual, feels general discomfort or just seems unwell.
15. LOSS OF APPETITE: Not to be confused with likes and dislikes of food selection.
16. SEVERE ITCHING OF BODY OR SCALP OR SCRATCHING OF SCALP: These may be signs of lice or scabies. If a child has scabies, the child must be free of scabies and provide proof of treatment in order to return to school. If a child has lice, the child must be nit-free before returning to school.

- Parents or guardians should be alert to the above signs and symptoms and aware they are not to bring the child to the Head Start center until free from the symptoms and/or cleared by the family physician. If a child becomes ill during the day with the above symptoms, we will notify a parent or emergency contact immediately so that the child's needs may be met.
- If we suspect that a child has an illness which might be contagious or that needs treatment by a doctor, we will request that the parent take their child to the doctor and bring back a note from the doctor stating that the illness is not contagious to others.

Clothing Policy



- Please make sure your child has a complete change of clothing, appropriate for the season, labeled with the child's name to be kept at the center at all times in case of accidents or when needed.
- To ensure your child's safety and ability to participate in all activities your child should wear shoes that securely fasten to their feet, such as tennis shoes or other shoes with a closed toe and heel.
- If your child does not have on appropriate shoes for safety, he/she will not be allowed to participate in large motor activities.
- To ensure your child's safety on the playground, please no HOODIES with strings.

Soiled Clothes

1. Teachers will place child's soiled clothes in a plastic bag and stored in a container until the end of the day. The bag of soiled clothes will then be placed in their bookbag or given to the parent at departure.
2. Teaching staff will contact you through ClassDojo to notify you that your child has had an accident. You will need to send a new set of clothes the following.

Diaper Choice/Changing

- STEP EHS will provide diapers for all infants and toddlers enrolled during classroom hours.
 - The brand of choice is "LUVS."
- In HS, if diapers/pullups are needed, **parents are required** to provide the diapers/pullups needed.

Infant Formula Choice

In EHS, we provide a Similac Advance formula for our infants. If your child needs a different formula, this will require your child's doctor to complete a Special Diet form.

1. Bottles will be labeled with the child's name.
2. The STEP Kitchen will provide bottles that are made of polypropylene or polyethylene (labeled BPA free) or plastics with a recycling code of #1, #2, #4 or #5 for the infants enrolled in the HS/EHS Program.

Pacifier

- Parents are asked to provide at least two pacifiers labeled with the child's name using a waterproof/non-toxic marker. A pacifier permission form must be completed and signed.
- Pacifiers will not be allowed to have an attachment/string in the classroom.
- Pacifiers will not be allowed to be clipped, pinned, or tied to an infant's clothing/body parts (neck, wrist, food etc.)

Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding mothers are provided a private area to feed their infants at the center when requested.
- Parents may provide breast milk that has been refrigerated or frozen immediately after collection, in a labeled, unbreakable bottle for use at the center.
- Labels must include the infant's name, the date, and time the breast milk was collected.
- **Unlabeled bottles are never accepted from a parent/guardian.**

Shoe-Free Environment for Infant Classrooms

- With infants commonly on the floor, we provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in the classroom.
- We practice a "shoe-free" policy in the infant room when the children are unable to walk.
- We ask adults who enter the infant room past the sign-in area, to please slip a pair of shoe covers over your shoes.
- Siblings or other children accompanying parents will not be allowed to go past the designated sign-in area.

Potty Training



- The decision of when to assist parents in potty-training is a personal one and should be made based on your child's signs of emotional and physical readiness.
- Once the child is ready and parents agree to begin potty-training, you will be asked to complete a contract, which will hopefully create a strong support system for your child to successfully become potty-trained.
- **PARENTS CAN SEND 'PULL-UPS', BUT CLOTH UNDERWEAR IS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.**
- Preschool age students that need to be potty trained, parents must provide cloth underwear for training.

Infectious Disease Control/Sanitation/Hygiene

The STEP HS/EHS Program attempts to minimize the spread of infectious diseases using the following methods:

- Use of Universal Precautions (gloves, etc.) by staff and volunteers when body fluids exist.
- Routine cleaning and sanitizing of the center materials, classrooms and bathrooms.
- Disease prevention education for parents, staff, and children.
- In the best interest of all children within the program, there may be an occasion when an entire classroom may shut down in order to be sanitized to control the spread of any germs connected to any infectious disease.

Hand Washing Procedure



- We use effective hand washing methods.
- We teach and model preventative hygiene practices.
- Children, staff, and volunteers wash their hands with liquid soap and running water.
- Younger toddlers and infants have their hands washed by staff using liquid soap and water.
- Upon entering the classroom, a child's hands are washed each day.

Head Lice Control

Because of the close contact between young children, head lice can spread rapidly from one child to another. The following are the procedures followed by our program to help limit the transmission of head lice.



- Children are checked weekly by the classroom staff for evidence of head lice.
- Children with evidence of head lice are excluded from the center activities until they are treated and free of lice and nits (lice eggs).
- Your child will be re-examined by the teacher before returning, with the completion of the verification form.
- When one or more cases are discovered in the classroom, all parents are notified and advised to check their child's scalp regularly.
- Children's personal articles are stored in separate cubbies.
- Staff are available to assist parents if needed.

Medication Policy



- Medication (such as asthma medication) forms for long term use must be signed by parent and physician in order for the medications to be administered in our classrooms. Child will not be able to attend until all the correct paperwork is completely fill out, signed and medication is on site.
- All medication must be kept in the original prescription bottle and stored in a locked cabinet or in a locked box in the refrigerator away from the reach of children.
- When having a prescription filled, ask the pharmacist to give you a small extra labeled bottle to bring to the HS/EHS center.
- Over-the-counter medicine will not be given to a child unless prescribed in writing by a doctor and packaged in the original container.
- All medications that are not picked up by the parent within 14 days after authorization expires will be disposed of.
- Over-the-counter sunscreen, diaper ointment or cream, and insect repellent may be administered in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. If the following requirements are met:
 - Written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions.
 - Be in the original container and labeled with the child's name.
 - Sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15.
 - Not kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.
 - The over-the-counter permission form will be valid for six months.

Activities Limitation Policy



- When specific limitations are placed on a child's activities by a physician, our HS/EHS Program requires written documentation from a physician outlining the limitations before the child can participate in the program.
- In some cases, due to the limited number of staff members; a parent may be asked to assist classroom staff if their child is limited to inside play only. All classrooms are required to go outside daily, weather permitting.

Nutrition and Meal Services



- Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are served in all full-day classes.
- All meals are planned using USDA Guidelines for Child and Adult Care Programs.
- Menus are planned so they are nutritious and reflect cultural and ethnic preferences and diversity. Special diets are provided upon the advice of a physician.
- Due to USDA guidelines, only foods that have been prepared in an approved, inspected kitchen may be served to children during HS/EHS hours.
- Snacks and foods for celebrations should be nutritious and low in fat, salt, sugar, artificial colorings, and preservatives. Teachers can provide you with a list of healthy snack foods.
- Meals and snacks are served family style (Patrick Springs is served in cafeteria) in a relaxed atmosphere promoting self-help skills. Mealtimes are used as educational opportunities to promote exploration and healthy food choices. Parents who volunteer at the center are welcome to share a meal with the children. If you would like to have lunch with your child, please, ask the teacher.
- Nutrition education is provided to children and families as an ongoing part of the program. Nutrition activities are offered monthly in classrooms to foster an understanding of the importance of good nutrition to overall health.
- 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. 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 mail:

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

Serving Children with Disabilities



- STEP, Inc. HS/EHS serves children with the guidance of different laws and regulations related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) Part B and Part C, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- Our program must reserve 10% of the participants in the program for children with disabilities. Disabilities may range from mild speech or hearing deficits to physical disabilities.
- Including children with disabilities in the classroom provides children and families an opportunity to learn from each other, create social competency, and develop a respect for diversity.
- Modifications to the environment or to the staffing of the program will be made whenever possible on an individual basis to facilitate inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms.

Mental Health



- Head Start and Early Head Start provides services to help promote the mental health of each child and family.
- Both HS and EHS implement research-based practice and strategies from the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). Its focus is on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children ages birth to age 5.

We also use a prevention program known as Al's Pals. Al's Pals is a school-based prevention program that seeks to develop social-emotional skills such as self-control, problem-solving, and healthy decision making in children ages 3-5 in preschool.

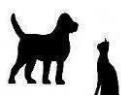
Parent Curriculum: S.T.E.P.



Our curriculum of choice is S.T.E.P. (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting). S.T.E.P. parenting curriculum is an effective seven session planned training curriculum that focuses on topics important to parents

today. This curriculum provides valuable tools which improve communication among parents and their children. The lessons are easy to understand and apply and can be used immediately.

Animal Safety



No animal will be allowed on the premises without the prior permission from our HS/EHS Health Services Manager.

Missing Child Policy & Procedure

- When the responsible staff discovers a child missing, they will immediately notify all other staff.
- The responsible staff person will immediately initiate a coordinated "preliminary search" of the entire facility. The entire interior and exterior of the building and grounds will be searched.
- If the child is located and is deemed to be safe and unharmed, the responsible staff person will notify all involved staff that the child has been found and the Child Supervision Incident Report Form will be completed and will be placed in the child's folder. Staff will contact parents and notify them of the incident.
- The responsible staff will notify their supervisor and the Early Childhood Education Director. If the child was left unattended, the Early Childhood Education Director or Education Manager will contact CPS and the Licensing Specialist.
- If the child is not found, the responsible Teacher or other staff will immediately call Emergency 911 for assistance. The responsible staff will also immediately notify the parent(s) of the situation. The responsible staff will cooperate fully with the Police department furnishing all

information concerning the child and parents/guardians and will continue to be available to the parents or police investigators.

The Education Manager or Early Childhood Education Director will be responsible for contacting CPS and the Licensing Specialist.

Event of the Death of a Child

- In the extremely unlikely event of the death of a child, having notified appropriate emergency services, the Executive Director or designee would immediately contact the child's parent or legal guardian.
- A report of the death will be sent to the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Monitored for Compliance

- STEP, Inc. HS/EHS Program activities and requirements are monitored regularly and frequently to ensure compliance and beyond with Federal and State regulations.
- We also have a systematic and structured approach to determine whether our program performance follows Head Start Performance standards, VA License Standards, and the USDA Food Program regulations.
- Annually we assess our program with staff, parents, and community partners to ensure compliance and quality services.

Complaints from Parents

1. If you have a complaint, discuss it with the staff member involved.
2. If not resolved at Step 1, take the issue to the staff member's supervisor.
3. If not resolved at Step 2, the complaint must be presented, in writing, to the Early Childhood Education Director who will hold at least one meeting and make a recommendation to the parties involved.
4. If not resolved at Step 3, the complaint will be presented, in writing, to the Policy Council with a copy to the Executive Director of the Agency. The Policy Council will have ten working days to schedule at least one meeting and make a recommendation.

Family Service Advocate Staff	
Franklin County Office - 540-483-5142	
Cindy Hostutler - 540-483-5142 ext. 3043	MaQueena Gill - 540-483-5142 ext. 3037
Lori Pruitt - 540-483-5142 ext. 3046	
Patrick County Office - 276-694-2239	
Kimberly Stegall - 276-694-2239 ext. 4226	Shamila Johnson - 276-694-2239 ext. 4227

Health Service Advocate Staff	
Franklin County Office - 540-483-5142	Patrick County Office - 276-694-2239
Shannon Riley - 540-488-7029 ext. 3013	Amber Wagoner - 276-694-2239 ext. 4260

WIC At-A-Glance

WIC clinics statewide are now issuing eWIC cards to WIC families. WIC participants use their eWIC card like a debit card to purchase WIC approved foods at authorized WIC grocery stores.

Is Virginia WIC For Me?

Must Be:

- A Virginia resident
- A pregnant woman, breastfeeding woman, or the parent of a child aged birth to five years old
- Household income eligible (*Ex. family of four can earn \$45,510 or less yearly or \$3,793 or less monthly*)
- Assessed as having a nutritional risk

EBT Benefits:

- Electronic payment system
- Each WIC family gets one eWIC card
- Family's food benefits are added together
- Food benefits are kept in a special family account

Next Steps

Contact Virginia WIC @
1-877-TELL-WIC (835-5942)

to connect to a local clinic, check eligibility,
and set up an appointment



WIC

At-A-Glance

WIC gives access to healthy food, nutrition education and breastfeeding support. If you're pregnant, a caregiver, or a mom with a child under 5, you can get the right personalized support for you and your family.



Nutrition Education

Shopping guidance
Prenatal nutrition tips
Kid-friendly recipes
Personalized nutrition counseling



Breastfeeding Support

Support and education
Peer counseling
Lactation support
Classes and information

Fresh fruits & vegetables
Milk, cheese & more
Cereal & other grains
Peanut butter, beans & More

Social services
Substance abuse
Health screenings
Immunization services



Healthy Food Options

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Referrals & Resources



Your child needs vaccines as they grow!

2024 Recommended Immunizations for Birth Through 6 Years Old

Want to learn more?
Scan this QR code to find out which vaccines your child might need. Or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/tool/child.html



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												
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								At least 1 dose of updated (2023–2024 Formula) COVID-19 vaccine						
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					

KEY

- ALL children should be immunized at this age.
- SOME children should get this dose of vaccine or preventive antibody at this age.

Talk to your child's health care provider for more guidance if:

1. Your child has any medical condition that puts them at higher risk for infection.
2. Your child is traveling outside the United States.
3. Your child misses a vaccine recommended for their age.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Call toll-free: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
Or visit: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents



American Academy
of Pediatrics
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN

What diseases do these vaccines protect against?

BIRTH–6 YEARS OLD

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASE	DISEASE COMPLICATIONS
RSV (Respiratory syncytial virus) Contagious viral infection of the nose, throat, and sometimes lungs; spread through air and direct contact	Infection of the lungs (pneumonia) and small airways of the lungs; especially dangerous for infants and young children
Hepatitis B Contagious viral infection of the liver; spread through contact with infected body fluids such as blood or semen	Chronic liver infection, liver failure, liver cancer, death
Rotavirus Contagious viral infection of the gut; spread through the mouth from hands and food contaminated with stool	Severe diarrhea, dehydration, death
Diphtheria* Illness caused by a toxin produced by bacteria that infects the nose, throat, and sometimes skin	Swelling of the heart muscle, heart failure, coma, paralysis, death
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)* Contagious bacterial infection of the lungs and airway; spread through air and direct contact	Infection of the lungs (pneumonia), death; especially dangerous for babies
Tetanus (Lockjaw)* Bacterial infection of brain and nerves caused by spores found in soil and dust everywhere; spores enter the body through wounds or broken skin	Seizures, broken bones, difficulty breathing, death
Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b) Contagious bacterial infection of the lungs, brain and spinal cord, or bloodstream; spread through air and direct contact	Depends on the part of the body infected, but can include brain damage, hearing loss, loss of arm or leg, death
Pneumococcal Bacterial infections of ears, sinuses, lungs, or bloodstream; spread through direct contact with respiratory droplets like saliva or mucus	Depends on the part of the body infected, but can include infection of the lungs (pneumonia), blood poisoning, infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord, death
Polio Contagious viral infection of nerves and brain; spread through the mouth from stool on contaminated hands, food or liquid, and by air and direct contact	Paralysis, death
COVID-19 Contagious viral infection of the nose, throat, or lungs; may feel like a cold or flu. Spread through air and direct contact	Infection of the lungs (pneumonia); blood clots; liver, heart or kidney damage; long COVID; death
Influenza (Flu) Contagious viral infection of the nose, throat, and sometimes lungs; spread through air and direct contact	Infection of the lungs (pneumonia), sinus and ear infections, worsening of underlying heart or lung conditions, death
Measles (Rubeola)* Contagious viral infection that causes high fever, cough, red eyes, runny nose, and rash; spread through air and direct contact	Brain swelling, infection of the lungs (pneumonia), death
Mumps* Contagious viral infection that causes fever, tiredness, swollen cheeks, and tender swollen jaw; spread through air and direct contact	Brain swelling, painful and swollen testicles or ovaries, deafness, death
Rubella (German Measles)* Contagious viral infection that causes low-grade fever, sore throat, and rash; spread through air and direct contact	Very dangerous in pregnant women; can cause miscarriage or stillbirth, premature delivery, severe birth defects
Chickenpox (Varicella) Contagious viral infection that causes fever, headache, and an itchy, blistering rash; spread through air and direct contact	Infected sores, brain swelling, infection of the lungs (pneumonia), death
Hepatitis A Contagious viral infection of the liver; spread by contaminated food or drink or close contact with an infected person	Liver failure, death

Good nutrition today means a stronger tomorrow!

Building for the Future with CACFP

This day care receives support from the Child and Adult Care Food Program to serve healthy meals to your children.

Meals served here must meet USDA's nutrition standards.

Questions? Concerns?

540-483-5142

Learn more about CACFP at USDA's website:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/>

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service FNS-317
November 2019



¡Buena nutrición hoy significa un mañana más saludable!

Construyendo para el Futuro con CACFP

Esta guardería infantil recibe ayuda del Child and Adult Care Food Program para servir comidas nutritivas a sus niños.



Comidas servidas aquí deben de seguir los requisitos nutricionales establecidos por USDA.

¿Preguntas? ¿Inquietudes?

STEP, Inc. 540-483-5142

Aprenda más información sobre CACFP en el sitio web del USDA: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/>

USDA es un proveedor, empleador y prestamista que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.
United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service FNS-317
Noviembre 2019

Meals:

CACFP homes and centers follow meal requirements established by USDA.

Breakfast	Lunch or Supper	Snacks (Two of the four groups)
Milk Fruit or Vegetable Grains or Bread	Milk Meat or meat alternate Grains or bread Two different servings of fruits or vegetables	Milk Meat or meat alternate Grains or bread Fruit or vegetable

Participating Facilities:

Many different homes and centers operate CACFP and share the common goal of bringing nutritious meals and snacks to participants. Participating facilities include:

- **Child Care Centers:** Licensed or approved public or private nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, and some for-profit centers.
- **Family Day Care Homes:** Licensed or approved private homes.
- **After School Care Programs:** Centers in low-income areas provide free snacks to school- age children and youth.
- **Homeless Shelters:** Emergency shelters provide food services to homeless children.

Eligibility:

State agencies reimburse facilities that offer non-residential day care to the following children:

- Children age 12 and under,
- Migrant children age 15 and younger, and
- Youths through age 18 in after school care programs in needy areas.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about the CACFP, please contact your

Center/Sponsoring Organization	State Administering Agency
STEP, Inc.	Special Nutrition Programs: CACFP
Early Head Start/Head Start	Virginia Department of Health
200 Dent St. Rocky Mount, VA 24151	Division of Community Nutrition 109 Governor Street 9 th Floor Richmond, VA 23219
540-483-5142	1-877-618-7282



Before and After School Care
Rocky Mount and Stuart Sites
Before and After Care Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday
7:00 AM – 8:00 AM
3:00 PM – 5:30 PM

“Snow Days and half-days are considered as they occur”

STEP, Inc. HS/EHS will provide:	To Qualify for this Service:
• Qualified Caregivers	• Enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start
• Afternoon Snack	• Apply and be approved through DSS – Subsidy (Instructions are provided.)
• Group Activities	• Select STEP as your subsidy provider (Fee might be associated with this service.)
• Outdoor Play	• HS/EHS Children considered Mixed Delivery can receive before and aftercare. (There is a fee associated with this service. This service is only available in Franklin County and in certain classrooms.) For more information, ask your Family Advocate.
• Indoor Play	
• Literacy Activities	

For more information, contact your Family Advocate.



**Head Start &
Early Head Start**

Application Process for Subsidy Before & Aftercare Childcare

There are two ways to apply for the Child Care Subsidy Program

- Visit [**CommonHelp**](#) to apply online or screen for eligibility
 - CommonHelp is a self-service portal available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - A [**video**](#) or [**Quick Guide**](#) for the application portal is also available.
- Submit a [**Child Care Service Application and Redetermination Form \(Spanish - aplicación en español\)**](#) to your local department of social services.
 - Click here to find your [**local department of social services**](#).
 - You can also request that an application be mailed to you.

Your application will be reviewed within 30 days. During that time, you may be required to participate in an interview and provide documentation of basic eligibility requirements.

If you are eligible, and approved for services, your local department will authorize child care with a participating child care provider of your choice, and a portion of your child care costs will be paid directly to your provider.

Additional information may be found on:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/cc.index.html>

NEED HELP WITH

Child Care Costs?

You may qualify for financial assistance through Virginia's Child Care Subsidy Program.

Families can choose from a wide range of child care providers, including centers, family day homes, and faith-based programs.

Eligibility

- Family eligibility is based on two key factors:
 - a. Parental activity: Parents must be working, looking for work, or participating in training or education.
 - b. Household Income: Families with a young child (not yet in kindergarten) are eligible if their income is up to 85% of the State Median Income (approximately \$113,000 annually for a family of 4). Assistance is also available for other children in the family under age 13.
- Families must also meet other basic eligibility requirements.
- Once approved, families typically receive care for at least 12 months.

Family Copayments

- You may be required to pay a monthly copayment to your child care provider.
- A family's copayment amount is determined during the eligibility process and is based on household income.
- Your local caseworker will explain your copayment as part of your application review.

HOW TO APPLY

Scan this QR code to learn more!



Waitlists May Apply: Some localities have waitlists for subsidy slots. Families are encouraged to apply and will be notified if placed on a waitlist.

Maximum INCOME ELIGIBILITY LIMITS (85% State Median Income)

Household Size	Monthly Income	Annual Income
2	\$6,455	\$77,455
3	\$7,973	\$95,680
4	\$9,492	\$113,904
5	\$11,011	\$132,129
6	\$12,529	\$150,354
7	\$12,814	\$153,771
8	\$13,099	\$157,188

Be ready to provide proof of income, activity, and your child's documentation.



Co-Parenting
is vital to maintaining a healthy relationship with your child.

Child Support
reduces the child poverty rate and improves the child's overall well-being.

How YOU can better support Virginia's children

APPLY FOR CHILD SUPPORT
To establish or inquire about child support, visit www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse/ or call (800) 468-8894.

MAKE A CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT

- **MyChildSupport**
mychildsupport.dss.virginia.gov
- **TouchPay**
Kiosks are located in DCSE district offices
- **Mail**
P.O. Box 570, Richmond, VA 23218-0570
- **MoneyGram**
Located in most CVS and Walmart stores

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
Visit dss.virginia.gov and click Child Support for details about how DCSE can assist you.

DCSE DISTRICT OFFICES
Visit www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcseoffices.cgi for a complete listing of our offices.





VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD
SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

B032-01-0977-00-eng (06/17)



every child needs support

DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

EVERY CHILD NEEDS SUPPORT

Virginia's children need both financial and family support to grow and thrive. Children with actively involved parents perform better in school, have higher self-confidence, and generally achieve greater success in life.

The Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) is committed to helping parents support their children by focusing on more than just money. DCSE offers free family engagement services focusing on access and visitation, responsible parenting, employment assistance, and prisoner reentry.

DCSE Helps Parents Support Their Children



Parents

DCSE staff is available to guide each parent through the child support process, ensuring fair and consistent obligations based on individual circumstances and needs.

DCSE services include:

- Locating absent parents
- Helping establish paternity
- Enforcing support orders
- Upon request, reviewing and modifying support orders as family circumstances change over time
- Supporting co-parenting through programs that focus on access, visitation, and responsible parenting
- Referring parents to mediation or agency partners for help in resolving disputes and improving communication



Family Engagement

Family engagement services help families to be successful by strengthening bonds between parents and children. Our top priority is promoting the well-being of children.

Working with our community partners, we help parents overcome barriers such as:

- Lack of job skills
- Unemployment
- Previous incarceration
- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Housing instability
- Custody and visitation disputes

MyChildSupport
mychildsupport.dss.virginia.gov

Sign in or register to MyChildSupport to pay online for free using your checking or savings account.



You can do the following online with MyChildSupport:

- Make/schedule payments (parents, employers, third parties)
- View payment history
- Generate income verification report
- Check arrears balance

One in five children in Virginia is involved in a child support case.

Parent In-Kind Flyer

Head Start and Early Head Start Parents,

You can help this wonderful program by giving a little of your time! Thank you in Advance!

There are also some volunteer services that can promote the development of the program without having the children directly involved. For example, parents can volunteer to participate in Policy Council Meetings to share ideas for new activities and actively participate in the decision making process of the program. This is a way to give them experience in leadership as they connect with other members of the agency and community.



We are required to gather 20% of its budget from other sources besides the federal government. This is called our Non-Federal Match, aka. “In-Kind” match. By volunteering your time and completing the forms sent home on a regular basis, you will help us meet this requirement. Again, thanks in advance!

Here are some suggestions of things you can do to help:

- **Volunteer in the classroom**
- **Attend Parent Meetings/Events/Trainings**
- **Help prep for activities for the classroom**
- **Complete homework activities ideas sent home**
- **Volunteer with some duties around the center**
- **Be a part of our annual self-assessment team**
- **Become a member of our Policy Council**

There are many opportunities, just let us know what interests you.

Talk to your child’s teacher or your Family Advocate and join us in a very important part of maintaining our program!

**Sincerely,
STEP HS-EHS Staff!**



STEP, Inc.

Head Start/Early Head Start

2025-2026

Receipt of Parent Handbook

I, _____, have
received copies of:

<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP Head Start/EHS Parent Handbook
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP Head Start/EHS Parent Packet

I understand that I am responsible for reading and understanding the guidelines as outlined within the Parent Handbook. I also realize that I may address any questions or concerns with my child's Teacher, my Family Advocate, or Management it involves.

My preferred method of receiving the Parent Handbook:

Electronic Version **Paper Copy**

Parent Name (print): _____ **Date:** _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Staff Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

** This page should be signed and returned to your Family Advocate or Education Manager. **