



# **SOUTH COAST HEAD START FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025**



A Program of Oregon Coast Community Action

## **Table of Contents**

MY RIGHTS AS A SOUTH COAST HEAD START CAREGIVER .....	2
MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SOUTH COAST HEAD START CAREGIVER.....	2
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT .....	3
HOME VISITS AND PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES .....	4
HEALTHY CHILDREN ARE READY TO LEARN! .....	5
SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT .....	6
WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH? .....	6
DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP:.....	7
ILLNESS .....	9
SCHS GROUP PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES.....	11
ATTENDANCE MATTERS! .....	12
ADULT EXPECTATIONS .....	13
NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES .....	15
USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT .....	17
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HEAD START .....	18

**Welcome to South Coast Head Start!** We are a program that values **YOU** as your child's first and most important teacher. Our goal is to support you and your child during this wonderful time of growth and learning. We have many program options available and will work with you to best meet your family's needs.

We look forward to getting to know you and welcoming your whole family to our Head Start team. Staff will work closely with your family as you transition into our program, if you need to transfer to a different program option or move from Early Head Start to Head Start and help prepare your child and family for the big step of transitioning to kindergarten. Our mission is to support families with young children in their quest for a brighter future.



South Coast Head Start is an inclusive program committed to promoting the acceptance and appreciation of human diversity. Our program welcomes children and families of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds and family compositions. We strive to reflect this respect for diversity in our educational programs and services, our policies and practices, and our interactions with families and the community.

Our program is committed to building upon the culture and strengths of enrolled children and their families. Multicultural awareness and appreciation are a part of our Head Start curriculum. We want children to grow up with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills for living in a complex, diverse world in a socially competent manner.

**We believe that every child needs:**

- A physically and emotionally safe and healthy environment.
- Positive relationships with other children and with adults.
- Curriculum that provides for physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development.
- A stimulating learning environment, indoors and outdoors, where children can explore, and interact with materials and the natural environment.
- Nurturing staff who:
  - respond quickly to children's needs.
  - respect the feelings of children and other adults.
  - set appropriate limits and follow through consistently and fairly.



## MY RIGHTS AS A SOUTH COAST HEAD START CAREGIVER

- To be recognized as my child's primary teacher
- To always be treated with dignity and respect
- To be informed regularly about my child's progress and help set goals for my child's learning and development
- To be supported as an advocate for my child within the program and with partner programs
- To expect guidance for my child from teachers and staff, which will help his/her total individual development
- To have my ideas and suggestions about my child's classroom and the program valued and considered through Parent Meetings and Policy Council
- To be informed about services related to education, health, social services, employment, and other community resources
- To review and ask for clarification on policies and procedures
- To address any concerns that may arise regarding South Coast Head Start. I may report my concern to my site's Area Manager and/or obtain a grievance form from any staff member



## MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SOUTH COAST HEAD START CAREGIVER

- To ensure my child attends the program consistently and on time
- To participate in home visits and parent-teacher conferences to further my child's growth and development and enhance my family's SCHS experience
- To ensure my child is up to date on all required medical and dental needs
- To be open to new ideas and experiences that can benefit my child and family
- To reinforce what my child learns in school by working with my child at home
- To work with teachers, staff, and other families in a cooperative, respectful manner
- To volunteer and participate in individual and family activities according to my strengths and interests (parent meetings/educational workshops, Policy Council)
- To help make the program better by offering suggestions, constructive criticism, and feedback
- To provide parent leadership by encouraging participation, taking part in elections, recruiting new families, and advocating for continued funding

*"Head Start has helped me in so many ways to be a better leader, parent, and person. They have helped me develop tools to help those around me. They gave me the strength to be a better person, which made me a better parent, and eventually a better leader."*

*~ South Coast Head Start Parent*

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

***This is your program.*** You are highly encouraged to share with us your enthusiasm, ideas, and special talents. South Coast Head Start parents are involved in all aspects of the program.

There are many ways parents can participate in the program

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences         | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a parent training or workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in Home Visits                | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare classroom materials                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Parent Committee Meetings          | <input type="checkbox"/> Share a hobby or talent                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer in the TAP Jobs Program         | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Family Events                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for a scholarship                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist on field trips                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in classroom/group activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with the monthly newsletter             |

**Volunteering/In-Kind:** Volunteers are vital to Head Start. We track volunteer hours to match our federal funds. Please check with site staff to learn how to record your volunteer hours.

Parent volunteers who work in our classrooms or kitchen are encouraged to join children and staff at meals. All volunteers are required to follow our posted guidelines, including kitchen sanitation guidelines.

**Family Services:** Our staff are here to support your whole family! Staff can assist families in meeting immediate needs, such as getting housing assistance, securing adequate and appropriate food, applying for health and social service programs, or handling a family crisis.

**Family Partnerships:** Family Partnerships are designed to support your family to identify areas of interests, goals, needs and strengths. This conversation helps South Coast Head Start staff learn about your family to offer you the best experience we can while you are here.

**Parent Committee Meetings:** Parent Committees create opportunities for parents to learn new information and assist in planning program activities. During this time, parents can exchange information with their Policy Council Representative. Your ideas and input are important. Check notices in your monthly newsletters for dates/times.

**Policy Council:** Serving on Policy Council is an exciting way to participate in the South Coast Head Start program. The Policy Council includes elected parent representatives from each class and service area. The Policy Council works closely with the Director and other staff on a variety of program planning activities, including the annual program self-assessment. The Policy Council meets once a month to discuss program business and to share information about program and site activities.

**Employment:** SCHS employment information is available online at [www.orcca.us](http://www.orcca.us). Job openings are also posted at Head Start sites. Please check the job descriptions for education and experience requirements. Please let your site staff know if you would like assistance in completing a job application.

## HOME VISITS AND PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

**As a partner to your child's team at SCHS, you will have very important home visits during this school year.** Home Visits allow you to be in the comfort of your own home as you interact with your child's teacher or other staff, work on activities with your child, have discussions to support you as an individual and family, and have support in setting your own goals to work towards.

**How long are Home Visits?** Home visits are scheduled for 1½ - 2 hours. Additional home visits may be scheduled according to your interests and needs.

**What is the Role of Staff in the Home Visit?** Staff share ideas, resources, and materials, and connect families with community resources to support school readiness for your child and family.

**What is the Parent's Role in the Home Visit?** Parents help plan, actively participate, and evaluate home visit activities.

**What kinds of Activities can be included in the Home Visit?** Activities can include health, nutrition, safety, language, and physical development projects that you can do with your teacher and child. Home Visits are also a time to identify family strengths and develop plans for individual or family goals.

**Why are Home Visits Important?** Home Visits emphasize that children learn all day, every day and engage you, the parent, as your child's most important teacher. Home Visits emphasize that adults are lifelong learners too.

### How Can I Help Ensure a Successful Home Visit?

- Set the designated time aside for the home visit.
- Have an area ready for doing work or activities.
- For educational home visits, have the child ready.
- Limit distractions: turn T.V., computers and radio off, put animals up or out.
- Actively participate in the home visit.





## HEALTHY CHILDREN ARE READY TO LEARN!



South Coast Head Start believes that for children to be ready to learn, they need to be healthy. Staff will partner with you to ensure that your child has medical and dental health insurance coverage and providers. Within 90 days of enrollment, we determine if your child is up-to-date in preventative and well care. If not, we will work with you to ensure your child gets up to date in these important areas, and any necessary follow-up or treatment is completed. If payment for your child's exams or any needed treatment is a concern, please talk with staff about available assistance.

South Coast Head Start's child nutrition services help families in meeting each child's nutritional needs, and in establishing good eating habits that nurture healthy development and promote life-long well-being. Growth screenings are conducted twice a year to assess each child's nutritional status and growth pattern. If necessary, referrals are made to WIC, the Child's Medical Provider, and other community agencies to address the child and family's nutritional needs.

**Immunizations:** According to Oregon state law, all children without current immunizations, or a medical or non-medical exemption will be excluded from school, in February, until the needed immunizations or exemptions are received.



## SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

- Head Start emphasizes the importance of early identification of health and developmental needs.
- Screening is a quick and simple check of how children are doing in a variety of developmental areas.
- Each enrolled child receives screenings in **speech, hearing, vision, nutrition, growth, dental, overall development, and social-emotional development** during the year from trained staff.
- Parents sign screening consent at enrollment and are informed of the results of screenings.
- South Coast Head Start staff will assist families with follow-up if screening indicates a need for further evaluation.
- Each child is provided 3 individualized learning goals per year, which are determined by assessing each child's developmental progress. Assessments include observations during class activities or experiences, reviewing the child's work, and parent input.



## inclusion

- South Coast Head Start provides inclusive early childhood educational services. We welcome children of all abilities!
- We actively recruit children with disabilities and work collaboratively with the South Coast Education Service District (ESD) for placement of children with disabilities.
- We also coordinate with South Coast ESD to ensure that specialized services (like speech therapy) are provided at our sites as outlined by the IFSP.

## WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH?

- **Early Childhood Mental Health** is the growing ability of a child from birth to age 5 to:
  - experience, regulate and express emotions
  - form close and secure relationships
  - explore the environment and learn
- Early Childhood Mental Health can also be described as healthy **social and emotional development**.
- South Coast Head Start contracts with a community mental health provider who helps support the emotional and behavioral health of children, families, and classrooms.
- Our consultant will visit your child's classroom for a Fall observation and work with the teacher to make sure that the classroom environment is a healthy and supportive place for your child!
- Parents/guardians can request an individual observation for your child or a meeting with our consultant at any time. Your teacher or Family Engagement Specialist can assist you with this request.







## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP:**

South Coast Head Start recognizes the importance of a smooth transition when children are both arriving and leaving our care. We are also committed to upholding the highest standards of safety for children, families and site staff members.

### **Drop-off:**

- An adult is required to stay with the child until the health screen is completed and the child is signed in.
- All children will receive a health screening before entering the classroom, which may include temperature with a touch-free thermometer, questions related to COVID- 19 signs and symptoms. Parents need to confirm that they have not used any fever controlling medications to lower their child's temperature.
- Children not meeting the Group Participation Guidelines will not be allowed to stay. The parent/caregiver will sign the child into the classroom, noting the planned time for pick-up.
- Children's hands will be washed as soon as they enter the classroom.

All efforts will be made to help the child happily separate from the parent/caregiver as quickly possible.

### **Pick-up:**

Each teaching team will create a plan for parents to communicate when they will pick-up their child.

- A staff member will require photo ID for parents/family members if they have not met them previously.
- The parent/caregiver will sign out the child.

*Note: If you are late picking up your child and we have not heard from you, staff will begin calling emergency contacts. If unable to locate a parent or emergency person one hour after the end of class or one hour after completion of the bus route, a referral will be made to the local police or Child Welfare Services.*

**Diapering and Toileting:** Diapers/pullups, wipes, and diaper cream are provided for children while in our care. Children are diapered in a designated area. Staff and parents will work together to help children learn to use the toilet. Parents are responsible for leaving a few changes of clothes at the site, and for washing any soiled clothing. Staff are aware of a child's "toilet readiness" signals and will help each child learn the skills they need to be successful at toilet learning. Staff are positive and encouraging and children are never disciplined about "accidents."

**Clothing and Belongings:** Our classrooms are well-equipped! Please check with site staff to see if it is okay for your child to bring items from home. Each child has a "cubby" in the classroom and staff will place items into the cubby like artwork, program information, and other treasures for you to pick-up. Young children learn through hands-on activities and exploration, so there will be many times that your child will get messy. Outdoor play is essential for children's health and well-being. The time children spend outdoors every day is just as important to their learning as the time spent in the classroom. Children will be going outdoors every day except when the weather is dangerous. Please send your child to school in clothing suitable for messy hands-on activities and exploration and for our seasonal weather. Shoes should be close-toed and have a back or a strap around the heel. **Please send an extra change of clothes for your child, if possible.**

**Rest Time:** Extended Day and Full Day program options will include rest times. Classroom rest times will be arranged according to the schedules and ages of the children enrolled. Our program provides appropriate sleeping arrangements and supplies for each child. Infants and toddlers in the EHS program will be allowed to rest, when necessary, throughout the day. Older children rest for up to 1 ½ hours. Those children who are awake after 30 minutes can get up and play in another space.



**Meals:** Nutritious meals and snacks will be served during class time, with children eating together with the staff, who model good eating habits for the children and make mealtimes a fun and educational activity. Food is not used as a punishment or reward, and each child is encouraged, but not forced, to eat or taste his or her food. South Coast Head Start classroom meals are provided with funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). For safety's sake, food may not be brought to school and served to the children.

Early Head Start will provide formula for formula fed infants at no cost to the family. Mothers may come on-site after a health check to nurse their infants and toddlers in our designated breastfeeding areas. Storage of breast milk on site will also be available.

**Food Allergies:** If your child needs food substitutions due to documented allergies, they cannot attend class without the required paperwork in place. Often this requires paperwork to be filled out by your child's medical provider. A staff member will assist you in this process.

**Health Management Plans:** If your child has a health condition such as Asthma or Seizures, a Health Management Plan must be created and signed by your child's Medical Provider before they can start attending class so that we can ensure staff know how to care for your child's individual health condition.

**Medication:** Staff are not allowed to administer any type of medication unless there is written authorization. We will give you an authorization form to be signed by you, the parent or legal guardian, and your child's medical provider. This policy applies even to Tylenol, cough medicine, etc. Also, no medication will be given unless it is in the original container with a label and clear directions.

**First Aid:** Any child with a minor injury receives first aid treatment from trained staff. You will be notified of the injury your child sustained and the first aid treatment given. Call the center if you have any questions.

**Blood Precautions:** All blood will be handled using the "body fluid spill cleanup kit", available in each classroom, on the playground, and on field trips. Staff, parents and children will receive training on handling blood.

**Emergency Treatment when Medical Care is Required:**

All parents are required to keep emergency contact information up-to-date. In case of an emergency, parents will be contacted IMMEDIATELY. If we are unable to locate you, we will call the emergency number(s) you have given us.



In the event of a medical emergency, South Coast Head Start staff is directed to call 911. If the judgment of the Emergency Medical Technicians is that a child is in a life-threatening situation, that child will be transported via the ambulance to the nearest hospital for treatment.

In the event of a non-life-threatening emergency (example: a broken bone), and we are unable to contact you or your Emergency Contact(s), the *Parent Consent Form* (which is completed at enrollment) authorizes the 911 Emergency Team to transport your child to your preferred hospital for treatment by a physician.

**REMEMBER TO NOTIFY SOUTH COAST HEAD START STAFF IMMEDIATELY IF ANY EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS (YOURS OR YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS) CHANGE.**

**ILLNESS**

We will contact you if your child becomes ill at the center. Make sure you have arranged back-up care when your child is ill. If your child becomes ill, they will be isolated from other children with a designated staff member until you arrive. An authorized contact must pick up your child within one hour of notification.

South Coast Head Start is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all enrolled participants, their families and our staff. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of illness, including COVID-19, in our workplaces, and that requires full cooperation among enrolled participants, their families and our staff.

This policy is based on information from the Oregon Early Learning Division, Oregon Health Authority, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and additional information from "Caring for Our Children" related to COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidance.

## **COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels and Associated Preventions Strategies**

SCHS will monitor local COVID-19 levels when making decisions on implementation of increased prevention strategies. When the COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level indicates an increase, or a local/site outbreak is identified in collaboration with the local health department, additional layered prevention strategies in the categories listed below will be implemented.

- Hand Hygiene
- Masking
- Physical Distancing
- Ventilation
- Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Daily Health Screening
- Vaccination education

**Exclusion:** Exclusion from the program of any individual will be determined by the current Group Participation Guidelines which meet or exceed the rules adopted by the Oregon Health Authority under OAR 333, Division 19 9 (OAR 333-019-0010). Individuals should be observant throughout the day for changes in health status. All exclusions are reported to the Health Services Coordinator daily.

Each site has a designated Illness Isolation Area to use while waiting to determine if they should go home. After each use, the Illness Isolation area should be cleaned and sanitized/disinfected following current protocols.

**Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Within the Facility:** If anyone who has entered the facility is diagnosed with COVID-19, staff will be notified, and exposure letters will be given to families to inform them if they have been exposed to COVID-19 while at our facility.

**Illness Reporting:** The Health Services Coordinator is the designated COVID-19 Point of Contact to facilitate communication, maintain healthy operations, and respond to COVID-19 questions from state or local public health authorities, state or local regulatory agencies, families, and staff. The Health Services Coordinator will report elevated levels of absenteeism due to respiratory illness in our facilities to the County Public Health. SCHS will end program activities if cases warrant, and it is recommended by the Oregon Health Authority or Local Public Health Authority.

**Vaccinations:** SCHS strongly encourages eligible staff and children to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. Vaccine education materials and availability will be provided to staff and enrolled participants annually, and staff will provide support in obtaining vaccines as needed.

**Support for High Risk Children:** If a child has a higher risk of severe illness, families should consult with their medical provider about the child attending childcare to ensure that the proper support is in place.

**Cleaning and Sanitizing/Disinfecting:** All SCHS indoor and outdoor environments will be cleaned, sanitized and disinfected throughout each day according to the guidance on our “Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting Schedule.” Staff are provided with products approved for use, with specific instructions for proper application.





## SCHS GROUP PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

INDIVIDUAL WITH THE FOLLOWING SHOULD REMAIN AT HOME AND/OR SEE THEIR DOCTOR: *=primary symptom for COVID-19.	INDIVIDUAL CAN RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK WHEN MEETS SYMPTOM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES BELOW:
*Fever over 100.4 degrees Fever over 101 degrees if teething symptoms (see Teething Guidelines).	No fever, 24-hours symptom free, w/out aid of fever reducing medication.
*Severe or persistent coughing.	Cough improving for 24 hours or with written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider.
*Shortness of Breath - Difficult breathing or wheezing not due to asthma	Breathing returns to normal.
*Congestion, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, muscle or body aches	Feeling significantly better.
*New loss of taste or smell	Neg. COVID-19 test result or conclusion of exclusion requirement.
Diarrhea (3 or more watery or loose stools in 24 hours OR sudden onset of loose stools OR student unable to control bowel function when previously able.)	No diarrhea for 48 hours OR cleared by licensed healthcare provider.
Vomiting (one or more episodes that are not explained by non-illness factors such as choking, spinning, etc.)	No vomiting for 48 hours OR cleared by licensed healthcare provider.
Uncharacteristic fatigue, decreased alertness, increased irritability, increased confusion, or a behavior change that prevents active participation in usual school activities.	Symptoms resolve, return to normal behavior, or with written clearance from a licensed health care provider.
Complaints of severe pain.	Symptoms are improving.
Unexplained rash or mouth sores w/fever or behavioral changes; or is oozing or open wound; tender, red area of skin; joint pain & rash.	Treated and cleared by doctor & determined that condition is not infectious; can be managed in a classroom setting, such as covering with a bandage.
Drainage from the eye	Minimum of 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins or until no drainage.
Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms	Treated and/or cleared by licensed healthcare provider.
Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes	Treated and/or cleared by licensed healthcare provider.

Individuals experiencing primary symptoms should seek testing for COVID-19. Individuals who are positive for COVID-19 must stay until 24-hours fever free without the aid of fever reducing medication and feeling significantly better.

Staff are required to wear a mask upon return to work for 10 days from onset of symptoms if they have tested positive for COVID-19, or from the onset of any primary symptoms, or if they have experienced more than one non-primary symptom.

Individuals who are exposed to a positive case of COVID-19 are not required to quarantine but must watch for symptoms and are advised to test on day 6 after exposure. Staff are required to wear a mask during this time. Participants over age 2 are asked to consider masking to protect others.



## ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

Unless your child is ill, we hope to see them each day!

### Did you know?

- Starting in preschool & kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind.
- Missing 10% of class days (or about 18 days) can make it harder for children to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.

### Tips for Success!

- Create habits & help your child learn routines. Have regular bedtimes & set out clothes, shoes, coat the night before school. *Children need 8-10 hours of sleep a night.*
- Teach your child that attending school every day is important.
- Teach your child about hand washing to cut down on illness.
- Build relationships with staff at your site and reach out to us for additional support!

*Please call your site if your child will be absent or late. Families will be called after one hour from the start of class if their child is unexpectedly absent. If we do not hear from you, we will check in.*

**Bus Transportation:** Some Head Start classrooms have bus transportation available. Parents should review the Bus Transportation agreement carefully as they make decisions on allowing their child to ride the Head Start bus. All parents and children in bused classes must attend a pedestrian and transportation safety training within 30 days of enrollment or transportation services will be withdrawn.

**Carpool Policy:** Some South Coast Head Start families choose to carpool for Head Start related activities. The program cannot accept any liability or responsibility for parents choosing to form carpools. Staff are not allowed to organize carpools or transport children or other Head Start family members in their personal cars. Parents concerned with the safety of a vehicle or driver are strongly cautioned to seek other arrangements.

## **ADULT EXPECTATIONS**

South Coast Head Start (SCHS) is committed to being a successful learning community, which includes:

- a partnership with parents and their children;
- a celebration of diversity;
- an atmosphere of support, respect, and trust; where everyone is safe and experiences a sense of belonging.

We **expect** respect from everyone involved in our program, and we teach it to our children. We know that sometimes the challenges people face in their lives can feel overwhelming and that can contribute to reactivity in our conversations or actions. We ask that all participants strive to embody our program commitments regardless of their situation; it supports the work we do and helps everyone to be a productive citizen of the larger community. SCHS expects all participants to respect the unique identity of each child and family.

### **SCHS will not tolerate:**

- Racism. The demographics of our program mirror that of the South Coast. All staff, children, parents, volunteers, and guests are to be treated with respect regardless of their ethnicity or country of origin.
- Bigotry. Everyone has their own unique opinions, beliefs and lifestyles and all are to be treated with respect.
- Yelling, swearing, or threatening language directed at staff, children or other parents on the phone, in the centers, at home visits, or during other program services.
- Harassment of any kind. Harassment can take many forms. The bottom line: Be civil and polite.

**SCHS Functions:** The following policies ensure the safety of all participants at all SCHS functions, including at family meetings and events, in the classroom, and on the bus.

- Anyone attending a SCHS center or SCHS function who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave.
- All adults are asked to refrain from using inappropriate language at any SCHS center or SCHS function.
- Only appropriate disciplinary measures will be permitted during any SCHS function. This does not include spanking, pushing, pulling, pinching, hitting, yelling, threatening, etc.
- Only safe play is allowed; please refrain from tossing children in the air, wrestling, or any other activity that might inadvertently hurt a child.

**Group Confidentiality:** Information obtained in the participation of a SCHS group is considered confidential and will not be repeated to anyone outside of the group. Out of respect for each other, participants are requested and expected to keep confidential any information they may hear or see regarding other participants or children in the program. This includes information gained as a result of conversations, classroom participation, conferences, meetings and written documentation.

**Cell Phone Use in Classrooms:** At SCHS, we encourage parent involvement as much as possible! We hope parents join their child in class as much as they'd like whether you are eating a meal, playing or volunteering. While you're with your child, we hope that you take the opportunity to engage with your child using the classroom materials provided. Please keep your phone on silent and avoid making or taking calls or text messaging. If you need to use your phone, we kindly ask that you step outside of the classroom to take the call. Being on the phone can be distracting to not only your child but also to the other children in the classroom.

**Picture and Photo Guidelines:** We all love photos of our children. South Coast Head Start staff take pictures of the children in class. These photos provide children and their families with wonderful memories as the years go by. However, there are some families who prefer not to have their children photographed. To honor the preferences of individual families, please ask your classroom teacher before taking any photos that would include other children.

**Tobacco, Vape, Marijuana, and Other Drugs:** SCHS is a tobacco, vape, marijuana, and drug-free organization. All forms of tobacco, vape, marijuana, and drug use including smoking will not be allowed at SCHS centers or parking areas. Adults are not to smoke, vape, or chew tobacco in front of the children or in areas used for staff. This includes classrooms, offices, kitchens, restrooms, meeting rooms, outdoor play areas, parking lots, and in vehicles used for transporting children. This policy also includes family homes during home visits.

When buildings are shared with a SCHS classroom, we will take steps to decrease children's exposure to tobacco smoke from other occupants. This can include altering traffic patterns and/or establishing a "tobacco or smoke-free zone" around the SCHS center. SCHS can provide educational materials and referrals to assist with tobacco cessation for staff and parents.

**Professional Boundaries:** Staff have professional boundaries and are strongly discouraged from participating in your private life, including but not limited to providing childcare, attending non-work-related social functions (like birthday parties), becoming involved in custody disputes, or engaging in romantic relationships.

**Mandatory Reporting:** SCHS has the responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment that supports the healthy development of every child and family. Through training and program policies, SCHS takes precautions to prevent neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse of children. Please talk with program staff about stresses that may be affecting you and your family. We will provide support and refer individuals/families to community services, as requested or needed. All SCHS staff are "mandated reporters." This means they are legally required to report all known and suspected cases of child abuse & neglect immediately.

**Holidays and Celebrations:** South Coast Head Start respects the right of individual families to observe holidays, customs, and traditions according to their own beliefs. We approach holidays with the philosophy of discussing culture and heritage through educational activities rather than through classroom parties. We are committed to respecting each family's traditions, while ensuring no one is excluded from activities. If you have questions about classroom celebrations, please check with your child's teacher.



## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES SOUTH COAST HEAD START**

South Coast Head Start (SCHS) keeps a record of the services we provide to your child/family. You have the right to see the file, request a copy, and to ask for any corrections to information in the file. SCHS will not disclose information in your file to others unless you direct us to do so or unless the law requires that we release the information. You may review your file or get more information about it by contacting your Area Manager or the ERSEA/Data Manager.

This notice describes how confidential information about your child/family may be used and disclosed, and how you can access this information. Please read it carefully. SCHS staff respect your child/families privacy. Staff understand that your family's information is very sensitive, and that the law protects the privacy of the information SCHS gathers while providing services to your child/family. SCHS uses and shares child and family information in the following ways:

**Internal Communication:** SCHS staff share information internally to help provide the best services to you and your family: Classroom and site staff share information by talking with one another and by recording in your child/ family file to ensure quality service delivery and safety. Staff may share information with supervisors and/or internal specialists or consultants to support service delivery and ensure compliance with program requirements.

**Exchanging information with other community agencies or providers:** With your written consent, SCHS shares information about your child/family with other agencies and providers. Information released to or received from other agencies is kept in your child/family file. For example, you may permit SCHS to receive a copy of your child's well child exam from your doctor.

**Program Audits/Reviews:** Information is shared with federal and state auditors to show how SCHS is meeting regulations.

**SCHS may share your child/family information *without* your authorization under the following circumstances:**

- a. For public health and safety purposes as allowed or required by law.
- b. To report suspected abuse and neglect to public authorities.
- c. To protect a person or public.
- d. To police when required by a court order or other legal process.
- e. To community disaster relief staff during a disaster.
- f. To the court when directed by a subpoena.

**Your Rights to Privacy:** The paper file and computer records the program creates and stores about your child/family belong to SCHS. The information, however, belongs to the legal parents and/or guardians of the child and family.

**You have a right to:**

1. Receive, read, and ask questions about this *Notice of Privacy Practices*.
2. Ask SCHS to not share information with particular people or agencies. You should make this request to your Teacher/Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist, or Home Visitor.

There are times that the law requires SCHS to share information even without parental permission. Examples include:

- a. Non-custodial parents/legal guardians have the same right to child education information as custodial parents/legal guardians.
- b. SCHS must share information with police or agencies presenting court orders.
3. Request that you, other custodial parents and/or legal guardians be allowed to see and receive a copy of your child/family information.
4. Have SCHS supervisors review a denial of access to your child/family file.
5. Request that information in the file be corrected if it is in error. Staff will change the information in the file or, at minimum you will be allowed to write a statement of disagreement. The statement will be stored in your file, and be included with any release of information.
6. Request that the program give you a list of the agencies and individuals who have received information from your child/family file.
7. Be contacted by staff in a manner that protects you or your family. For example, families may ask SCHS to mail all information to a post office box that is different from their home address because they are living in a safe house.
8. Change who may have access to your child/family records. Any written authorization or release signed by you may be changed or cancelled.

**SCHS responsibilities include:**

1. Keeping your child/family information private.
2. Giving you notice of SCHS privacy practices.
3. Following the practices on the *Notice of Privacy Practices*. SCHS has the right to change the program privacy practices. You will receive notice, in writing, of any changes to the policy and practices.

**If you need to ask for help or to complain about SCHS privacy practices:**

1. Talk with any SCHS staff member.
2. Talk with your Area Manager.
3. Contact the administration office of SCHS, 1855 Thomas Ave. Coos Bay, OR, 97420 or call 541-888-3717 and ask to speak to the ERSEA/Data Manager, Program Services Coordinator, or the SCHS Director.
4. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services at [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov). SCHS respects your right to file a complaint, and no action will be taken against you or your family.

## USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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

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

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- 2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- 3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HEAD START



**Oregon Head Start Association (OHSA – [www.ohsa.net](http://www.ohsa.net)):** The Oregon Head Start Association’s purpose is to provide up-to-date information on legislative matters and to bring parents, staff and directors together.



**National Head Start Association (NHSA – [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org)):** The National Head Start Association is a private nonprofit membership organization representing over a million Head Start/Early Head Start families annually.

Major activities of NHSA include education and advocacy on behalf of Head Start children providing regular policy and legislative updates, special studies and reports, training conferences, and leadership institutes.



**The Office of Head Start Early Childhood Knowledge and Learning Center (ECKLC – <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>):** The Office of Head Start helps young children from low-income families prepare to succeed in school through local programs. Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote children's development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being. The ECKLC includes resources and information to support staff and parents.