



# 2024-2025 PARENT HANDBOOK

*Tazewell-Woodford Head Start has a vision of providing comprehensive early childhood experiences with knowledgeable, passionate staff that strengthen families; promotes child and family well-being; involves the community; and prepares children for kindergarten and life-long learning.*

**Welcome to Head Start! We look forward to partnering with you this year!**

**HEAD START FAMILY CENTER**  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
233 LEADLEY  
EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61611  
309-699-6843

**HENSEY SITE**  
JL HENSEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
304 E. ALMOND  
WASHINGTON, IL 61571  
309-699-6843

**ROBEIN SITE**  
ROBEIN SCHOOL  
200 CAMPUS AVENUE  
EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS  
309-699-6843

**EUREKA SITE**  
ROANOKE MENNONITE CHURCH  
1195 COUNTY RD. 1600 E.  
EUREKA, IL 61530  
309-699-6843

**CREVE COEUR SITE**  
LASALLE SCHOOL  
300 HIGHLAND AVE.  
CREVE COEUR, IL 61610  
309-699-6843

**PEKIN SITE**  
LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH OF GOD  
1010 EL CAMINO DRIVE  
PEKIN, IL 61554  
309-347-1971





# Welcome to Tazewell-Woodford Head Start!

Welcome to our Head Start Family! The staff of Tazewell-Woodford Head Start are happy you have enrolled your child in our program! We look forward to partnering with you to give your child a quality, first school experience.

In our program, both you and your child will have many wonderful opportunities. Children will be given many experiences in the classroom to prepare for kindergarten. Our program believes that children learn best through play, and classrooms are arranged to give children many engaging learning opportunities. Remember, play is a child's work and allows them to learn about the world around them.

Our program strongly believes that ***you are a child's first and most important teacher.*** Your involvement is critical to your child's school success, and we have many opportunities for you to be involved. Some of these include: volunteering in the classroom, interacting with your child with take-home activities each month, attending many events throughout the year, attending Parent Education Classes, attending Parent Committees, and being involved in our Policy Council. We encourage you to be involved in as many ways as possible and take advantage of the wonderful opportunities offered.

Our program focuses on the whole child and family. The program emphasizes the importance of good physical and dental health, nutrition, and social-emotional well-being. Family Engagement Coordinators and Teachers have a variety of resources available for you. We are here to partner with you, so please feel free to reach out to us with your families' needs. **We can help!**

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to contact me or stop by my office. Our doors are always open to visit with me or in your child's classroom. I am happy you have chosen our program and hope you have a wonderful Head Start Experience!

Your partner in education,

*Donna M. Ashley*

Donna Ashley  
Executive Director  
[dashley@twhsp.org](mailto:dashley@twhsp.org)  
309-699-6843

## Table of Contents

Mission, Vision, Values and Program Goals	Page 3
School Readiness Goals	Page 4
Program Eligibility and Requirements	Page 5
Documentation Requirements	Page 5
Fees	Page 6
Child Services	Page 6
Screening and Assessments	Page 7
Curriculum & Social Emotional Development	Page 7
Program Expectations	Page 8
Discipline Policy	Page 8
Mental Health Services	Page 8
Parent-Teacher Conferences and Home Visits	Page 9
Family Partnership Agreements	Page 10
Attendance & Absence	Page 10
Withdrawing from the Program	Page 10
Dropping Off	Page 10
Release from the Classroom or Bus	Page 10
Emergency Reunification	Page 11
Riding the Head Start School Bus	Page 11
Health and Nutrition	Page 12 & 13
Illness and Injury and Medication	Page 14
Outside Food	Page 15
Health Service Plans & Allergic Reactions	Page 15
Dental Services	Page 15
Lawn Care Product Application Notification	Page 15
Family Service and Involvement	Page 16 - 18
Parent Involvement – Inkind	Page 19
Confidentiality	Page 19
Building Security and Visitor Conduct	Page 19
Cell Phone/Electronic Device Use	Page 19
Social Media	Page 19
One Call Now	Page 20
Learning Genie	Page 20
School Closing	Page 20
Transitions	Page 20
Weapons Policy	Page 20
Statement of Conduct	Page 21
Parent/Community Complaint Procedure	Page 21
Mandated Reporting	Page 21
Resources and Support	Page 2

## Mission

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start has a mission of teaching children, supporting families and impacting the community.

## Vision

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start has a vision of providing comprehensive early childhood experiences with knowledgeable, passionate staff that strengthen families; promote child and family well-being; involves the community; and prepares children for kindergarten and life-long learning.

## Values

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start follows values that guide our approach to services for you and your family. Our values are:

- **Dedication** – Committed to going above and beyond for children and families as demonstrated through passion and accountability to our profession.
- **Teamwork** – Work together at the organizational, community, state and national level to provide quality early childhood experiences for children and their families.
- **Support** – Provide an encouraging, nonjudgmental environment for children, families and colleagues.
- **Compassion** – Provide an environment based on understanding, care, concern and appreciation of another's perspective.
- **Excellence** – Provide high quality services with a committed, knowledgeable workforce dedicated to high standards and exceeding expectations.

## Program Goals

The Tazewell-Woodford Head Start Program is always seeking ways to improve the program. Goals are set to better the program for both you and your child.

Our Program Goals include:

- *Tazewell-Woodford Head Start will increase program quality by strengthening the Quality Improvement Process and the use of data to inform decision making.*
- *Tazewell-Woodford Head Start will strengthen family partnerships to support, educate and empower parents/caregivers as their child's first and most important teacher.*
- *Tazewell-Woodford Head Start will strengthen the coordination of health care services to meet the physical health, oral health, mental health and nutritional needs of children to support growth and school readiness.*
- *Tazewell-Woodford Head Start will increase knowledge through professional development and Practice-based Coaching to heighten the quality of services.*
- *Tazewell-Woodford Head Start will provide Mental Health Support to address the needs of children, families and staff.*

## Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework outlines the essential areas of development in young children. Tazewell-Woodford Head Start uses this framework to set school readiness goals, monitor children's progress, align curriculum and plan program activities. At least one School Readiness Goal for the program is selected from each Domain.

### School Readiness Goals

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start uses data from screenings and assessments to set School Readiness Goals. These goals allow the program to focus professional development, child activities and parent activities to best meet the needs of the children in the program. School Readiness Goals are developed using the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Illinois State Board of Education Early Learning and Development Standards. This Framework and Standards are also used to guide developmentally appropriate teaching practices in the classroom to promote a child's development.

The School Readiness Goals for Tazewell-Woodford Head Start include:

- Approaches to Learning
  - Children will learn to identify emotions and regulate behavior.
- Social and Emotional Development
  - Children will engage in positive interactions with peers.
  - Children will use basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts.
- Language and Literacy
  - Children will develop an understanding of the sounds (phonemes) in language and rhyming concepts.
  - Children will demonstrate an increased knowledge in identifying letters of the alphabet.
- Cognition and General Knowledge
  - Children will add and subtract to create new numbers and begin to construct sets.
  - Children will plan and conduct investigations and experiments.
  - Children will accurately count to 15 in sequence.
- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development
  - Children will demonstrate a physical competency and control of large muscles.
  - Children will exhibit fine motor coordination when using tools to complete tasks.



## Program Eligibility and Requirements

Head Start is a federally funded program providing preschool education to children. Head Start has served as a model to many programs and has been a leader in focusing on the importance of learning during the first five years. The program focuses on the whole child and the whole family to give children a Head Start.

Our program provides services to children most in need. In order to determine eligibility, an application is completed with a Priority List and a Waiting List maintained. Eligibility Requirements include:

- A child must be three years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The program serves three- and four-year olds.
- A families' income must be at or below Federal Poverty Guidelines. The family is required to provide documentation of income to prove eligibility. Once a child has been determined eligible, they are qualified for up to two years in the program. At least 90% of the children served must be income eligible.
- TANF Recipients, SNAP Recipients, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Homeless and Children in Care receive automatic eligibility.
- Ten percent of the children enrolled in the program must have a disability with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Tazewell-Woodford Head Start staff will collaborate with your local school district about your child's IEP services.
- Tazewell-Woodford Head Start does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, marital status, political beliefs, or mental or physical disabilities. Head Start services are accessible to everyone.

**Please help us enroll children in our Head Start Program! If you have friends, family or neighbors with children eligible for our program, please have them contact us at 309-699-6843.**

## Documentation Requirements

In accordance with Department of Children and Family Service Licensing and Head Start Standards, the following are required for your child:

- Current Physical Exam
- Up-to-date Immunization Record
- TB Skin Test or a physician's documentation that this is not required.
- Current Dental Exam – on file within 90 days
- Hematocrit or Hemoglobin
- Lead Test or a physician's statement that this is not required
- Vision Screening -within 45 days
- Hearing Screening – within 45 days
- Certified Birth Certificate

Health requirements should be completed before the first day of school. Dental exams and Hearing and Vision Screenings are offered in the Fall by the program.

If you need any assistance with obtaining these documents, please let us know.

## Fees

There are no fees ever charged for any Head Start services.

## Child Services

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start provides services for children 3 to 5 years old. Children are served in center-based, full-day classrooms for 6.5 hour per day.

A child's first five years are critically important. If you are interested in programs for your birth to 3-year-old child, please contact us for information on other programs in the area.

Services are provided to support the whole child. These services include:

- **Education Services** – Tazewell-Woodford Head Start provides comprehensive education services to all children and are designed to meet a child's individual needs. Learning experiences foster intellectual and social-emotional development and focus on school readiness. Children cannot learn without strong social-emotional skills. For this reason, our program focuses on: how to express feelings, calming techniques, problem solving skills, friendship skills and self-confidence.
- **Health Services** – Good physical and dental health are important to a child's overall development. The program will assist with ensuring your child receives any health or dental services needed.
- **Nutrition Services** – Nutrition is another critical component to healthy development. Your child will receive a healthy breakfast, lunch and snack during the day. Meals are served family style. Staff eat with the children to encourage them to try new foods and to encourage conversations. You are always welcome to join your child for a meal.
- **Special Services** – Children with disabilities are enrolled in Head Start classrooms with accommodations made to meet their IEP needs. Every child is unique in their needs, and Tazewell-Woodford Head Start works with children to find ways to best support their learning. Children identified throughout the school year as needing additional services will be referred to their local School District for further screening. Head Start requires that 10% of children served be those with disabilities.
- **Mental Health Services** – Tazewell-Woodford Head Start recognizes the importance of a child's mental health and social-emotional needs. A Mental Health Consultant is available to provide services and training to families and staff.

## Screenings and Assessments

**Developmental Screenings** – Screenings are conducted within the first 45 days of enrollment. Children are screened for cognitive, language and motor development indicators with the Brigance Early Childhood Screening III. This screening gives us a snapshot of your child's development and will help with planning classroom activities to best meet your child's needs. Teachers will share the results with you at your first conference. If there are any developmental concerns, your teacher will contact you for referral to your local School District.

**Social-Emotional Screenings** – Your child will also receive a screening focused on their social-emotional development. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire will be administered at your child's first screening. If concerns are indicated, teachers will work with your child to gain the social-emotional skills needed to be successful.

**Assessment** – Your child's teacher will continually assess your child's development throughout the year with Early Learning Scale. These assessments give teachers more information on areas to focus their Lesson Plans. You will receive information about your child's assessments at conferences and at the end of the year Home Visit. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher with any questions.

## Curriculum

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start utilizes Creative Curriculum in the classroom. This curriculum allows us to provide your child with a high-quality learning environment that supports their development. Teachers ensure children receive hands on experiences to explore and discover as they play.

## Social-Emotional Development

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start promotes positive behavior and social interactions through a safe, nurturing learning environment. Children are taught skills to manage their emotions, make friends and solve problems.

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start is implementing the Pyramid Model. This is a framework that supports children's social-emotional development and creates an environment where every child feels good about coming to school. In the classroom, our staff will work together to ensure that all children understand behavior expectations, receive instruction on social skills, and those who are struggling receive individual support.

Please ask your child's Teacher or Family Engagement Coordinator for more information about the strategies used in the classroom for you to use at home.





## Program Expectations

Through implementation of the Pyramid Model, the program has a set of expectations for everyone. We are Head Start Heroes, and our expectations are:



We are Safe!

We are Kind!

We are a Team!

Please encourage your children to be Head Start Heroes both at home and at school!

## Discipline Policy

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start encourages children to make positive choices and teaches children strategies to manage their emotions. Time out is not used. Classrooms have a "Safe Place" that children can go to regain control of their emotions. This space has calming activities such as: breathing techniques, books, and problem-solving prompts. Teachers work with the children to manage their emotions and reenter group activities.

No child is ever subject to corporal punishment, emotional abuse, abusive or profane language, deprivation of food or rest, or punishment for toileting accidents by any staff or volunteer. Our program does not suspend or expel children. Any child that is unable to manage their emotions or becomes aggressive will be provided with individualized strategies. Teachers and parents will collaborate on the best ways to support the child in the classroom. A Behavior Support Plan will be developed that allows the child to participate in the program in the best and safest environment for the child and their peers. We will work together to ensure your child receives the support needed to develop skills to be successful in school.

## Mental Health Services

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start contracts with a Mental Health Consultant to provide services for your child, if needed. They provide additional social-emotional support in the classroom and are a resource for both teachers and parents/guardians. Please feel free to ask for help if you feel your child is in need of additional support. Your teacher will contact you if the Mental Health Consultant is observing your child. Observations are not conducted without parent/guardian permission.



## Reading with Your Child

Reading with your child every day is so important! An easy way to be sure you read every day is making it a part of your bedtime routine. When you take time to read with your child, you are sparking their imagination, expanding their vocabulary, enhancing their listening skills, and creating connections with them.

Throughout the year, you will receive a book and activity from our program. Please take the time to read the story and complete the activity with your child! If you are unable to access books, please ask your Teacher or Family Engagement Coordinator for resources.



## Parent-Teacher Conferences and Home Visits

Our partnership in your child's first school experience is critical! We want to work with you to make this a positive experience for both you and your child. Head Start regulations require that Teaching Staff visit you in your home before and at the end of the school year. These visits are meant to help us get to know you and your child and learn how we can support you.

Conferences are also held three times per year with the End of the Year Conference being at your home. You will be given information on your child's screening, information from ongoing assessment and ideas for ways you can help your child prepare for kindergarten.

In addition, you will be receiving Home Visits from our Family Engagement Coordinators. These visits are meant to support you in achieving your Family Goals. Our Family Engagement Coordinators have access to many resources in the community and can provide parent education to help support you and your child's learning.

Please take advantage of these opportunities!



## Family Partnership Agreements

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start Family Engagement Coordinators will work with you to complete a Family Partnership Agreement. This agreement will:

- Find areas of family strength and areas that need support
- Set one or two goals to accomplish during the year
- Develop time frames and strategies to meet your goals
- Define areas that program staff can support you in reaching your goals and your involvement in your child's early development
- Describe ways you would like to be involved with our Head Start Program
- Provide referrals to community resources to help your child and family

## Attendance and Absence Reporting

Your child's attendance is extremely important! Children with regular attendance show more growth than those that do not attend regularly. Head Start requires that children maintain an attendance rate of at least 85%.

**Please contact your Head Start Center by phone or through the Learning Genie App if your child will be absent.** Please state the reason and/or symptoms that your child will not be at school! Please do not notify Teaching Staff through their personal cell phones or Messenger. If your child's absence is not reported within an hour of class beginning, we will contact you to determine the reason for the absence.

If a child misses school or is tardy regularly, you will be contacted by the teacher and/or Family Engagement Coordinator to set up a conference. We will work with you to support your child's increased attendance. Unfortunately, if attendance continues to be a problem, your child will be placed on the Waiting List to return when space is available. With limited spaces available, it is critical that we serve children that attend regularly.

## Withdrawing from the Program

A parent/guardian planning to withdraw a child from the program should contact your Family Engagement Coordinator. We would like to be able to assist you in your transition from the program; so please keep us informed.

## Dropping Off

**Being on time to school is important!** If you transport your child, please be on time. Arriving late changes your child's classroom routine and may make it more difficult for them during the day. If your child will be late, please contact your Head Start Center. *Children must be walked into class or to the bus by a responsible adult, a person over 14 years of age.*

## Release from the Classroom or Bus

Your child's safety is our highest priority! Your child will not be released to anyone not listed on the *Emergency Contact Form*. Please be sure that this list is up to date at all times. The form will be filled out at registration and can be changed at any time. Any changes must be made by the parent/legal guardian in person or in writing. **Anyone picking up a child must have photo identification, must be on the Emergency Contact Form, and must be over the age of 14.**

**Please be on time to pick up your child!** It is important to pick up your child on time and to be at the bus stop on time. If you are not on time, office staff will:

- Contact you at home, work or school.
- Call all emergency contacts.
- After a period of time, we will contact the authorities if we are unable to reach you or any of your emergency contacts.

If late pick up is a chronic problem, a parent/guardian will be given a written reminder of the policy regarding pick up. If the problem continues, a meeting will be held with the parent, and the situation will be monitored. If there is no significant change within 30 days, the child will be put on the Waiting List to be enrolled when the situation can be corrected.

***Please remember to keep your Emergency Contact Form up-to-date at all times!***



**Emergency Reunifications**



In the case of fire, earthquake or other emergency that would not allow children and staff to return to their building, each Tazewell-Woodford Head Start site has a reunification location offsite. Parents will be contacted by phone call or One Call to pick up their child at this alternate location.

Head Start Family Center – East Peoria Community High School  
Pekin Site – Fenced playground area at the church  
Eureka Site – Fenced play area next to the church  
Robein Site – Northern Tazewell Fire Department  
Creve Coeur Site – Creve Coeur Library  
Hensey Site – Sunnyland Christian Church

## Riding the Head Start School Bus



Your child must be ready to board the Head Start bus when it arrives at your stop. Parents/Guardians must walk the child to and from the bus. Our buses have a very tight schedule and need your cooperation. Please be on time.

If a child will not be riding the bus for the day, please contact your Head Start Center so Office Staff can contact the bus. This will help in avoiding an unnecessary stop. Your child's pick up and drop off time may vary slightly from day to day due to traffic or weather. Please know your times may be five minutes before or after the scheduled time. Please be ready!

If you miss your child being dropped off by the bus, please contact the Head Start Center immediately. Your child will be transported back to their Center for you to pick up.

Bus rules include:

- Children will be safely secured with a seat belt at all times.
- No eating, drinking or chewing gum on the bus.
- No toys should be brought on the bus unless they are requested by the teacher.
- Parents and siblings are welcome to ride the bus when space is available. Please let the Bus Driver or Monitor know if you would like to ride the bus to school at least one day prior to the day you are wanting transportation.

## Dress Your Child for Fun and for the Weather!

Please have your child dressed for fun! When children are at school, they will be active and sometimes get messy. Children will go outside to play daily when it is not determined to be too hot or too cold. Tennis shoes are strongly encouraged.

Please send a set of extra clothes in your child's bookbag. If they have an accident, get messy, etc., it is important we have extra clothing.



## Health and Nutrition

In addition to a strong educational program, your child's health is critical to their learning and success. Prevention and early identification of health concerns are critical to a child's healthy development. Healthy living habits and injury prevention lessons will be included in your child's Head Start classroom.

In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, Tazewell-Woodford Head Start must provide high-quality health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and that will support each child's growth and school readiness.



## Nutrition

Good nutrition is also critical to your child's healthy development. Tazewell-Woodford Head Start is committed to providing nutritious meals. The menu is developed to meet Child and Adult Food Care Program Meal Pattern Requirements. It is sent home with your child and posted outside the classroom. A note from the child's doctor is required to change menu options for your child. Your child will be introduced to new foods, and teachers eat with your child to encourage them to try new foods.

## Outside Food Policy

A priority of our Head Start Program is to provide a healthy, safe environment for children. For this reason, food for special events/occasions is not permitted. With many children having food allergies, it is critical we serve children food only purchased by the program. If you would like to bring a special birthday treat, please bring things like crayons, coloring books, or other small items. We will be sure to make your child feel special on their birthday and bringing extra treats is not necessary.

## Dental Services

Dental health is as important as physical health! Dental checkups are provided twice a year at your Head Start Center with your permission. If during this evaluation your child is found to need more extensive care, we will assist you in finding services for your child.

All children will brush their teeth once per day at school. Please continue these good dental hygiene habits at home.

## Illness and Injury

A daily health check of each child is made upon arrival. It is critical that parents and teachers communicate about a child's health status to identify illness and prevent the spread of infection.

Please keep your child home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature over 101 degrees (oral temperature of 101 degrees or under the arm temperature of 100 degrees) – A child should be fever free for 24 hours with no medication to return to class
- Positive case of COVID-19
- An unexplained rash
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Conjunctivitis or pink eye – until 24 hours of treatment has been completed
- Mouth sores
- Lice – Each classroom has supplies to send home if needed
- Other signs or symptoms of illness

Your child's health is important! Please keep them home to take care of them and prevent spread of illness to other children.

If a child needs emergency care because of an accident or injury that occurs at Tazewell-Woodford Head Start, staff will contact you immediately and document all attempts to contact the child's parent/guardian at the phone numbers provided. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the Emergency Contact List will be used.

**Please be sure this information is up to date!**

If immediate medical attention is required, staff will call 911 and accompany the child to the Emergency Room in an ambulance.

Any injury that occurs in a Tazewell-Woodford Head Start classroom will be documented on the "I Thought You Should Know" form and will be sent home. If at any time you have a question about an injury, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the Administrative Office.

## Medication

Medication will only be administered in accordance with DCFS Regulations, and only when prescribed by a child's physician and parent permission is given. Medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label, current date and directions for use from the physician.

An **Authorization to Administer Medication Form** will be completed for each medication to be given. Documentation will be kept when medication is administered to your child.

## Health Service Plans

If your child has allergies, asthma or other medical needs, our program will work with you to provide the care they need. Please contact the Health Coordinator to complete a Health Service Plan for your child.

## Allergic Reactions and Anaphylaxis

All staff members are trained in the treatment of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis. If your child has a known allergy in need of an EpiPen, please contact the Health Coordinator to complete a plan specific to the needs of your child. In the case of an allergic reaction, staff will follow the plan as directed by your physician or contact emergency personnel when necessary.



Classroom activities are planned throughout the week to encourage healthy eating and exercise. Also, the Health Coordinator and Nutrition Coordinator visit the classroom to provide fun lessons about healthy habits.

Please feel free to contact our Health Coordinator if you have any questions or need resources for your child's medical and dental health. Please contact the Nutrition Coordinator with questions about the menu.

## Lawn Care Product Application & Notice Act Structural Pest Control Act

An Integrated Pest Management approach for controlling insects, rodents, and weeds is used at Tazewell-Woodford Head Start. Chemicals are only used when necessary and are not routinely applied. When chemicals must be used, they will only be used when children and families are not present. We will provide notice of specific pesticides used to any parent who requests this notification. Please contact Donna Ashley, Executive Director, with your name, address and phone number if you would like to receive this notification.



## Family Services and Involvement

With your child's enrollment in Head Start, there are many opportunities for YOU! Research shows that children do better in school when their parents/guardians are involved. Staff will work with you to give you ample opportunity to be involved. If you need anything, please ask!

When families are involved in their child's daily learning by talking with them, reading with them and playing with them, children have:

- Higher grades and test scores
- Fewer behavior problems
- Higher self-esteem
- Lower dropout rate
- Greater success later in life

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start uses the Head Start Parent and Community Engagement Framework to guide services for your family. Tazewell-Woodford Head Start's Family Outcomes are:

- **Positive Parent-Child Relationships**
  - 50% of families will attend one or more Family Event during the School Year.
- **Families as Lifelong Educators**
  - 60% of the families will access at least three Learning Genie Lessons during the School Year.
- **Families as Learners**
  - 10% of families will complete at least one Parent Workshop during the School Year.
- **Family Engagement in Transitions**
  - 75% of families will attend a Transition Event during the School Year.
- **Family Connections to Peers and the Community**
  - 65% of referrals will result in services received.
- **Families as Advocates and Leaders**
  - 10% of families will attend two or more committees or Board Meetings.
  - 100% of classrooms will have a designated Classroom Advocate.

All Outcomes support the well-being of your family.



Our program is here to serve you as well as your child. As parents, you have the right to:

- Be supported as the first and most important teacher of your child.
- Be listened to and respected at all times.
- Ask questions and receive information on any aspect of the Head Start Program – including daily operations and policy making.
- Express concerns about the program without repercussions to yourself or your child.
- Express your needs and interests.
- Offer suggestions regarding the program and receive feedback from those suggestions.
- Participate as much or as little as you are comfortable.
- Be treated as an equal to staff in supporting the educational goals of your child.
- Know that all the information collected from you is confidential.
- Be welcomed and encouraged to participate in your child's classroom and other program activities.

**We are here to help strengthen your family and give your child the skills needed to be prepared for kindergarten and lifelong learning.**



**Your involvement is critical to your child's lifelong success! We are here to partner with you so that you and your child have a positive first school experience.**

Opportunities to be involved include:

- **Volunteering in the classroom** – Teachers have ample opportunities for you to volunteer in the classroom. You are also welcome to come to eat a meal with your child anytime!  
**Please Note:** Due to Department of Children and Family Service regulations, siblings (including infants) are unable to come to volunteer with you.
- **Parent Committee** –Parent Committee Meetings are held monthly. These meetings give you the opportunity to meet other parents at your site and receive information and education. Childcare and a meal are provided.
- **Classroom Advocate** – As a Classroom Advocate, you will represent your child's classroom at Parent Committee Meetings to give updates on your classroom's activities and upcoming events.
- **Family Events** – Throughout the year, Literacy Events, Community Fairs and other fun family activities are held. Please watch for announcements to attend!
- **Father/Male Engagement** – There will also be opportunities for fathers or significant male role models in the child's life to participate in special activities. Please watch for announcements for these special events!
- **Home Visits** – Each family will receive multiple Home Visits throughout the year. This is an opportunity for Teachers and Family Engagement Coordinators to get to know you and your child. You will be asked to set goals for both your child and your family. Please ask if there are resources that your family needs. Head Start Programs are mandated to provide Home Visits, so your participation is greatly appreciated.
- **Parent Workshops** – A variety of opportunities will be offered throughout the year to provide you with parenting information. Please watch for registrations.
- **Policy Council** – The Policy Council is a part of the Tazewell-Woodford Head Start governing structure. Policy Council shares policy making responsibilities with the Governing Board. Each Parent Committee will select a voting member for the Tazewell-Woodford Head Start Policy Council to represent their site. A member serves a one-year term, and a member can serve up to five years. Everyone, including community members, are invited to attend. The Policy Council provides an opportunity to advise the program on the best way to meet the needs of families in the community. Meetings are held once per month with child care and a meal provided.
- **Health Service Advisory Committee** – This committee meets two times per year to guide the program in supporting the health of children. It is comprised of local health providers and social service agencies. Parent representation is also critical to this committee. If you are interested in being a part of the Health Service Advisory Committee, please contact the Health Coordinator.

## **Parent Involvement – In-Kind**

The Federal Government requires that all Head Start Grants receive a 20% match of contributions from parents and the community. These contributions are “In-kind” contributions used to support the children and families in the program. One of the ways we receive “In-kind” donations is from parents being involved in their child’s education. By volunteering in the classroom, completing activities at home with your child, attending Policy Council Meetings, attending field trips, etc., you are helping our program receive the grant money needed for our program.

**Please be involved! It is critical to our program’s success, but more importantly, your child’s success!**

## **Confidentiality**

Information is gathered for the Tazewell-Woodford Head Start Program to completely understand the needs of your family. All information obtained is confidential. If the program needs to share information with another agency about your child, you will be asked to sign a release in order for us to share the information.

## **Building Security and Visitor Conduct**

You will receive information from your Head Start Center about specific rules for entry and security.

## **Cell Phone/Electronic Device Use**

Children need an adult’s full attention when being dropped off or picked up to make sure they are transitioned smoothly. Please complete your phone conversations before you enter the building and give your child your full attention.

## **Social Media/Tazewell-Woodford Head Start Website**

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start maintains a Facebook page to keep you informed of community resources, community activities and what is going on in the classroom. Your child’s picture will only be used with your written permission.

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start also has a website ([www.twhsp.org](http://www.twhsp.org)). Information is provided about the program and classrooms. Please visit our website for program information.

We ask that postings on your personal social media account be positive reflection of your child’s experience. When attending events at Tazewell-Woodford Head Start, please post pictures of your own child and not of other children without permission from their parent.

**Please follow us on Facebook!**



## **One Call Now**

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start uses One Call Now to notify parents of important program information. You will receive a call from us to: remind you of days off of school, announce school closings, and invite you to family events. Please be sure your contact information is up to date to be sure to receive these important announcements.

## **Learning Genie**

You will be given information about signing up for the Learning Genie app. This app will allow you to communicate with your child's teacher, report absences, provide you with learning opportunities, and will allow you to see what is happening in your child's classroom.

## **School Closings**

In addition to receiving notification on One Call Now and Learning Genie, school closings will also be announced on WEEK, WHOI and WMBD. School closings are based on the School District that your Head Start Center is located. If your local School District cancels, your Head Start classroom will be closed as well. At times, if we determine bus transportation would be unsafe, Head Start classes may be cancelled even if the School District is in session.

## **Transitions**

In the next few years, your child will experience many transitions. Your child's first school experience is a big transition for both you and your child which may cause some anxiety. Entering preschool is a big step, and Tazewell-Woodford Head Start will work with you to make these transitions as easy as possible.

Transitioning into the Program – We are here to support you with tips and strategies to ease separation. Head Start Staff are available to help you with gathering the information needed to enter the program, school procedures, or other questions you may have.

Transition to Kindergarten – Tazewell-Woodford Head Start works collaboratively with all the School Districts in the area to assist you when it is time for your child to transition to kindergarten. You will receive information about your School District's registration, and we can also assist you if you are unaware of which school your child will attend. Assessment information will be sent to your child's kindergarten teacher to assist them in meeting the needs of your child and inform them of your child's growth while in the Head Start Program.

Transitions are times of change that can have many emotions. Please let us support you in transitioning both in and out of the program.

## **Weapons Policy**

Bringing a weapon to any Tazewell-Woodford Head Start facility or on the bus is prohibited. If a child or adult possesses a weapon, the police will be contacted. Also, toy weapons and toys used as weapons should not be sent to school.

## **Statement of Conduct**

Tazewell-Woodford Head Start is a drug free, alcohol free, smoke free environment for children and families. The safety of our children, families and staff is of utmost importance. Adult behavior that is disruptive and suggests the use of drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated. Individuals displaying such behaviors will be asked to leave the premises. As Mandated Reporters, a call to police and/or DCFS will be required if staff suspects an adult picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Police will also be contacted if a visitor is acting inappropriately.

## **Parent/Community Complaint Procedure**

An occasion may arise when you have an issue or complaint with our program. If so, there are steps to follow to address the issue. The first step is always to discuss the issue with the person(s) involved with the issue. Many problems can be resolved with a simple discussion.

If the issue is not resolved, please contact the Supervisor of the person(s) involved. If you are unaware of whom to contact, please call the office for information. The person(s)'s Supervisor will work with you to resolve the issue. If a solution is still not reached, the next step is to contact the Early Childhood Services Manager, Family and Community and Engagement Manager or Program Operations Manager. They will address the concern with you within 5 working days.

If the issue still cannot be resolved, a meeting with the Executive Director will be held within 10 working days. If after this meeting the issue is still not resolved, it can be scheduled to be discussed at the next Policy Council Meeting. The complaint should be submitted in writing for review by the Policy Council.

In the event there is still no resolution to the issue, the Governing Board will become involved for a decision.

Our hope is that any complaint you have with the program is resolved quickly and to your approval. We are here to partner with you to make sure that your child and family have a positive first school experience.

## **Mandated Reporting**

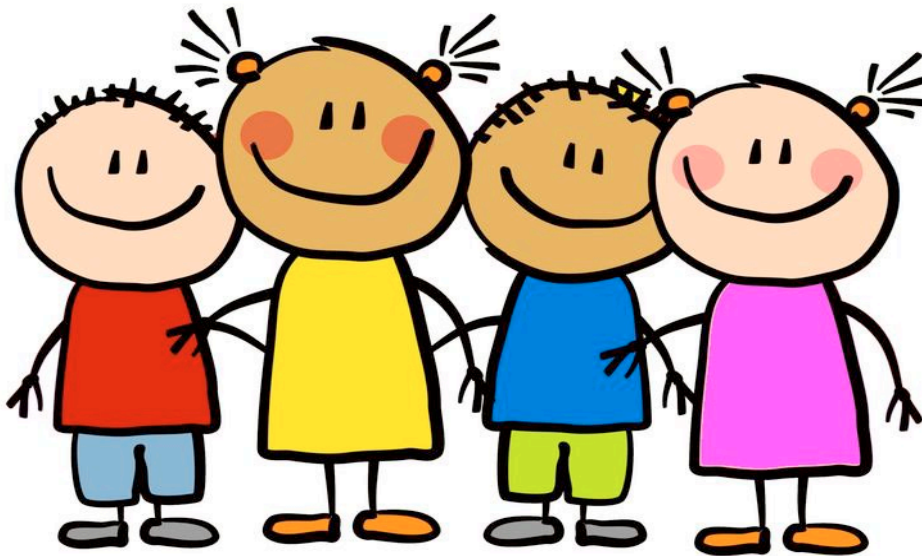
Staff that work with you and your child care about your health, safety and well-being. We are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Being a parent is not easy, but we are here to support you.

## Resources and Support

Each family has a Family Engagement Coordinator available to assist with your family's needs. They are able to provide you and your family information on community resources and are available to support you. Please do not hesitate to ask for help!

A few of the resources available include:

- Tazwood Community Services – rent, energy assistance, car repairs, etc.
- Tazewell-Woodford Head Start Food Pantry – located at Family Center in East Peoria
- Women, Infants & Children (WIC) – On-site appointments at Family Center in East Peoria
- Illinois Central College – GED classes at Family Center in East Peoria
- SAL Child Care Connection – Childcare assistance for families working or going to school
- Doctor and Dental Resources
- Housing Resources
- And many more!



**Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions, concerns or resources needed for your family.**

**We are happy you have chosen to be a part of our Head Start Program. We look forward to partnering with you to give your child a *Head Start!***