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## *Early Head Start Parent Handbook*

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*Home Based Option*

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*2021-2022*

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# Welcome to Early Head Start

## ***Dear Parents and Guardians:***

Welcome to Kids' Corps Early Head Start. We are excited that you have enrolled your child in our program! We look forward to working with you to make sure your child learns and grows in a safe, nurturing environment.

All of us at Kids' Corps recognize that you are your child's first and best teacher. Therefore, our doors are always open to you and your family.

Your participation is vital; we want to hear your ideas, concerns and suggestions. By working together, we can make sure your child learns and grows to meet their full potential.

Thank you for enrolling your child at Kids' Corps. We hope that you and your child enjoy a year of learning and discovery with us.

Sincerely,

Dirk Shumaker  
Executive Director

## ***Mission Statement***

We provide a Head Start to families with children who need it most

## ***Our Primary Goal as an Agency***

To provide a comprehensive program to children and families which promotes sound physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth

## ***Program Philosophy***

- *To provide a quality program by making the most of resources available*
- *To assure all enrolled families have access to all our services*
- *To be open to the diversity and uniqueness of the children and families we serve*
- *To encourage each family to participate in Head Start and Early Head Start*
- *To keep families at the center of decision making for their children*
- *To help families help themselves*

## Early Head Start Centers and Locations

### Early Head Start Home Based Option

Home visits are scheduled weekly with families for 1 ½ hours each week. Enrollment for expectant mothers and families with children ages 0 to 3. Group Socialization experiences are held twice a month for up to 3 ½ hours. Hours of operation: Home visits are scheduled with families enrolled. No Fees.

### KCI Support Staff

<b>101 Davis St. (907) 279-2021</b>	
Executive Director	Dirk Shumaker
Human Resources Manager	Katrina Ahlfield
Bookkeeper	Joishua Lau
Administrative Specialist	Jennifer McClure
Home Visiting Coordinator	Marie Wallace
Early Head Start Home Visitor	Jessica Trujillo
<b>3710 E. 20th, Suite '2' (907) 272-0133</b>	
Education Manager	Charles Freeman
Family Services & Health Manager	Rachel Schafer
Deputy Manager	Steffi Redhead
Center Director	Selina Ellis
Family Services Coordinator	Freddy Camarena
Family Engagement Specialist	Ronnie Brown
Disabilities & Mental Health Coordinator	Krystyna Cullom
Child Development Assistant	Amanda Fieldhouse
EHS Mentor-Coach	Erin Barrows
Head Start Mentor-Coach	Amber Calles
Health & Nutrition Coordinator	Ayla Richardson
Health Assistant	<i>Nou Her</i>
Enrollment Specialist	Miriam Vazquez-Mateo
Administrative Assistant	Nina Saechao

# 2021-2022 Schedule

First Day of Program year—August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 - Last Day of Program year—August 13, 2022

## CLOSURES FOR 2021 - 2022

September 6, 2021	Labor Day Holiday-No Visits
October 15, 2021	In-Service Day - NO Visits
November 11, 2021	Veterans Day - NO Visits
November 25 & 26, 2021	Thanksgiving Holiday-NO CLASSES
December 17, 2021	In-Service - NO Visits
December 20, 2021 through December 31, 2021	Winter Break-NO Visits
January 17, 2022	Martin Luther King's Birthday NO Visits
February 21, 2022	President's Day - NO Visits
March 4, 2022	In-Service - NO Visits
March 7 - 11, 2022	Spring Break-NO Visits
May 20, 2022	In-Service - NO Visits
May 30, 2022	Memorial Day-NO Visits
June 20, 2022	Juneteenth Day - NO Visits
July 4, 2022	Independence Day - NO Visits
August 13, 2021	Last Day of Visits for 2021-2022 program year



## Enrollment Information

### Non-Discrimination Statement

Kids' Corps, Inc. will not discriminate in enrollment with regard to religion, marital status (or changes in marital status), pregnancy, sex, color, race, or national origin of children and their families.

### Steps to Enrollment

Submit KCI Enrollment Application with:

1. Child's Birth Certificate
2. Income Verification for Family

If eligible, the following health items are required:

1. Current Physical Examination
2. Current Immunization Record



### FEDERAL INCOME GUIDELINES FOR ALASKA 2021

<i>Family Size</i>	<i>Maximum Income</i>
1	\$16,090
2	\$21,770
3	\$27,450
4	\$33,130
5	\$38,810
6	\$44,490
7	\$50,170
8	\$55,850

- Families with more than 8 members, add \$5,680 for each additional member.
- ATAP recipients and foster children are automatically income eligible.
- A limited number of families may be over income.

## *General Information*

### *Open Door Policy*

Parents and guardians are encouraged to observe or participate in activities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors at KCI centers may be limited.

### *Insurance*

KCI Head Start carries liability insurance from Markel Insurance Corporation which meets the requirements of the Municipality of Anchorage code 16.55.4.10.c.

### *Policies and Procedures*

KCI's policies and procedures comply with the Head Start/Early Head Start federal performance standards. KCI will give all families at least fourteen (14) days written notice in advance of changes in policy and procedures.

#### *If a concern arises*

Parents are encouraged to first discuss concerns with their Home Visitor. If additional discussion is needed, contact the Home Visiting Coordinator, Family Services Coordinator, or Family Services & Health Manager.

#### *Smoking Policy at Head Start/Early Head Start Centers*

KCI maintains a smoke-free environment at all centers. Smoking is prohibited inside the center and in the play yard. Smoking must be farther than 20 feet from openings into interior space which children access. KCI personnel may not smoke while working with families, and they may not expose children to second-hand smoke.

## *Home-based Early Head Start*

Whether you are new to parenting and home-based programs or are the parent of several children who have been in a program for years, you are your child's first teacher. Your child pays close attention to what you say and do because of how important you are to them. They learn by watching and listening to you and other family members day after day.

Your child learns about themselves, other people, and the surrounding world every day. For your child, everyday moments—getting dressed, preparing a meal, setting the table, taking a walk, taking a bath, reading a book—are learning moments. They are filled with interesting things to see, touch, smell, hear, taste, explore, and do.

Your home is filled with interesting things to see and do for your infant, toddler, or preschooler. Things that are fun and can help them learn are right there in your own kitchen, living room, closet, and even the garage.

### *Home Visits*

The home-based program consists of weekly home visits with a regular Home Visitor. The parents and Home Visitor will work together to establish goals based on the child's development, through parent observation. Home visits provide opportunities for the parents to strengthen their relationship with their child and help them develop and enhance skills they already have. The Home Visitor will also work with the parents to establish family goals, provide community resource referrals as needed and will share information about program activities and training opportunities that are available. Home visits should be scheduled for an hour and a half at the parent's home. Parents will be encouraged to help plan the home visits and should expect to participate in the planned activities with their child/children.

#### **Home visits are opportunities for:**

- Strengthening parent-child relationships
- Learning more about parent-child interactions
- Developing positive relationships, which allow parents and staff to get to know one another
- Identifying learning opportunities in home environments
- Identifying techniques that can be generalized to other children in the family
- Focusing individualized attention on family strengths, interests and goals
- Allows communication with parents about their child's everyday routines and their child's progress

## *Group Socializations*

In the home-based program, we will provide the opportunity for Group Socializations two times each month. Socializations are a time when you, your child, and other parents and their children come together. Group Socializations allow children and parents to interact with others, using age-appropriate activities. They are also a chance for parents to participate in group discussions on topics as like safety, nutrition, parenting, and to develop new skills through different activities and interaction experiences. Socializations are also opportunities to build on the goals you have set for your family and child during your home visits.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate fully in the Group Socialization experiences. Group Socialization experiences are held twice a month. The Early Head Start Home Visitor assists in guiding parents with activities, but parents are encouraged to participate in the planning process for these events.

During socializations, you will be focused on different things, depending on your situation:

**If you are the parent of a new baby**, Group Socializations may be a time for you to hold your baby in your arms and watch how they responds to what is going on or a time for you to talk with another new parent. As your child grows, activities you do together such as finger-plays, singing a song, or playing “roll the ball” are a chance to get to know your child better and to have fun together.

**If you are the parent of an infant or toddler**, the focus of these Group Socialization experiences is your relationship with your child. From birth, babies are aware of other people and are eager to build relationships. They interact with you by making eye contact, smiling, cooing, reaching out, and over time, by talking. As you and your infant or toddler participate in a group, you can learn about how your child responds to you and others. This information will help you make decisions about how best to respond to your child.

**If you are the parent of a preschooler**, the focus of these Group Socialization experiences is learning about how your child interacts with other people. What you learn will help you figure out ways to support your child’s social development.

Remember to dress children in comfortable play clothes and shoes that are appropriate for the weather. **It is advisable to bring an extra set of clothes for your child to the Group Socialization experience.** Please put your child’s initials on all coats, boots, snow pants, hats and gloves.

## *The Benefits if Group Socialization Experiences*

No matter what your child’s age, Group Socializations will give you the chance to:

- be out of the house and meet other parents;
- assist in organizing activities, gathering materials, and preparing snacks;
- share what you know and learn with other parents and Early Head Start staff members;
- attend presentations about safety, nutrition, discipline, or other topics of interest;
- learn that you are not alone in the joys and challenges of raising a young child;
- share activity ideas and things you learn with family members;
- most important of all, strengthen your relationship with your child.

## *Outdoor Play – Cold Weather*

Outdoor play should be a daily activity. Exercise and fresh air have positive effects on children and adults as long as they are dressed appropriately for the weather. We will try to incorporate some outside play during group socialization experiences.

Appropriate **winter** outdoor clothing includes:

- Snowsuits or Winter Coat & Snow Pants
- Mittens or Gloves
- Hats
- Boots
- Socks

For other seasons, depending on the weather, appropriate outdoor clothing is required. Such items may include jackets, sweaters, hats, and rain gear including boots.

## *Education & Early Childhood Development*

Early Head Start Performance Standards provide quality standards for all aspects of child development and family services. These performance standards require all Early Head Start programs to collect and share information with parents about their children's progress in Early Head Start programs.

The Early Head Start Home Visitor will partner with parents on how their child is progressing each week during home visits.

The Early Head Start Home Visitor will encourage parents' input in setting goals for children. If you have ideas or questions concerning your child's progress in Early Head Start programs, talk with your Early Head Start Home Visitor.

### *Planning for Infants and Toddlers*

During the first three years of life, children are working on acquiring a sense of trustworthiness of oneself and others. This is the sense of safety and security that comes from responsive and predictable care from familiar others to whom the child is attached. In the toddler years, a strong sense of autonomy is building. This comes from being treated as an individual and being allowed opportunities for independence.

When children feel the sense of independence, power, and competence, they can step out into the world and be active learners and problem solvers. Young children need a safe environment full of opportunities to explore and have fun. They need to be able to see, touch, feel, and move.

Planning for infants and toddlers does not necessarily involve "lessons" but rather opportunities for experiences that as individuals they can make the most out of. When Home Visitors work with families for home visits, they take into account children's individual differences along with their knowledge child development. Planning is based on observations and discussions with the family of the children using their interests, their new skills, and their reactions to materials.

## Curriculum & Education

Curriculum is the word used to describe what is planned and accomplished in a program. KCI's home based Early Head Start program uses Partners for a Healthy Baby as it's home visiting curriculum, with Creative Curriculum as a secondary curriculum. Home Visiting includes:

- ❖ Personal Visits
- ❖ Resource Referrals
- ❖ Group Socializations
- ❖ Screenings

### *Areas of Emphasis for all home visits:*

Area	Description
Parent-child interactions	Home visitors provide developmentally appropriate activities for parents and children using everyday household items in order to strengthen developmental parenting skills that are warm, responsive, encouraging and communicative.
Development-centered parenting	Home visitors provide information on child development and help parents make connections between the child's stage of development and his/her behavior. This helps parents identify and understand causes of behaviors and move towards solutions as needed.
Family well-being	Home visitors work with families to identify strengths, capabilities and skills, set goals and provide community resource referrals as requested. Home Visitors support families by learning about their perspectives, understanding their needs and wishes, and facilitating their decision-making abilities.

### *Literacy*

Literacy activities take place throughout the day in the home and other environments you and your child will be a part of. Children may be engaged in reading books, drawing/writing, listening to stories, looking at books, using writing tools, telling stories, singing songs etc. During home visits, your Home Visitor will help you identify and build on simple, fun, and easy literacy activities. Literacy activities also happen during group socials.

### *Developmental Screenings*

KCI ensures that all children entering the program receive developmental, sensory, and social/emotional screening. Parental permission and the child's developmental history are obtained before the screening. The screening procedure will be sensitive to the child's cultural and linguistic background. This developmentally appropriate process may identify children who need to be referred for more formal assessments (multidisciplinary evaluations).

Screenings are conducted within 45 days of the child's entry in the program. Trained staff use a standardized screening tool called Ages and Stages Questionnaire for the developmental screenings and DECA for social/emotional screenings.

### *Areas evaluated are*

- ❖ Behavior
- ❖ Social skills & emotional development
- ❖ Speech & language
- ❖ Motor
- ❖ Cognitive
- ❖ Height & weight
- ❖ Perceptual
- ❖ Vision (for acuity and strabismus or "lazy eye")
- ❖ Hearing

All screening results are shared with parents.

### *Disabilities Services*

Children with diagnosed disabilities have been enrolled in Early Head Start since the program began in the mid-1990s. They may have speech, health, visual, hearing, or physical impairments. Children with behavioral difficulties, learning disabilities, and developmentally delayed are also served.

Children diagnosed with disabilities and their families receive a full range of Early Head Start services. Early Head Start staff members work closely with community agencies to identify and provide services to meet the needs of the children enrolled. Parental consent is required for any disability services.

### *Transitioning*

As a family/child prepares to transition out of Early Head Start or transition between program options, the Home Visitor will work with the family to create a transition plan to prepare for the changes that will be happening. Parents are encouraged to continue their involvement in their child's education after Early Head Start or when changing program options. Each child will have a portfolio containing information that shows the child's growth and development, while in their Early Head Start program. The portfolio is periodically shared with parents on home visits and is given to parents when children leave the program or transition into Head Start.

### *Guidance and Discipline*

To assure the Early Head Start experience is positive and pleasant for children, spanking, striking or other forms of physical punishment are not allowed in the program. Name calling or the use of threats are not allowed at any Early Head Start activity by anyone. These guidelines apply to staff, parents, siblings, community volunteers, and any other visitors.

KCI follows these principles in dealing with guidance and discipline:

- ❖ Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors
- ❖ Redirection of inappropriate behaviors
- ❖ Ignore certain behaviors
- ❖ Logical or natural consequences
- ❖ Consistency and follow through

## Observations

If parents or staff becomes concerned about a behavior or behavioral changes in a child, an individual observation by a mental health consultant may be done. Individual observations are only done with the advance written approval of parent or guardian. The individual observation gives parents and staff recommendations for positive learning.

General group socialization observations will occur periodically. They are conducted to assist parents and staff in promoting the development and learning of the children. Focus areas of the observations are:

- ❖ Respect for individual and cultural differences
- ❖ Ability to form relationships
- ❖ Positive self-esteem
- ❖ Social responsibility
- ❖ Positive coping skills
- ❖ Social skills
- ❖ Non-gender bias
- ❖ Ability to express feelings appropriately



## *Parent Involvement*

There are also many ways in which parents can be involved in Early Head Start programs. Remember....volunteering can be fun! You can...

- ❖ Read to your child
- ❖ Participate in home visits
- ❖ Participate in parent committee meetings
- ❖ Join the policy council and help guide the program
- ❖ Join an advisory committee
- ❖ Learn new skills at monthly parent trainings
- ❖ Attend social events

## *Employment Opportunities for Parents*

Parents are encouraged to apply for substitute and regular employment positions with KCI. Parents who apply are required to submit the same documentation as a regular employee. Substitutes or classroom positions are required to meet Municipality of Anchorage childcare licensing code. Parents who serve on the policy council cannot work at Kids' Corps as a substitute or permanent employee and maintain their representation on the policy council. Speak to your Teacher, Center Director, Home Visitor, Home Visiting Coordinator, or the Human Resources Manager for more information.

## *Policy Council*

Federal Head Start performance standards state that parents must be involved in making decisions that affect the quality of the program. As members of the policy council, parents have an opportunity to help KCI management and the Board of Directors make many important decisions. Policy Council members can:

- ❖ Serve on the planning committee and help develop grants
- ❖ Serve on a hiring committee (training provided)
- ❖ Serve on an advisory committee (health/nutrition, family services & parent involvement, early intervention/education, or transition)
- ❖ Learn how to conduct a meeting (Roberts Rules of Order)
- ❖ Share important information with other parents at Parent Committee Meetings

## *Policy council roles and responsibilities*

### **Parents on the Policy Council help Staff Develop:**

- The program's philosophy with long and short range goals
- The composition of the Policy Council and procedures for choosing members
- The criteria for recruitment, selection and enrollment of children in the program
- Decisions related to the hiring or termination of KCI Director and staff

### **Policy Councils Have Operating Responsibility For:**

- Working with the Board of Directors and staff to establish and maintain procedures for hearing and resolving community complaints about the program.

### **Policy Councils Also:**

- Help develop center activities (Parent Committee Meetings)
- Attend Policy Council meetings once a month

### **Policy Councils Interact With.....**

- KCI Board of Directors
- Advisory Committees
- Staff
- Parent Committee Meetings
- Legislative Representatives

Childcare and dinner are provided.  
Transportation and translation are  
available as needed.

**Join Us Anytime**

## Advisory Committee Descriptions

Kids' Corps, Inc. has seen the need to thoroughly incorporate the community and parents in the decision-making processes for our agency. Advisory Committees have been established and are established as the need arises.

### *Education Advisory Committee*

The committee is responsible for reviewing curriculum, ongoing assessments and outcomes. The committee makes recommendations to strengthen the educational services.



### *Family Services Advisory Committee*

The focus of this group is to discuss family services practices, policies and forms and make adjustments as needed to meet the changing needs of the families enrolled in our program.

### *Health & Nutrition Advisory Committee*

This committee is mandated by the HS Performance Standards. This committee is responsible for making recommendations to the program with regard to health & nutrition services delivered to the enrolled families



**Please contact your Home Visitor for further information.**

## *Family Services*

KCI Early Head Start seeks to support families as they work together to achieve their family's goals. The Home Visitor works with parents at home visits to assist them to:

- Identify their family's strengths, interests and needs
- Learn about community resources
- Utilize the social services available in the community
- Set and reach goals

## *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting*

Children's safety always comes first. Alaska state law and the Municipality of Anchorage code require Early Head Start staff and all licensed childcare providers to report suspected or known cases of child abuse and neglect. Staff must report no matter where the suspected incidents occur. All incidents of suspected or known child abuse or neglect must be reported to the office of children's services (269-4000) within 24 hours.

## *Child Health & Developmental Services*

KCI Early Head Start believes that early intervention improves a child's capacity to learn and develop. The health education program offers parents information about:

- ❖ Finding a "medical and dental home"
- ❖ Preventative health care
- ❖ Lactation information and support
- ❖ Early intervention - height, weight, hearing, & vision screenings
- ❖ Child nutrition & oral health
- ❖ Communicable disease awareness
- ❖ Home safety and injury prevention

Early Head Start performance standards require the following:

- ❖ Current physical exam (as specified by EPSDT)
- ❖ Developmental screenings (within 45 days of enrollment)
- ❖ Immunization records (current)

### *Child Illness/Communicable Diseases*

KCI asks for your cooperation to help assure that children have a happy and healthy Early Head Start experience. It is important to make sure that children are feeling well on scheduled days of home visits and group socials.

We ask that children and families refrain from participating in any Early Head Start activities if any of the following conditions exists:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a. Sore throat   | n. Skin rashes, excluding diaper rash, which lasts more than one day                      |
| b. Deep hacking cough or severe congestion   | o. Swollen joints   |
| c. Earache   | p. Visibly enlarged lymph nodes   |
| d. Severe pain or discomfort of joints, ears or abdomen  | q. Stiff neck   |
| e. Acute diarrhea (two times the child's normal frequency of bowel movements in the past 24 hours) | r. Blood or pus from ear, skin, urine, or stool   |
| f. Severe drainage from wound, nose, eyes or ears  | s. Unusual behavior for the child such as not playing, confusion, persistent crying, etc. |
| g. Oral or auxiliary temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher  | t. Loss of appetite such as refusing solids or favorite foods                             |
| h. Yellow skin or eyes   | u. Symptoms which indicate any of the   |
| i. Two or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hours   | v. Following diseases: chicken pox, lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, strep throat       |
| j. Red eyes and discharge  | w. Reportable communicable diseases   |
| k. Infected or untreated skin patches or lesions   |   |
| l. Difficult or rapid breathing  |   |
| m. Severe itching of the body or scalp   |   |

### *A child is still not ready to participate if they have*

- ❖ Not fully recovered from an illness
- ❖ Is still too sick to take part in activities **or outdoor play**
- ❖ Had a fever in the last 24 hours (a child should be fever free for 24 hours)
- ❖ Had a communicable disease and is still considered contagious
- ❖ Has vomited within the last 24 hours

Parents may be asked to provide a statement from a physician stating that the child is no longer contagious. (the child could spread the illness to others.) It is hard for children to cope with group situations when they do not feel well.

If infestations of the home are present, such as bedbugs, lice, rodents, cockroaches or other spreadable infestations, home visit may need to be conducted in an alternative location until the infestation is eliminated.

Parents may be asked to provide documentation of pest removal from landlord or pest removal services before indoor visits may continue. Visiting the family outside is a short-term option in this situation.

## Nutrition

KCI will provide nutritious foods to meet the child's needs during group socialization experiences, i.e. formula for infants, baby food for older infants, solid or finger foods for toddlers.

### *Birthdays and Holiday / Family Traditions*

To be respectful of all families, KCI Head Start staff emphasize activities that encourage the acceptance of diversity, respect for others, self-concept and cultural identity.

Birthdays, holidays and other family celebrations may take place in during the KCI Early Head Start group socialization experiences. The procedure is as follows:

- Parents/guardians arrange **in advance** with the Early Head Start Home Visitor. The Home Visitor will then notify all other parents of the event.
- The parent and Home Visitor plan an activity that is developmentally appropriate and fits within the regular schedule of the socialization.
- The parent will lead the activity for other parents and children attending the group socialization experience.

**Birthday cakes, cupcakes, candy, cookies etc. are not permitted.**

**Centers and Group Socializations are a Nut-Free Zone due to common, potentially life threatening, allergies.**



## Communication

***Kids' Corps is on Facebook!***  
***Visit us and receive updated information at: [www.facebook.com/kcialaska](http://www.facebook.com/kcialaska)***  
***KCI Website: [www.kcialaska.org](http://www.kcialaska.org)***

### ***Weather Conditions/Center Closure***

Only in extreme cases will home visits or Group Socializations be canceled due to weather. **Your Home Visitor will call you to inform you if it is necessary to cancel a visit or group socialization event.**

### ***Transportation***

Transportation to socializations can be provided. Speak to your Home Visitor to make arrangements.



### ***Family Pets***

Early Head Start Home Visitor comes to your home for the visits. If a family has a pet or shares a common yard with a pet that staff feel may present a danger, a plan may be needed to address safety.



# Early Head Start Parent Partnerships

## Early Head Start Parents Rights

- ❖ To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.
- ❖ To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for me and my family.
- ❖ To be welcomed in activities and Group Socializations.
- ❖ To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Early Head Start programs.
- ❖ To always be treated with respect and dignity.
- ❖ To expect guidance for my child from Early Head Start Home Visitors and all other staff who will help the child's total individual development.
- ❖ To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
- ❖ To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skill in the areas of possible employment.
- ❖ To become informed about all community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of family life.



## *Early Head Start Parent Responsibilities*

- ❖ To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
- ❖ To accept Early Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives.
- ❖ To take part in the group social and to contribute in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the entire program.
- ❖ To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parents and to encourage full participation.
- ❖ To welcome the Home Visitor into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home in relation to 'world' experiences.
- ❖ To work with the Home Visitor, staff and other parents in a cooperative way.
- ❖ To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
- ❖ To offer constructive criticism to the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and to share in evaluating it.
- ❖ To take advantage of programs and meetings designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
- ❖ To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education, and recreation for all.

# Attendance Procedures

## Setting a Home Visiting Schedule

Upon enrollment in KCI's Early Head Start Home Based Program, families will be asked to choose a set visit day and time for weekly visits, establishing a set visit schedule benefits parents, children and home visiting staff.

Families will be expected to participate in visits on this day/time weekly and notify the Home Visitor **in advance** if they will be unable to participate in a visit.

If a family is unable to attend their scheduled visit on their regular day and time the Home Visitor will attempt to schedule a "make-up" visit that same week.

After enrollment, changes can be made to your home visit schedule on a permanent basis, but not week to week. Talk to your Home Visitor if you would like to change your visit schedule.

## Participation Expectations

- When enrolling in the program, families are making a commitment to attend weekly family visits lasting 1.5 hours.
- It is expected that parents and children consistently attend and actively participate in family visits.
- It is expected that parents and children consistently attend and actively participate in group socialization events.

## IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD IS UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN HOME VISITS

Call or text your family's Home Visitor at \_\_\_\_\_.

- Tell them why you or your child will be unable to participate
- Ask about scheduling a make-up visit later in the week

### **Attendance becomes a concern when.....**

- There are frequently canceled home visits
- There is a pattern of missed visits
- Families do not cancel in advance for visits they will not be able to attend.

If attendance becomes a concern or a family misses 2 or more visits in a month an attendance plan will need to be completed in order to create a plan to reestablish regular attendance. **Continued poor attendance may result in the family being withdrawn from the program.**

If repeated attempts to contact you fail, a letter will be sent to your last known address advising that you need to contact your Home Visitor within 7 calendar days and complete an attendance plan to remain in the Early Head Start Home Based Program.

## *Prearranged Absence Policy*

Early Head Start families may prearrange absences for up to two (2) weeks during the program year. Longer periods of absence may be authorized on a case-by-case basis for reasons that include but are not limited to serious health issues and family emergencies.

Parents must contact the Home Visitor to make arrangements for a prearranged absence. The Home Visitor will try to schedule a home visit for the estimated return date. If the family is not available on the previously scheduled visit date, your Home Visitor will attempt to contact the parents or guardians. **If they cannot be contacted within three working days, the child will be withdrawn from the program and placed on a wait-list.**



## Confidentiality Procedure

KCI respects your right to privacy. Parents/guardians must sign an authorization for Mutual Exchange of Information Form before any information will be released.

All staff and volunteers are informed of the confidentiality policy and reminded to keep all information regarding families confidential.

All staff shall be informed prior to beginning work and reminded regularly thereafter that any information concerning a KCI family is private and shall not be discussed with anyone outside the appropriate Kids' Corps staff without authorized parent/guardian permission. Staff who leave KCI will be reminded of the confidentiality still binding them.

All documents, forms, and files regarding families in the program will be kept in a locked space when not in use.

There are some exceptions when written consent to share information is not required:

- ❖ When the information is requested by a government agency for law-enforcement activity;
- ❖ When there is an appropriate court order, such as a subpoena;
- ❖ In emergency situations to protect the health or safety of an individual;
- ❖ In a program review or review audits conducted by childcare licensing, federal Head Start reviewers, or state agencies.



## *Child Abuse and Neglect Procedure*

### *Reporting suspected abuse*

Kids' Corps Head Start & Early Head Start is required to follow the Alaska state child abuse and neglect reporting law (section 47.17). KCI staff or volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse or neglect of a child to the Office of Children's Services. **All reports are confidential.**

### *What is considered "abuse" and/or "neglect"?*

State law defines child abuse or neglect to include:

- ❖ **Physical injury** that harms or threatens a child's health or welfare;
- ❖ **Failure to care for a child**, including neglect of the necessary physical needs: (food, shelter, clothing, and medical attention), emotional, mental and social needs:
- ❖ **Sexual abuse**, including molestation or incest.

### *Unsupervised children*

Lack of supervision may be considered child neglect. This could include children twelve (12) years of age or younger left unsupervised at home or unattended in a vehicle.

### *Help is available*

The safety of young children is a primary concern of Kids' Corps. Staff is available to assist families who are in crisis or experiencing family problems.

## *Unsupervised Child Procedure*

Leaving young children 12 years old and under unsupervised may fall under the category of child neglect. Alaska state law requires that incidents of child abuse or neglect be reported to the Office of Children's Services (OCS). Kids' Corps employees are mandatory child abuse and neglect reporters.

*It is the policy of this agency to insure the safety of all children. If any children are left alone in your residence, a KCI employee may enter your home to use the telephone or to assure that children are safe.*

### *Procedure*

1. If upon a KCI employee's arrival at an Early Head Start child's home a child answers the door, the employee will attempt to determine if an adult is present.
2. If the staff person determines that an adult or appropriate caregiver is not home, the staff is legally mandated to make a report to the Office of Children's Services (OCS) and the Anchorage Police Department.
3. Staff may enter the home to assure the safety of the child. Staff will call the Anchorage Police Department (APD) at 786-8900 to request a child welfare check. The child's address will be given to the dispatcher.
4. Staff waits at the home until APD arrives.
5. Staff reports the incident to their supervisor and the Home Visiting Coordinator immediately.

## Safety & Security

**WEAPONS POLICY:** Weapons of any kind are not allowed in any KCI facility or event. This includes staff, parents, and community volunteers. Any person who brings a weapon to a facility or event will be asked to leave immediately. If a parent brings a weapon, it could result in their child being withdrawn from the program.

**ALCHOL & DRUGS POLICY:** Any parent under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be allowed at any KCI facility or event. If a KCI staff has a reason to believe a parent is under the influence during a home visit or at a KCI event they will be asked to leave immediately. If the health and/or safety of the child is a concern, KCI staff will contact The Office of Children's Services and/or the Anchorage Police Department as needed to ensure child safety.

## Pedestrian Safety for Parents of Infants & Toddlers

Children learn most during their first year of life. Babies learn best by copying others and through repetition. Before babies can speak, they are learning about the world by watching their parents and caregivers. It is critical to begin teaching them the dangers of motor vehicles as a young child. Children at this age are at risk of injury by moving vehicles in driveways, parking lots, and on the roads. Children this age are unaware of the danger that exists with a moving vehicle.

Here are some facts you should know:

- Children ages 0-4 years old are at the highest risk for pedestrian related injury and death.
- Children ages one to two suffer the highest number of pedestrian injuries, most often when a vehicle is backing up.
- Unfortunately, injuries sustained by child pedestrians are often severe.
- As the parent, you have the opportunity to teach your child pedestrian safety by being an example.

### **This is how you can prevent Tragedies:**

#### **IN THE CAR**

- **Always take your child out of the car on the curbside:** Your child will get used to using the door by the curb to get out of the car. This habit will continue on into preschool and school age years when they become more independent.
- **Take your child out of the car last and put them into the car first:** It can be difficult at times to fumble with shopping and a child. Always put your child in the car first so you can carry on with everything else knowing that your child is safe. When getting out of the car, take your child out of the car last so you can be sure they are always by your side.

#### **IN THE STREET**

- **Always choose safe places to cross the street with a clear view of traffic:** By choosing safe and clear places to cross such as pedestrian crosswalks or traffic lights, your child will begin to understand where they should cross the road.
- **Hold hands with your child.** If they are unwilling it may be safer to put them in a stroller.
- **Look for dangers.** Stop at driveways and tell your child you are checking for cars.
- **Talk to your toddler.** Involve your child in conversation. Ask them what they can see and if they think it is safe.

#### **IN THE DRIVEWAY**

- Always supervise your children when a vehicle is being moved on your property.
- Make access to the driveway difficult for children.
- Remember that using mirrors while reversing still leaves limited visibility of the area behind your car.
- Know where all children are before backing out of your driveway.

## *Breastfeeding Promotion & Support*

Kids' Corps Early Head Start is committed to encouraging breastfeeding and providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. Substantial research has documented that breastfeeding provides many health benefits to both mother and child.

- ❖ KCI Early Head Start program recommends breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding. All expectant mothers will be encouraged to breastfeed, and new mothers will be educated on the benefits of breastfeeding.
- ❖ An area will be provided at Group Socializations for mothers who want to breastfeed their child or express their milk in private. This space will include a comfortable seating area, an electrical outlet and water will be available. Mothers are also welcome to breastfeed in the meeting/visit/event if they wish.
- ❖ A positive breastfeeding attitude will be conveyed by the distribution of culturally appropriate materials. Breastfeeding promotion information may be displayed in centers. Resource information will be available to families should questions or problems arise.



## *“Just Playing”*

*When I’m building in the block area, please don’t say I’m “Just Playing.”  
For, you see, I’m learning as I play: about balance and shapes.  
Who knows, I may be an architect someday.*

*When I’m getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for babies,  
Don’t get the idea I’m “Just Playing.”  
For, you see, I’m learning as I play: I may be a mother or a father someday.*

*When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some plaything at my school,  
Please don’t feel the time is wasted in “Play.” For, you see, I’m learning as I play.  
I’m learning to solve problems and concentrate: I may be in business someday.*

*When you see me learning to skip, hop, run, and move my body,  
Please don’t say I’m “Just Playing.” For, you see, I’m learning as I play.  
I’m learning how my body works: I may be a doctor, nurse, or an athlete someday.*

*When you see me sitting in a chair “reading” to an imaginary audience,  
Please don’t laugh and think I’m “Just Playing.”  
For, you see, I’m learning as I play: I may be a teacher someday.*

*When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice things I find, don’t  
pass it off as “Just Playing.”  
For, you see, I’m learning as I play: I may be a scientist someday.*

*When you see me tasting foods, please don’t think that because I enjoy it, it is  
“Just Playing.” For, you see, I’m learning as I play.  
I’m learning to follow directions and see differences: I may be a cook someday.*

*When you ask me what I’ve done at school today, and I say, “I Just Played,”  
Please don’t misunderstand me. For, you see, I’m learning as I play.  
I’m learning to enjoy and be successful in my work,  
I’m preparing for tomorrow.  
Today, I am a child and my work IS play.*

