

Head Start Early Head Start Pre-K Counts Parent Handbook 2020-2021 *Revised 2020*

Center: _____ Center Phone Number: _____

Center Faculty: _____

Center Address: _____

Center Start Time: _____ Center End Time: _____

School District to Follow for Delays: _____

Center Emergency Evacuation Walking Location: _____

Center Emergency Evacuation Drive Location: _____

Welcome to Westmoreland County Head Start, Early Head Start & Pre-K Counts Programs

Dear Parents:

We welcome you to our program. We recognize that **You Will Always Be Your Child's First and Best Teacher** and we Thank You for entrusting them into our hands for this next school year.

We also recognize that every child is unique with different abilities and needs. Our program objectively assesses each child then works together with the parent's to build a strong educational foundation so your children can be successful in school and life.

Research shows that children who attend a High-Quality Preschool are more successful in Kindergarten and beyond. All of our centers throughout Westmoreland County have received the highest rating of 4 stars from the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development. Our professional qualified staff provide a caring environment that fosters creativity and a lifetime of learning.

We encourage children to think for themselves, observe, and explore the world around them to find answers on their own. The more involved children are in solving problems the more they learn and remember. We encourage children to see themselves as inventors, problem solvers, discovers, and confident learners.

It is important that you keep this *Parent Handbook* readily available as a future reference of our programs policies and procedures. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call your child's teacher or Family Advocate.

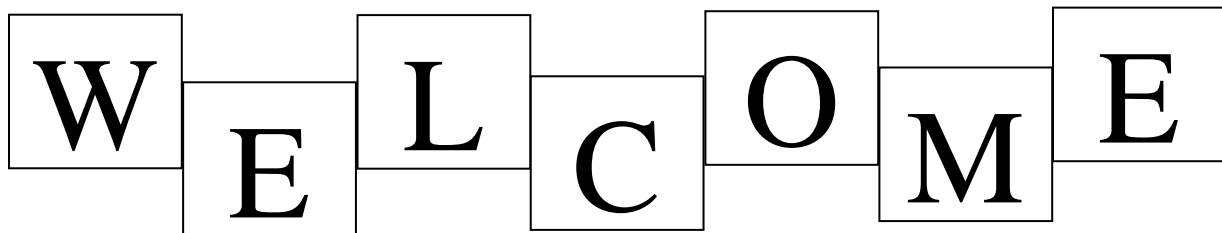


Table of Contents

Administrative Office Information	1
Description of Program Services	1
WCA Plans and Guidance during Pandemics	1
Online Westmoreland County Resource Directory/2-1-1	1
Head Start/Pre-K Center Sites / Early Head Start	2
Family Engagement Agreement.....	3
Parent’s Responsibility during Arrival and Departure.....	4
Drop Off/Pick Up.....	4
Center Closings/Delays.....	5
Safety at the Center-Accidental Injury.....	5
Faculty/Family Partnership Agreement	5
Parent Power Hour.....	7
Election of Parent Committee Officers.....	7
Parent Committee Meetings.....	8
Policy Council.....	8
Policy Council Childcare & Mileage Reimbursement.....	8
Parent Volunteering Policies.....	9
Volunteer Clearances – Background Checks.....	10
Home-Based Playgroups.....	10
Parent Activity/Special Event Policy.....	10
Parent Activity/Special Events Money Guidelines.....	11
Family Education.....	11
Recruitment and Enrollment.....	11
Social Services.....	11
Westmoreland Community Action Resource Directory.....	12
Code of Conduct.....	12
Confidentiality Policy.....	13
Smoking/Tobacco/Vaping Policy.....	13
Drug-Free and Weapon-Free Environment.....	13
PA Seat Belt & Car Seat Info.....	13
PA Child Restraint Law.....	14
Notice of Privacy Practices.....	14
Child Abuse Law.....	17
Mandated Reporting.....	17
Court Orders & Custody.....	17
Protection from Abuse.....	17
Education.....	17
Celebration Policy.....	18
Toilet Training, Clothing, and Hygiene.....	19
Importance of Bedtime Routine and Sleep.....	19
Program Communication for Parents.....	20
Notification System.....	20
Discipline.....	20
Special Needs.....	21
Behavior Management / Suspension & Expulsion.....	21
Transitions.....	22
Screenings.....	22
Health Requirements.....	22
Policy for Giving Medication at Center.....	23
Sick Child Policy.....	23
Nutrition Notes.....	24
USDA Child and Adult Food Service Civil Rights Regulations.....	24
Donations and Contributions.....	24
Fundraising Policy.....	25
Parent/Guardian Complaint Procedure & Community Complaint Procedure.....	25
Review and/or Copy of Records.....	26
Transfer of Records to Public/Private/Parochial School.....	26

Westmoreland Community Action Early Childhood Education Programs

VISIT US ONLINE AT: headstart.westmorelandca.org

For general questions or concerns please contact our administrative office:

Administration Office

Telephone Number: 724-834-1260 ext. 4350

Toll Free Number: 1-800-816-0022 ext. 4350

Fax Number: 724-834-4863

For Enrollment Information Please Contact:

Early Head Start – 724-834-1260 ext. 4168

Head Start/Pre-K Counts – 724-834-1260 ext. 4121

Description of Program Services

Our Head Start program receives both state and federal funding. We try to place families in the option that best fits their needs.

The **State/Federal Head Start Center Based Option** provides five 6-hour days of classroom experiences for children and a minimum of two home visits a year by the teacher and a minimum of three visits with a Family Advocate (based on family needs), and two Parent/Teacher Conferences.

The **Pre-K Counts Option** provides five 6-hour days of classroom experiences for children and one initial visit a year by the teacher and two Parent/Teacher Conferences.

The **Head Start/Early Head Start Home-Based Option** provides weekly home visits and 2 socializations per month are offered.

* Please see WCA website www.westmorelandca.org under Early Childhood Education for further details on WCA Plans and Guidance during pandemics.

For an online Westmoreland County Resource Directory go to:

<http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/Documents/Westmoreland%20County%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

Or call **2-1-1** for additional referral information

W.C.A HEAD START/PRE-K COUNTS CENTER SITES

BELLE VERNON

ROSTRAVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
300 Crest Avenue, Belle Vernon, PA 15012
Email: thuffman@westmorelandca.org

BRIGHTSIDE ACADEMY – Pre-K Counts

320 N 7th St. Jeannette, PA 15644

GREENSBURG

Greensburg, PA 15601
Email: hottenberg@westmorelandca.org

LATROBE

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
331 Weldon Street, Latrobe, PA 15650
724-537-0970
Email: jheming@westmorelandca.org

DONEGAL - HS/Pre-K

OLD DONEGAL BORO SCHOOL BLDG
340 Church Street, Donegal, PA 15628
878-214-8000
Email: hdewitt@westmorelandca.org

GRANDVIEW

GRANDVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
188 Recreation Road, Derry, PA 15627
724-694-4236
Email: nblaker@westmorelandca.org

HERMINIE

H.W. GOOD ELEM SCHOOL
1464 Herminie West Newton Rd.
Herminie, PA 15637
Email: ccrusan@westmorelandca.org

JEANNETTE

JEANNETTE/MCKEE ELEMENTARY
1000 Lowry Avenue, Jeannette, PA 15644
Email: cshepherd@westmorelandca.org Classroom 1
cyamrick@westmorelandca.org Classroom 2

KISKI

NORTH PRIMARY ELEMENTARY
1048 School Road, Leechburg, PA 15656
Email: jhoculuck@westmorelandca.org

MCCULLOUGH – Pre-K

MCCULLOUGH ELEM SCHOOL
213 Watt Rd. Jeannette, PA 15644
Email: lpellis@westmorelandca.org

MONESSEN

Monessen, PA 15062
724-684-3229 or 724-684-4002
Email: smauck@westmorelandca.org

NEW KENSINGTON

WCA HEAD START
1049 Fifth Avenue, New Kensington, PA 15068
Phone: 724-337-1130 Fax: 724-335-6300
Email: epietrolaj@westmorelandca.org Classroom 1
cmaddock@westmorelandca.org Classroom 2
mwesterman@westmorelandca.org Classroom 3

NORWIN – HS/Pre-K

CIRCLEVILLE METHODIST CHURCH
11600 Parkway Drive, Irwin, PA 15642
Email: credmond@westmorelandca.org
ncolton@westmorelandca.org

RUFFSDALE

RUFFSDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
842 Route 31, Ruffsdale, PA 15679
724-925-1148 or 724-925-1154
Email: dkelley@westmorelandca.org Classroom 1
rwilkins@westmorelandca.org Classroom 2

WEST NEWTON - Pre-K Counts

WEST NEWTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1208 Vine Street, West Newton, PA 15089
724-872-5877
Email: mferek@westmorelandca.org

ST. PAUL

820 Carbon Road, Greensburg, PA 15601
Email: asullenberger@westmorelandca.org Classroom 1
pstanko@westmorelandca.org Classroom 2

SUNRISE – Pre-K Counts

SUNRISE ESTATES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
171 Sunrise Drive, Irwin, PA 15642
724-864-6700
Email: aclose@westmorelandca.org

EARLY HEAD START / HEAD START HOME BASED

226 S. Maple Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601
724-834-1260, Ext 4168 or 4122
Program Coordinator – Lori Brooks
Email: lbrooks@westmorelandca.org
ehs@westmorelandca.org

***NEW CENTERS MAY BE ADDED OR CHANGED**

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

At WCA, we believe each and every student can be successful when parents and faculty work together to keep students' attendance at a high level. This agreement outlines the responsibilities of parents and faculty in setting students up for successful learning and a high-quality early education experience.

By signing this agreement on the Child Plus database, parents and WCA faculty are making a commitment to each other that they will fulfill their roles and responsibilities for achieving the best possible learning outcomes for students.

I want to help my child learn each and every day and to achieve success.

By signing this agreement, I/we agree to:

Preschool Parents' Agreement

- Send my child to school every day on time and ready to learn
- Encourage and support my child's learning at home including the completion of Parent/Child Activity forms
- Talk with teachers and/or Family Advocate about any problems that may affect my child's learning
- Be open and responsive to communication from my child's teachers or other school faculty
- Call the center when my child is sick or tardy and give a reason for absence. I understand that after 2 consecutive unexplained absences faculty will make direct contact with the family for a welfare check.
- Drop off and pick up my child at the scheduled times
- Provide a written excuse when my child is absent from school. A doctor's excuse is required if a child had a contagious illness or was absent for surgery.
- Notify the classroom teacher/family advocate of any updates to the Authorization for Pickup form.
Please be sure to keep your emergency information up to date.
- Abide by WCA policies and procedures.
- Read all documents given to me to be aware of classroom happenings
- Attend Parent Power Hours, family activities, workshops, and parent trainings.
- Set realistic individualized goals for your child with their teacher/family advocate.

Early Head Start Parents' Agreement

- Agree to complete home visits with substitute home visiting staff in order to complete the required visits
- Be home and ready to participate with my child and the family advocate during weekly scheduled home visits
- Make sure my child is ready to learn
- Encourage and support my child's learning at home
- Be sure that my child is in bed so that a good night's sleep will allow my child to be rested and ready for home visits
- Talk with family advocate about any problems that may affect my child's learning
- Be open and responsive to communication from my child's family advocate or other EHS faculty
- Work with my child to complete the Parent/Child Activity each time it is provided
- Reinforce the importance of education and that home is also a place for learning
- Attend Early Head Start/Head Start Home-Based parent meetings/playgroups, family activities, workshops, and parent trainings.
- Call the family advocate when my child is sick and we need to reschedule a home visit
- Allow management staff to observe home visits for training purposes

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY DURING ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To ensure that children in the WCA program are safe and supervised at all times, parents must take ownership and responsibility in the care of their children when arriving at the Center and departing from the Center.

Parents will:

- not use cell phones during drop off/pick up of child and while in the classroom
- hand children over to the Teacher on arrival and ensure the faculty member is informed when departing
- inform faculty if someone other than the parent will be picking up/dropping off the child; they need to be listed on the Authorization for Pickup
- ensure that any changes in phone, address, and emergency contacts are kept up to date
- Inform faculty of any current/pending court orders affecting the child and providing the Center with a photocopy of the most current court order. Faculty are to send updated copies of court orders to the Family & Community Partnership Coordinator at Central Office; a copy will also be kept in the child's Center file
- not leave any children in vehicles unattended
- adhere to sign in and out procedures

DROP OFF/PICK UP

1. To ensure the care & supervision of all children in the Head Start/Pre-K Programs, parents must take ownership and responsibility of their children when arriving/departing at the center until they have signed in and handed their child over to faculty.

Parent will:

- **Pick up/drop off their child on time**
 - Physically hand child over to teacher on arrival and ensure a faculty member is informed when departing
 - Inform faculty if someone other than the parent will be picking up/dropping off the child, they would also need to be listed on the Authorization for pickup form.
 - **Ensure that any changes in phone, address, emergency contacts are kept up to date.**
 - Inform faculty of any current/pending court orders affecting the child and providing the center with a photocopy of the most current court order.
 - Not leave children in vehicles unattended.
 - Home-based parents are required to attend playgroups and will be responsible for arrival, departure, and supervision during playgroup.
2. When parents are bringing their children to and from Head Start/Pre-K, we assume responsibility for children **after** the parent has signed the child in and presented that child to the faculty. Your child must be signed in by a responsible adult at the centers scheduled start time. If the child will be arriving late, parents must speak with the teacher to make special arrangements for arrival time. **If the child arrives late it will be the parents' responsibility to wash their child's hands, help with serving the child at meal times, etc. until the child is caught up to the daily routine.** It is important to have a consistent adult transport the child to and from the center. If faculty is unfamiliar with the adult picking up the child, they will ask for identification. Again, please, be sure to hold the child's hand for safety purposes when entering and leaving the building.
 3. At the end of the day, parents must again sign out their child. Please make sure that the faculty is aware that your child is leaving. **Parents are expected to pick up their children on time.** We realize there are times you may be running late due to some extenuating circumstance (late appointment, traffic jams, alarm that did not go off, etc.). If this should occur, you must contact someone listed on your Authorization for Pickup form to pick up your child. Then please call the center to let them know your arrangements.

You cannot drop off your child before designated center hours. Faculty use this time to prepare for class and are not available to provide care for your child.

Each time you are late; you will be expected to sign a form acknowledging that you were late. The first incident will result in a verbal reminder. The second incident will result in a second verbal reminder. The third incident will result in your FA scheduling a visit to develop a plan to ensure your child is picked up at the appropriate time. Each time an incident occurs parents will be required to sign the transportation acknowledgement form. Please provide Head Start/Pre-K with current emergency contact numbers. If we cannot reach an emergency contact person Westmoreland County Children's Bureau will be contacted. Also, a pattern of late pick-ups may result in a call to the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau.

The Head Start/Pre-K faculty WILL NOT release any child to parents or other designated adults who appear to be in an impaired condition.

CENTER CLOSINGS/DELAYS

You will receive a monthly center calendar to provide you with any advanced center closing information, but centers may also be closed for the following reasons:

- Inclement weather
- Building concerns (heating/water problems, renovations, etc.)
- Staffing issues

If the need arises to close the center at any time not scheduled in advance, center faculty will notify parents via our notification system.

CLOSINGS DUE TO WEATHER

There are times when centers must close or adjust their regular daily schedule due to “bad” weather. When this occurs, the following procedures go into effect.

- If the school district “identified” for your center is closed, your center will also be closed. Please listen to the radio or television for school closings. If your identified school district has a delay, your center may or may not also have a delay. You will be notified if delayed. No breakfast will be served on a day that there is a delay.

SAFETY AT THE CENTER - ACCIDENTAL INJURIES

Safety in the classroom and outdoor play is of utmost priority. Faculty complete Daily 'Safety' Checklist upon arrival and Site Safety checklists are done 2 times per year. Evacuation drills are done monthly. Faculty receives CPR and First Aid training every 2 years. Emergency evacuation routes and disaster plans are posted in classrooms. Safety information is shared with the parents and safety awareness activities are a part of daily classroom interactions.

Although safety measures are taken on a daily basis, accidents may still occur. If a child is injured, faculty completes an Accident Injury report that will be shared with parents. Parents will be notified about all injuries that happen at the center. In case of a severe injury, parents will be notified immediately.

FACULTY/FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

1. **HS/PKC** – Parents and faculty agree to participate in home visits as needed. A minimum of _____ visits must be completed with parent/legal guardian. Visits are a minimum of 30 minutes in length. **Two will be completed with the teacher and at least _____ will be completed with the Family Advocate.** Additional visits will be based on needs of the family with no minimum time required. First Teacher Visit will occur prior to the child's first day of center.

EHS/HS HB – Parents and HB Family Advocate agree to participate in 46 (EHS)/32 (HS HB) visits. These visits can only be conducted with the parent or legal guardian and must take place in the home. Each home visit must be at least 1 ½ (one and one half) hours in length.

2. Time of home visits can be flexible due to families work schedule or other factors. It will be important to plan home visits in advance in order to accommodate all of the WCA programs families. Home visits are scheduled for _____ (EHS only).

The Parent will:

- Obtain needed physicals, dentals, and any needed follow up treatment. A request will be made for lead and hematocrit.
 - Complete Parent/Child Activities to help their child achieve their school readiness goals
 - Plan, discuss, and carry out program activities with the WCA faculty
 - Work with faculty in identifying strengths and work toward meeting individual and family goals
 - Attend 2 Parent/Teacher Conferences (minimum of 30 minutes each) [**HS/PKC**] or Participate in child's socialization (minimum of 2x/month) [**EHS**]
 - Participate with his/her child during home visits and provide feedback and/or discuss any concerns with program faculty
 - Have center-based child attend every day except for emergencies or illness & home-based attend all visits and contact home visitor if schedule changes.
 - Refrain from smoking/vaping during home visits
 - Restrain pets away from faculty during home visits
 - **Volunteer whenever possible**
3. In an emergency, when a visit must be canceled by either the parent or WCA faculty, **the visit must be rescheduled as soon as possible (and made up within 2 weeks for EHS)** to ensure that the family receives the appropriate number of visits.
 4. At the end of each visit, both the parent and WCA faculty must sign the completed online visit plan. The parent can request a copy at any time.
 5. **Faculty will:**
 - Provide information on child development, health, nutrition, center or socialization activities, and community resources
 - Respect parent's privacy and keep all information exchanged between family and agency confidential, except as specified in writing by the parent
 - Call the parent in the event of cancellation
 - Plan, discuss, and carry out home visit objectives with the parent
 - Write plan together with the parent (using developmental guide such as Ages and Stages/Parents As Teachers for EHS children)
 - Assist parents in identifying their strengths and support them in setting and working toward meeting individual and family goals
 - The Supervisor will do some unannounced home visit observations throughout the year – EHS ONLY
 6. Additionally, parents are asked to agree to have other faculty visit or other persons (i.e. interns, review team, etc.) with your visitor occasionally. Your permission will be requested on an individual basis for these. Some observation visits will be unannounced.
 7. **I understand that it is my responsibility to notify center faculty if my child will be absent or late prior to the start of center.** I also understand that Head Start/Pre-K Counts faculty will come to my home if there has been no contact made regarding my child's absent.
 8. During the school year Head Start/Pre-K Counts will provide your child with a free scholarship worth \$9,000 in quality education.

We look forward to your full **participation** so you and your family may experience all the program has to offer.

The safety of our Head Start/Pre-K Counts faculty is a priority in families' homes during home visits. In some instances, it may be necessary to carry out a home visit at a Head Start center or other location if a risk or threat is evident.

PARENT POWER HOUR (Parent Meetings)

Parent Power Hours are held several times a year. Attending these meetings provides all parents with the opportunity to work with faculty, develop activities for both children and parents, to learn more about the program and develop strong leadership skills. The Parent Committee is most effective when all parents attend the meetings and become involved. We welcome you to attend Parent Power Hour because we value your input and your attendance is extremely important.

Parents are expected to help plan and attend your center Parent Power Hour. The meeting is a good way for you to get to know other families and all faculty, share your ideas about what is happening at your center, and share your skills and talents.

Every parent is important and is encouraged to participate in whatever way they can.

- Parent committees are made up of all the parents or legal guardians of enrolled children.
- Parent Power Hours are held at the center or in the community.
- Meetings are led by an elected Parent Chairperson.
- Minutes are recorded at each meeting by an elected Parent Secretary or another parent in attendance.
- The Parent Power Hour Minutes are typed and given to each family, then approved at the next meeting. This enables all families to have center news.
- Meetings and activities should be planned based on parent interest.
- Speakers, interactive workshops and community projects are planned based on the interest and needs of all families.
- Other adult family members may attend, but only parents or legal guardians can vote.
- Non-enrolled children must remain with parents during the meeting.
- No reimbursement is provided for center functions.

Faculty will assist with arranging for guest speakers and activities. If you are interested in a specific topic or speaker inform your Family Advocate.

ELECTION OF PARENT COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Each center will elect the following offices yearly, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary from all of the enrolled parents. Self-nomination or volunteering for a position is our standard form of nominating.

CHAIRPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Plan Parent Power Hour and agenda with a faculty member one week prior to schedule meeting.
- Lead discussion at meetings by following the agenda.
- Make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate.
- Make sure when votes are taken, a majority decides.
- In case of a tie vote, the chairperson votes.
- Electing representatives to Policy Council for Head Start/Early Head Start

VICE-CHAIRPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Performs chairperson's duties in that person's absence.

SECRETARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Fills in notes of the meeting on a "minutes form" during the meeting.
- Review the minutes with faculty after the meeting.

PARENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Budget – purpose: To develop and monitor Head Start budgets; monitor spending and in kind; work with planning committee to meet established goals.
- Health Advisory – purpose: Examine health services and education programs to identify any areas of concern; develop plans for meeting areas of concern to meet Performance Standards.
- Parent Newsletter – purpose: Choose articles that are sent in from parents and center faculty that will be of interest to all families in the program. Can be typed by parents or clerical staff.
- Personnel/Interview Team – be included in hiring faculty
- Planning – input to the future of our program
- Annual Program Assessment
- School Readiness Committee – input into the curriculum

***Head Start/Early Head Start parents are reimbursed for babysitting and mileage at the end of meetings.**

POLICY COUNCIL

The Policy Council is composed of representatives from parent committees, community agencies and past parents. Policy Council is made up of parents/guardians of children currently enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start Program. By becoming a member of this Council, you will be a part of the decision-making process for the entire program. Your delegate will attend the meetings and keep you informed of all developments. Additionally, this person is the voice of your center or home base. They are able to carry forward your ideas or concerns to the Policy Council. The Policy Council meets monthly. Mileage for attending Policy to and from the meetings will be paid to the parent representative.

*Reminder – Pre-K parents/guardians are invited to meetings to share input as Community Representatives

Policy Council Representative

Is the voice of the program that their child is enrolled in
Assists with decision making for their program

Policy Council Alternate

Is welcome and encouraged to attend ALL meetings
Substitutes if the Representative is unable to attend meetings
Has no voting privilege unless they are substituting

Policy Council members should:

- Volunteer in the center or playgroups (EHS) a minimum of one day per month.
- Meet with center faculty 1 or 2 days before and after monthly Policy Council meeting to share information.
- Review Policy Council information during center Parent Power Hours upon receiving the approved minutes in writing
- Sign a confidentiality statement. This is necessary due to the nature of members' work, which at times, is confidential.
- Be committed to attend the monthly Policy Council meetings. Note: If member misses two consecutive meetings without being excused a new Policy Council Representative or Alternate will be elected at the center to replace the member.

POLICY COUNCIL CHILDCARE AND MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

To encourage Policy Council members to participate fully in their responsibilities, Head Start/Early Head Start will provide reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred by the members.

- A child under 2 years of age may remain with the parent in the meeting and is very welcome.

- Babysitting reimbursement is \$3.50 per hour plus \$.50 more an hour for each additional child for some program committees according to Policy Council Standards of Operation. We do not reimburse childcare cost to persons living in your home or someone who normally cares for your child without pay. We do reserve the right to limit the mileage to and from babysitters due to budget constraints.
- Mileage is also reimbursed at the rate of \$.50 a mile from your home to the meeting and back home.
- Please record your odometer readings.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING POLICIES

Scheduling Your Volunteer Day – Although volunteers are welcome at any time, scheduling volunteer time in advance with the Teacher is preferred. It helps both the volunteer and faculty to plan. If you cannot come on your scheduled day, please call the Teacher who is expecting you as early as possible, so a replacement can be found.

Volunteer Time Sheets – W.C.A. Head Start is a non-profit program and offers free services to children and families. In return, families are asked to volunteer their time to the Program. *Volunteer hours are given a dollar value and are a required part of our Head Start budget each year. Parents who cannot volunteer can arrange for other reliable adults to volunteer in their place.

Money/Valuable Items – Money and valuable items should not be brought into the classroom. If you cannot avoid bringing in your purse, please ask the faculty to lock it away for you. **Cellphone use is not permitted in the classroom or during EHS socializations.** If you need to make a call, please excuse yourself. We appreciate your cooperation.

First Aid Kit – We follow “Universal Precautions” when anyone is hurt. Every classroom has first aid and infectious disease control kits. Please ask faculty to show you the location of the kits and explain when and how to use them on your first classroom visit. Please tell the faculty if someone is hurt.

Hand Washing – Every adult must follow the hand washing procedures posted in the classroom. Thorough hand washing is required by state law and Head Start regulations. This is for the safety of everyone.

Classroom Fire Drill – Monthly fire drills are held in each classroom/center. It is important that volunteers participate in the practice and follow the procedures.

Children not Enrolled in the Program – Due to space restrictions, only enrolled children are permitted in the classroom while you are volunteering. It is the policy of W.C.A. Head Start/Pre-K that school age children may not participate in classroom/center activities, field trips, or any other Head Start sponsored activities held during regular school hours. If you need a babysitter while volunteering, they should sign a Volunteer Time Sheet. Please ask the Teacher for a volunteer Time Sheet to take to your babysitter and return to the Program after it has been signed.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING

Thank You for Volunteering! We really appreciate volunteers, and the Head Start Performance Standards require us to have a daily volunteer. There is a variety of ways to volunteer, some examples include:

- Volunteering in the classroom (any amount of time, 1/2 hour or all 6 hours)
 - Read stories, art activities and draw/sing
- Participating in fatherhood activities
- Being a classroom or field trip volunteer
- Participating in home visits and parent/teacher conference.
- Participating in the annual Program Self-Assessment
- Represent Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Counts at a community event
- Become a classroom substitute
- Becoming a member of Policy Council (Head Start/Early Head Start Only) or other committees. Pre-K families may attend as a community representative.

Volunteer Clearances – Background Checks ~ IT’S THE LAW

Under the Child Protective Services Law, classroom volunteers are required to obtain background checks before volunteering in the classrooms, this includes parents, interns, student teachers, etc. There are two clearances that all volunteers must obtain 1. Child Abuse History Clearance issued by the Department of Human Services and 2. Criminal History Record Check issued by the Pennsylvania State Police Department. The clearances fee has been waived by the Governor and is **FREE** for volunteers. Volunteers must also watch Mandated Reporter video prior to volunteering. This may be done at the Head Start center by going to www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu.

If you have not lived in the State of Pennsylvania consistently for the past 10 years you will also have to acquire an FBI Criminal Background Check, which cost \$27.00. You must register online or by phone at www.pa.cogentid.com or 1-888-439-2486 before you go to get fingerprinted. You can request copies of the Clearances Forms from your teacher, or contact our offices at 724-834-1260 and we can mail you copies or for more information about clearances required under the Child Protective Services Law please visit www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov. If you are seeking clearances go directly to www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis to create an individual account and apply for your child abuse clearances electronically. For Criminal History Check go online to <https://epatch.state.pa.us> once completed give to your Family Advocate. Any volunteer – parent, relative, guardian, student teacher or other person will not be permitted in the classroom without clearance determination and approval.

Please note, the Head Start and Pre-K Counts programs are guest of the school districts in which your child is attending, each school district has a right to request a copy of your clearances. We are permitted to share your determination to volunteer with the school district, but we will not share the actual clearance documents nor give a hard copy of the clearances without your signed written permission.

HOME-BASED PLAYGROUPS

- Faculty will provide materials/activities to help your child with school readiness skills
- Parents will have opportunities to interact with other children/adults
- Parents are invited to help plan playgroup activities
- Parents will assist their child with handwashing before eating
- Parent will assist child with toileting/diapering
- Parent and children will participate in tooth-brushing after meals to ensure good dental care habits
- No food/drinks from home will be permitted except infant formula

PARENT ACTIVITY/SPECIAL EVENT POLICY

Together parents and faculty will plan and budget special events for their center. Activities can be in addition to, or in place of, a regular center day. The Tickets for Kids Program will be utilized whenever possible.

MEALS

- All nutritional guidelines will be followed.
- If our program is providing the meal, everyone (faculty and families) is required to eat together following CACFP Guidelines.
- If families and faculty are providing their own meals (packed lunches) for field trips, good nutritional choices are encouraged.

ADULT/CHILD RATIO

- An adult should accompany each child to special events.
- Children are not to be left unattended at any time.

“PARENT ACTIVITY/ SPECIAL EVENTS MONEY” GUIDELINES

"Parent Activity/Special Events" money is provided for parents to plan special events/projects. These activities should take place early into the program year.

At each Parent Power Hour, a log should be reviewed regarding the budget/spending.

All events for the year are to be voted at the October meeting. Specific dates and times for the events can be scheduled by the Family Advocate once selected by the parent group. A quorum must be present to vote on these events. In the event that a quorum is not present a phone or ballot vote must be completed. Events are to be held at the center or in the community and money should be budgeted accordingly so it extends throughout the program year. Some events can be planned for free or use materials available at the center.

- Parents could form Committees for Meal Prep, Serving, Clean up, Games, etc. Activities should be fun for the majority as well as a social time for parents. Children may attend. No videos, please. Guidelines will be provided at the first parent meeting.
- Any food involved with the above events will be provided by Head Start. Under **no circumstances** are parents to bring food or drink items, i.e. covered dishes, bagged snacks, or bottled drinks.

FAMILY EDUCATION

Family education is a valued part of our program. We want families to learn and grow.

- Parents receive training and skill development in a variety of areas including nutrition, health, parenting, social services, and child development.
- Each parent completes a “Parent Training Survey” form indicating what topics he/she would like to learn more about.
- Information is shared through home visits and by guest speakers at Parent Power Hour.
- Faculty will work with families on achieving more formal goals, such as receiving a High School diploma/GED, obtaining employment, learning English as a second language, etc.

NOTE: PARENTS CAN BECOME A PAID SUBSTITUTE (in a classroom other than the one your child is currently enrolled in). IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT AT (724)834-1260 EXT. 1166.

RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

Our program recruits year-round. We may ask you to put a sign in your yard to promote our program. Our current and former parents have always been a big part of helping us recruit children to keep our program full. Parents can share with others what they and their children enjoyed most about their experience. We appreciate and value your involvement with our program. If you know anyone who may be interested in our programs, please have them call us at 724-834-1260 ext. 4121 or toll-free at 1-800-816-0022.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Our goal is to assist you and your family as you work toward your goals. We recognize parents are in control of their lives and we will offer support as needed. Family Advocates are able to:

- Assist you in applying for available services.
- Go with you and your child to an appointment.
- Provide parent education opportunities.
- Encourage and support you and your family as you discuss strengths, needs and set goals.

WESTMORELAND COMMUNITY ACTION RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Our program has developed and maintained a Community Resource Directory. It can be found online at www.westmorelandca.org. On the home page, click on Links & Downloads, scroll down and then click on **Resource Directory**. For additional referrals call your Community Resource Hotline at **211**.

CODE OF CONDUCT

We believe that people are individuals who have different thought processes. All individuals at WCA will treat faculty, families, and children with respect and dignity. It is an expectation that all adults in our programs will conduct themselves in the following manner:

- With courtesy, respect, and patience
- By dressing appropriately
- Treat people the way you want to be treated and modeling how we want our children to treat others
- Acknowledge and celebrate the cultures and practices of other people and families.

Under no circumstances will the following behaviors be allowed:

- Physical or verbal punishment of children
- Threats to staff or parents/guardians
- Swearing and cursing
- Quarrelling, verbally fighting, raising of voices with other staff or parents/guardians
- Doing things that are against center safety practices and policies
- Bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons to Head Start centers or events
- Violation of any program policy including confidentiality
- All cellphones are prohibited in classrooms/socializations
- **Pictures can be taken of your OWN child only. All other pictures are prohibited. Photos of other children are prohibited from being posted on social media.**

If the above behaviors occur, parents/guardians will be asked (privately if possible) by faculty to stop the inappropriate behavior. If parents/guardians continue to quarrel, verbally fight, or threaten, faculty will call the police. At an appropriate time, faculty will refer the parent/guardian to Head Start's Conflict Resolution Procedures or offer parent/guardian referrals to counseling services.

WCA has developed a policy on the release of children to parents or other designated adults who appear to the center faculty to be in an impaired condition. An impaired condition specifically relates to alcohol, mind-altering chemicals, or other medical conditions that render a person to be unable to operate a motor vehicle or supervise a child and thereby endanger the safety of a child by the impaired person. Impaired is defined by but not limited to the following behaviors: staggering, slurred speech, unable to answer questions appropriately.

If, in the judgement of the responsible faculty at the center, a parent or designated person appears to be unable to safely transport or supervise a child, the center faculty will ask the parent or designated person to arrange for alternate transportation or supervision of the child. If the person is unwilling to provide such alternate transportation or supervision, the matter will be referred to the police or local Children's Bureau.

The program recognizes that it is a stringent policy, but we could be morally and legally responsible for releasing a child to an impaired caregiver. Hopefully, the necessity to implement the policy will not arise, but should it, the parent or designated person must be aware of the policy.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify faculty if a registered sex offender resides in the home or has shared legal custody of the enrolled child.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Our program believes in the integrity of all our families and will do everything possible to ensure that all information obtained will be kept in the strictest confidence.

For: Parents/Guardians, Paramour, Grandparents, Family Members, Friends' of Family, Policy Council Members, and Committee Members

Westmoreland Community Action Confidentiality Policy:

Parents are reminded not to repeat any information overheard at the center. "INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS, RESUMES, VOLUNTEERING, JOB APPLICATIONS, AND MENTORING SHOULD BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. Disclosure of confidential information to parties who are not authorized is inappropriate." Please remember information about children, families, and/or faculty is confidential. If you have concerns, please discuss them with center faculty.

SMOKING/TOBACCO/VAPING POLICY

As an agency, we focus on the well-being of our children and faculty and promote health awareness and prevention. The W.C.A. Policy states:

"In order that we may have as healthy an environment as possible for our employees, clients and children, smoking, vaping, or tobacco use will not be permitted in the presence of our families. No smoking, vaping, or tobacco use is allowed in any of our facilities or within 100 feet of the premises."

At our facilities:

- There will be no smoking by faculty or volunteers when children are present. This includes both indoor and outdoor activities.
- Designated smoking area will be outside the building and out of sight of the children and at least 100 feet away from the main entrance or activity area. This includes field trips and outdoor functions.
- There will be no vaping/tobacco use in personal or agency vehicles when transporting persons on authorized business.
- Field trips, walks and other off-site activities will be smoke-free.
- No tobacco/vaping is permitted in the classroom.
- If you smoke, we ask that you limit it during events. If you must have a cigarette, please ask faculty privately where you may do so and ensure that someone will watch your child while you do.
- Please check with faculty before smoking/vaping because some of our sites are in buildings or schools that do not allow smoking/vaping on the premises.

DRUG-FREE AND WEAPON-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Programs operate a healthy environment that is free from alcohol, illicit drugs, and smoke. State laws regarding these items are strictly enforced. Alcohol, drugs, and weapons are not permitted in centers or at events. Violators of this regulation will result in the police being notified.

PA SEAT BELT & CAR SEAT INFO

When transported to and from the center:

- All children **must be properly restrained in car seats** (according to Pennsylvania law)
- Keys may not be left in vehicles and cars may not be left running.
- No children may be left alone in cars.
- When faculty transports families, parents are responsible to ensure their child is restrained according to the PA Child Restraint Law.

PA CHILD RESTRAINT LAW

- Children under 2 **MUST** be restrained in a rear-facing car seat until the child outgrows the maximum weight and height limits designated by the car seat manufacturer. Even if their legs seem cramped, they can always sit crisscross, put their legs over the sides, or up the back of the seat. It's easier to fix a broken leg than a broken neck.
- Children 2-3 years: Remain rear-facing until your child reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer.
- Children under 4 **MUST** be restrained in an approved child safety seat.
- Children ages 4-8 **MUST** be restrained in an appropriate booster seat (which helps to align the seat belt correctly across the child's chest and lap).
- Children ages 8-18 **MUST** be in a seat belt.

It's also recommended that children ages 12 and under should always ride buckled in the **back seat** because of the potential dangers associated with air bag deployment.

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This notice describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

We have a legal duty to safeguard your protected health information. We will protect the privacy of the health information that we maintain that identifies you, whether it deals with the provision of health care to you or the payment for health care. We must provide you with this Notice about our privacy practices. It explains how, when, and why we may use and disclose your health information. With some exceptions, we will avoid using or disclosing any more of your health information than is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the use or disclosure. We are legally required to follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice, which is currently in effect.

However, we reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice and our privacy practices at any time. Any changes will apply to any of your health information that we already have. Before we make an important change to our policies, we will promptly change this Notice and post a new Notice in our reception area. You may also request, at any time, a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices that is in effect at any given time, from Human Resources.

We would like to take this opportunity to answer some common questions concerning our privacy practices:

Question: How will Westmoreland Community Action use and disclose my protected health information?

Answer: We use and disclose health information for many different reasons. For some of these uses or disclosures, we need your specific authorization. Below, we describe the different categories of our uses and disclosures and give you some examples of each.

- A. **Uses and Disclosures Relating to Treatment, Payment, or Healthcare Operations.** We may, by federal law, use and disclose your health information for the following reasons:
1. **For Treatment:** With the possible exception of information concerning mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and HIV status (for which we may need your specific authorization), we may disclose your general health information to other health care providers who are involved in your care. For example, we may disclose your medical history to a hospital if you need medical attention while at our facility or to a residential care-program we are referring you to. Reasons for such a disclosure may be: to get them the medical history information they need to appropriately treat your condition, to coordinate your care, or to schedule necessary testing.
 2. **To Obtain Payment for Treatment:** With the possible exception of information concerning mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and HIV status (for which we may need your specific authorization), we may use and disclose necessary health information in order to bill and collect payment for the treatment that we have provided to you. For example, we may provide certain portions of your health information to your Health Insurance Company, Medicare, or Medicaid, in order to get paid for taking care of you. [To do this, we will need to provide your health information to the billing company that handles our health insurance claims.]
 3. **For Health Care Operations:** We may, at times, need to use and disclose your health information to run our organization. For example, we may use your health information to evaluate the quality of the treatment that our staff has provided to you. We may also need to provide some of your health information to our accountants, attorneys, and consultants in order to make sure that we're complying with law; if this information concerns mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and/or HIV status, we may be further limited in what we provide and may be required to first obtain from you specific authorization.

- B. Certain Other Uses and Disclosures are Permitted by Federal Law.** We may use and disclose your health information without your authorization for the following reasons:
- 1. When a Disclosure is Required by Federal, State, or Local Law, in Judicial or Administrative Proceedings, or by Law Enforcement.** For example, we may disclose your protected health information if we are ordered by a court, or if a law requires that we report that sort of information to a government agency or law enforcement authorities, such as in the case of a dog bite, suspected child abuse, or a gunshot wound.
 - 2. For Public Health Activities.** Under the law, we need to report information about certain diseases, and about any deaths, to government agencies that collect that information. With the possible exceptions of information concerning mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and HIV status (for which we may need your specific authorization), we are also permitted to provide some health information to the coroner or a funeral director, if necessary, after a client's death.
 - 3. For Health Oversight Activities.** For example, we will need to provide your health information if requested to do so by the County and/or the State when they oversee the program in which you receive care. We will also need to provide information to government agencies that have the right to inspect our offices and/or investigate healthcare practices.
 - 4. For Organ Donation.** If one of our clients wished to make an eye, organ, or tissue donation after their death, we may disclose certain necessary health information to assist the appropriate organ procurement organization.
 - 5. For Research Purposes.** In certain limited circumstances (for example, where approved by an appropriate Privacy Board or Institutional Review Board under federal law), we may be permitted to use or provide protected health information for a research study.
 - 6. To Avoid Harm.** If one of our counselors, physicians, or nurses believes that it is necessary to protect you, or to protect another person or the public as a whole, we may provide protected health information to the police or others who may be able to prevent or lessen the possible harm. [If you are treating with our organization for the propensity to commit a particular type of action, we may not report your statements or provide protected health information about that particular propensity for purposes of avoiding harm.]
 - 7. For Specific Government Functions.** With the possible exception of information concerning mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and HIV status (for which we may need your specific authorization), we may disclose the health information of military personnel or veterans where required by US military authorities. Similarly, we may also disclose a client's health information for national security purposes, such as assisting in the investigation of suspected terrorists who may be a threat to our nation.
 - 8. For Workers' Compensation.** We may provide your health information as described under the workers' compensation law, if your condition was the result of a workplace injury for which you are seeking workers' compensation.
 - 9. Appointment Reminders and Health-Related Benefits or Services.** Unless you tell us that you would prefer not to receive them, we may use or disclose your information to provide you with appointment reminders or to [give you information about/send to you newsletters about] alternative programs and treatments that may help you.
 - 10. Fundraising Activities.** For example, if our Organization chose to raise funds to support one or more of our programs or facilities, or some other charitable cause or community health education program, we may use the information that we have about you to contact you. If you do not wish to be contacted as part of any fundraising activities, please contact [contact person].
- C. Certain Uses and Disclosures Require You to Have the Opportunity to Object.**
- 1. Disclosures to Family, Friends, or Others Involved in Your Care.** We may provide a limited amount of your health information to a family member, friend, or other person known to be involved in your care or in the payment for your care, unless you tell us not to. For example, if a family member comes with you to your appointment and you allow them to come into the treatment room with you, we may disclose otherwise protected health information to them during the appointment, unless you tell us not to. (This information may not contain information about mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and HIV status, without your specific authorization.)
 - 2. Disclosures to Notify a Family Member, Friend, or Other Selected Person.** When you first started in our program, we asked that you provide us with an emergency contact person in case something should happen to you while you are at our facilities. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will disclose certain limited health information about you (your general condition, location, etc.) to your emergency contact or another available family member, should you need to be admitted to the hospital, for example. (This information may not contain information about mental health disorders and/or treatment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, and HIV status, without your specific authorization.)
 - 3. Disclosures from our Facility Directory.** If you reside with us, we will maintain your name and room number in a directory for the [telephone operator/receptionist] to be able to direct visitors or caller to you, so long as they ask for you by name. We may also note your religion and provide this information to a member of the clergy that would like to visit our residents that are members of the same religion; your religious affiliation will not be provided to anyone other than clergy. Please tell us if you do not want this information to be given to these visitors or caller.
- D. Other Uses and Disclosures Require Your Prior Written Authorization.** In situations other than those categories of uses and disclosures mentioned above, or those disclosures permitted under federal law, we will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing any of your protected health information. In addition, we need to ask for your specific written authorization to disclose information concerning your mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and/or treatment, or to disclose your HIV status. If you choose to sign an authorization to disclose any of your health information, you can later revoke it to stop further uses and disclosures to the extent that we haven't already taken action relying on the authorization, so long as it is revoked in writing.

Question: What rights do I have concerning my protected health information?

Answer: You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information:

- A. **The Right to Request Limits on Uses and Disclosures of Your Health Information.** You have the right to ask us to limit how we use and disclose your health information. We will certainly consider your request, but you should know that we are not required to agree to it. If we do agree to your request, we will put the limits in writing and will abide by them, except in the case of an emergency. Please note that you are not permitted to limit the uses and disclosures that we are required or allowed by law to make.
- B. **The Right to Choose How We Send Health Information to You or How We Contact You.** You have the right to ask that we contact you at an alternate address or telephone number (for example, sending information to your work address instead of your home address) or by alternate means (for example, by [email/mail] instead of telephone). We must agree to your request so long as we can easily do so.
- C. **The Right to See or to Get a Copy of Your Protected Health Information.** In most cases, you have the right to look at or get a copy of your health information that we have, but you must make the request in writing. A request form is available from Human Resources. We will respond to you within 30 days after receiving your written request. If we do not have the health information that you are requesting, but we know who does, we will tell you how to get it. In certain situations, we may deny your request. If we do, we will tell you, in writing, our reasons for the denial. In certain circumstances, you may have a right to appeal the decision. [If you request a copy of any portion of your protected health information, we will charge you for the copy on a per page basis, only as allowed under Pennsylvania state law. We need to require that payment be made in full before we will provide the copy to you.] If you agree in advance, we may be able to provide you with a summary or an explanation of your records instead. There will be a charge for the preparation of the summary or explanation.
- D. **The Right to Receive a List of Certain Disclosures of Your Health Information That We Have Made.** You have the right to get a list of certain types of disclosures that we have made of your health information. This list would not include uses or disclosures for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, disclosures to you or with your written authorization, or disclosures to your family for notification purposes or due to their involvement in your care. This list also would not include any disclosures made for national security purposes, disclosures to corrections or law enforcement authorities if you were in custody at the time, or disclosures made prior to April 14, 2003. You may not request an accounting for more than a six (6) year period. To make such a request, we require that you do so in writing; a request form is available upon asking Human Resources. We will respond to you within 60 days of receiving your request. The list that you may receive will include the date of the disclosure, the person or organization that received the information (with their address, if available), a brief description of the information disclosed, and a brief reason for the disclosure. We will provide such a list to you at no charge; but, if you make more than one request in the same calendar year, you will be charged [\$____] for each additional request that year.
- E. **The Right to Ask to Correct or Update Your Health Information.** If you believe that there is a mistake in your health information or that a piece of important information is missing, you have a right to ask that we make an appropriate change to your information. You must make the request in writing, with the reason for your request, on a request form that is available from Human Resources. We will respond within 60 days of receiving your request. If we approve your request, we will make the change to your health information, tell you when we have done so, and will tell others that need to know about the change. We may deny your request if the protected health information: (1) is correct and complete; (2) was not created by us; (3) is not allowed to be disclosed to you; or (4) is not part of our records. Our written denial will state the reasons that your request was denied and explain your right to file a written statement of disagreement with the denial. If you do not wish to do so, you may ask that we include a copy of your request form, and our denial form, with all future disclosures of that health information.
- F. **The Right to Get a Paper Copy of This Notice.** If you have agreed to receive this Notice via e-mail, you will always have the right to request a paper copy of this Notice, also.

Question: How do I complain or ask questions about this organization's privacy practices?

Answer: If you have any questions about anything discussed in this Notice or about any of our privacy practices, or if you have any concerns or complaints, please contact your case manager at 724-834-1260 extension "0". You also have the right to file a written complaint with the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services. We may not take any retaliatory action against you if you lodge any type of complaint.

Question: When does this notice take effect?

Answer: This Notice takes effect on April 14, 2003.

The notice of Privacy Practices is posted at the following locations:

- 226 South Maple Avenue, Greensburg PA 15601
- 119 Westmoreland Avenue, Greensburg PA 15601
- 515 South Church Street, Mt Pleasant PA 15666
- 604 South Church Street, Mt Pleasant PA 15666

And all Head Start Centers located in Westmoreland County. Locations can be obtained by calling the main office.

CHILD ABUSE LAW - Child Protective Service Law – P.S. 2201-2224

The instructions to mandated reporters say: Any person who, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, comes in contact with children, shall report or cause a report to be made to Childline (800-932-0313) when they have reasonable cause to suspect on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is a victim of child abuse.

MANDATED REPORTING

All WCA faculty are mandated reporters according to the Child Protective Services Law. When faculty has a reasonable cause to **suspect** a child is being abused or neglected, Childline will be called. We encourage parents who suspect child abuse to contact Childline at 1-800-932-0313 or make an online report at www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS.

FAILURE TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE MAY RESULT IN FELONY CHARGES.

COURT ORDERS & CUSTODY

Custody paperwork is your responsibility. A copy of the custody agreement and court orders must be on file at the center in order faculty to abide by the agreement. Please give a copy of all current custody orders to your Teacher or Family Advocate.

State law maintains that both parents have access to their child unless there are legal documents which define the restrictions. In situations involving child custody disputes or restraining orders, a copy of the court order **MUST** be in the child's file. We cannot prohibit contact with either parent without current court orders.

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

Faculty is committed to ensuring the safety of all children. When there is a restraining order or a Protection from Abuse, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the faculty that an order exists, so we are aware and alert to keeping the building, rooms and school grounds safe. It is advised that the "no contact" order extend to all locations where the child may be including the center.

If a parent refuses to provide a copy of the PFA the program is not held responsible for the terms of the order. Documentation is necessary to abide by the terms and conditions of the order.

EDUCATION

Our program is based on a respect for the children and their families. Educational opportunities are integrated into all components of our program such as health, nutrition, special needs, parental involvement, and social services.

I. Curriculum

Westmoreland County Head Start/Pre-K Counts classrooms utilize the *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* a researched based, nationally recognized curriculum for children age 3-5.

This curriculum allows for a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences in the classroom setting, while maintaining the flexibility required to meet the individual need of each enrolled child. Your child will have the opportunity to participate in whole group, small group and individual learning activities daily. Additionally, he/she will experience both teacher led and child-initiated learning opportunities. Each parent is invited to volunteer in their child's classroom often, which is the best way to learn about

and understand our curriculum. You will be a vital part of setting and updating individual goals for your child throughout the year.

We use both the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards and the Early Learning Outcome Frameworks (ELOF) which are quality State/Federal frameworks designed for pre-kindergarten programs. These standards provide guidance on which skills children should develop before they enter kindergarten and are inclusive of all children.

II. Daily Schedule

A daily schedule that fits the classroom's individual needs will be posted in each center. The schedule reflects key learning components, activities, and groupings that align with state and federal standards.

The daily schedules include:

- Child initiated experiences
- Quiet and active times
- Independent and guided activities
- Large and small groups
- Individual activities
- Reading to children
- Meal times
- Gross motor skill and outdoor playtime

III. Assessment

The assessment tool used for all classrooms is Teaching Strategies GOLD. Ongoing observation and assessments are completed on each child throughout the year. Assessment results are shared with parents/legal guardians during the two parent/teacher conferences per year and at other times upon parent request.

Westmoreland County Head Start and Early Head Start Home-Based Programs utilize Parents As Teachers curriculum which provides **parents** with child development knowledge and parenting support, provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues, prevent child abuse and neglect, and increases children's school readiness.

CELEBRATION POLICY

Classroom celebrations can be a part of building a classroom community: a place where people help one another and consider themselves to be part of the group. Classroom celebrations will be consistent with providing an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition.

Guidelines:

1. Faculty will review the information provided by families during enrollment through the "Our Special Family".
2. Head Start will avoid "promoting" one holiday over another and will not plan or implement religious holidays.
3. Faculty will demonstrate respect for family traditions and cultures.
4. Faculty will follow the rules of good practice as outlined by NAEYC:
 - Are the activities meaningful to children?
 - Are their needs and interests being met?
 - Is the activity a Valuable use of children's time?
5. Child initiated conversations, play, and activities related to holidays will be supported by classroom faculty.
6. No one will be allowed to bring food or beverages for children into the classroom, field trips, etc. for holiday, birthdays, celebrations or other reasons.
7. If appropriate, provide holiday activities as a free-choice activity rather than an all-class activity.
8. Focusing on seasonal changes instead of dominant-culture holidays would be an acceptable alternative when you have families who do not celebrate those holidays.
9. Celebrations can be related to children's learning such as art exhibits, parades, or shared meals.
10. End of the year celebration needs to be developmentally appropriate. Such ideas are singing songs that are done during circle time, IMIL activities, art show, etc. However, calling children one at a time to pass out participation certificates is not developmentally appropriate, as it takes too long while the other children are waiting and are not involved. It's fine to take a picture of the teacher, child and family before or after, but avoid group classroom photos. Remind parents of our confidentiality policy regarding photos posted on social media.

TOILET TRAINING

Head Start/Pre-K Counts **does not** require children to be toilet trained upon enrollment. Our facilities have a diaper changing area to accommodate children in need. Our goal is to provide support and assistance to any child exhibiting interest in the toilet training process. We will also support families throughout the toilet training process. The combined support of faculty and families consistently working together will lead to a child's success in being toilet trained.

CLOTHING

- Please choose washable, comfortable clothing which allows your child to play and create without being afraid of 'getting dirty'. Going outside is part of our daily routine as long as weather is above 25 degrees and below 90 degrees, with no precipitation. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather which includes hats, gloves, and boots, when necessary. We are not permitted to apply sunscreen, so in the event of hot, sunny weather you should apply sunscreen to your child before center.
- Please choose clothing that the child can fasten/dress themselves without assistance.
- Shoes should have rubber or non-skid soles. **Tennis shoes are preferred, no flip-flops or shoes without backs.**
- Please put your child's name on clothing such as jackets, boots, hats, etc....
- Please use paper bags (no plastic bags permitted) to provide one set of extra clothing labeled with child's name to be used in the event of a bathroom accident, paint spill, etc.

HYGIENE

It is our intent to reinforce healthy hygiene practices in children to develop lifelong healthy habits. Children will practice healthy hygiene habits which include hand washing, tooth brushing, etc. We encourage parents to help their child at home with these practices to ensure a healthier child and family.

IMPORTANCE OF BEDTIME ROUTINE AND SLEEP

Preschoolers require about 10 to 12 hours of sleep per day. As a parent, establishing a regular bedtime routine is important in order for your child to be well rested and full of energy. Each center's daily routine is filled with a variety of fun learning activities. We want your child to benefit and maximize their learning potential by being ready for the day.

Tips to keep in mind:

- Allow 30 minutes of wind-down time before bed.
- Alert your child that bedtime is nearing an hour before, half hour and ten minutes before.
- Avoid stimulants, such as caffeine before bedtime. Limit food/drinks before bed.
- Make the bedroom quiet, cozy, and with NO TV.
- Play soft soothing music.
- Allow your child to choose pajamas and a stuffed animal to take to bed.
- Tuck your child in for a feeling of security.
- Read a story.

PROGRAM COMMUNICATIONS FOR PARENTS



Please read all documents you are provided. They have important information about your child and/or center happenings!

PARENT NEWSLETTER: Published weekly

PARENT MEETING MINUTES: Taken at Power Hour then typed by clerical department

POLICY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: Taken at Policy Council, and reviewed at Parent Power Hour

Weekly Newsletter

Newsletter will include:

- Introduction of the study topic
- Small group activities
- Stories
- Special classroom events

Monthly Calendar

Calendars will include:

- Center days
- Parent Power Hour date (Parent Meeting)
- Policy Council date
- Other Special Event

NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

We will be utilizing a notification system which is a texting service. This will be used for notices such as when centers are shut down due to weather, calendar changes, upcoming events, or as reminders of meetings. Parents need to be sure that the Head Start/Pre-K center has a current working phone number available at all times and must notify the center in the event of a phone number change. If you receive a text please read the information carefully.

DISCIPLINE

To Discipline is to Teach! Adults need to help children learn effective ways to meet their needs while learning to appreciate and respect the needs of other. Through discipline, children learn safety, responsibility, family rules, personal values, and self-control. Many parents have questions about disciplining their child and our faculty can provide more information about discipline with parents when requested. Head Start does not permit physical punishment within the Center, nor the use of labels, name calling, shame, or any other form of punishment that is harmful to a child's self-concept. Please allow behavior problems within the Center to be handled by the faculty. Parents volunteering in the Center should refer any problems to the Teacher.

We facilitate the development of self-discipline in children in a number of ways:

1. Rules are developed with input from the children and reviewed with the children frequently to help them understand.
2. All rules and guidance are stated in a positive way so children learn 'what they should do'.
Examples: We use walking feet. We talk softly. We use gentle hands.
3. The faculty supports children in solving their own problems.
4. If behavior issues occur faculty will redirect children as needed.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO DISCIPLINE CHILDREN

SPECIAL NEEDS

Our programs are designed to meet the needs of all children including those who may have difficulty in some area of development. These areas may include: speech, hearing, learning, motor or social/emotional skills.

- Our goal is to provide support and assistance to the child, family and faculty in determining if the child has a developmental concern, as well as meeting the needs of children who have a diagnosed condition.
- If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's development, talk to your child's Teacher and together you can address any concerns.
- Helping children with special needs requires the cooperation of the parents and community agencies. Teamwork can provide the support, encouragement, and resources necessary to give you and your child the help he/she may need.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT / SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

It is our goal to ensure that all children are safe in our classrooms. Our faculty is trained in using positive behavior guidance techniques to redirect/guide behaviors in the classrooms. Pre-school children are just learning social and emotional skills to help them manage their own behaviors. Our job is to encourage and teach new social skills to young children. Each child develops social skills at different rates and occasionally we have children that struggle with appropriate behaviors. In a few cases children may demonstrate unsafe behaviors that put themselves, other children, or faculty at risk of injury. We will always try to work together with parents to develop behavior plans that best meet the needs of these children.

Unsafe behaviors include:

- Repeated instances of aggressive acts such as hitting, kicking and biting other children or adults within the center.
- Destroying classroom materials or furniture.
- Running out of the classroom or building.
- Refusing to come in from a walk, running from faculty, or any issue that causes safety concerns.
- Inappropriate sexual acting out which involves a threat to the wellbeing of other children.
- Self-injurious behavior such as repeated head banging or biting oneself causing injury.

We will make every attempt to work with a child to improve the above behaviors however; there may be an instance when we need to talk to the parent about the following options:

- Referring the child to the Program's Behavior Consultant or talk with parent about outside Mental Health Services.
- Ask the parent to come in with the child each day.
- Refer the parent to outside behavioral support services to work one on one with the child in the classroom and remove the child from the classroom until the supports are in place. In this case the family and child would receive weekly home visits to help support parents in getting needed help and provide educational activities in the home that are aligned with what is happening in the classroom.

We realize that all children have days when they are having some challenges in keeping themselves within the confines of the normal classroom rules and limits. If a child is being unsafe, we may have to move them physically out of the classroom or away from other children to keep them safe. All parents are asked to sign a permission slip for staff to physically but gently guide or carry children as needed when an unsafe behavior occurs.

Mental Health Referrals & Resources

Our program currently has a strong relationship with a county mental health agency. If a family/child is in need of services or you would like to arrange consultation with our Mental Health Consultant you can contact your Teacher or Family Advocate.

TRANSITIONS

Transition is an important part of child development. Transition is simply about change. The changes you and your child experience coming into our program and the changes involved as your child prepares to move from Head Start/Pre-K into your local school system.

- When you enter the program, your center faculty will work with your family to help make your child's experience a positive one.
- Throughout the year, you will be given numerous opportunities to become an active part of your child's transition.
- As your child prepares for the move to kindergarten, many new questions will arise. To make this as smooth a process as possible, we work with the various school districts within Westmoreland County to provide information and support to families.

Your child's records will be transferred directly to the school district. The Head Start/Pre-K center will be getting a signed permission from each parent before doing so.

SCREENINGS

Most young children are eager to learn. They love stories, songs, playing, running and jumping. If they have a problem with their vision, hearing, speech, growth or development, it can interfere with their ability to learn and engage in classroom activities. For this reason, we complete several important screenings on all enrolled children. The purpose is to identify any child having difficulty in any of these areas so that they can receive help as soon as possible; whether it means glasses to correct their vision, antibiotics for an ear infection, nutritional counseling, speech therapy or developmental services.

Screenings conducted within the first 45 days of the child's enrollment are:

- **Hearing**
- **Vision**
- **Color Blindness**
- **Speech**
- **Cognitive**
- **Behavioral**
- **Growth Assessment**
- **Blood Pressure**
- **Mental Health**

When a child does not pass any of the above screenings, parents are expected to follow up with their child's pediatrician or other professional service provider.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

The program regulations state that health requirements are to be completed for every enrolled child. We use the term "Medical Home" which means that your child has an ongoing source of treatment from a licensed medical professional, a dentist and has medical insurance. The goal of prevention and early intervention is to ensure that all children are well and obtain any necessary treatment to maintain wellness. It is expected that dental and physical exams **be completed within 60 days** of a child's enrollment.

Please be aware that due to lack of some immunizations your child may be excluded from the classroom for an extended period of time if a disease is determined to put your child at risk for illness.

The following are required to complete enrollment:

- **Well Child Exam every year (Early Head Start follows EPSDT schedule)**
- **Dental Exam with cleaning and fluoride treatment every 6 months including completion of any necessary dental treatment**
- **Up-to-date immunizations – proof of MMR before child attends center**
- **Screenings for vision, hearing, speech, blood pressure, and behavior along with height and weight measurements within 45 days of enrollment.**
- **Care plans for children with special health needs. Children will not be permitted to attend center until the Care Plan and medication has been provided to the center.**

Health Staff is available at screenings and through phone consultation as needed.

All programs support the importance of good dental care. Your children will brush their teeth and care for their toothbrush during school hours. Decaying or lost teeth can affect a child's overall health, nutrition, and speech. Follow up dental care is crucial to the child's overall well-being. Good tooth brushing is practiced after a meal and/or snack.

All programs promote healthy development to ensure that health problems in your child are quickly identified and addressed. Early identification and treatment for these health problems reduces complications and improves the health outcome of your child. Your child will be better equipped to learn when they are well. A sick child cannot concentrate.

Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Counts faculty members are always available to assist you in accomplishing this process and can provide transportation if needed.

POLICY FOR GIVING MEDICATION AT CENTER

- Parents are expected to notify faculty if a child received any medications prior to attending center.
- All medicine must be in the original bottle from the Pharmacy.
- Authorization for medication administration must be completed and signed by both the parent and doctor.
- Only medications ordered by a doctor will be given by the WCA faculty.
- When possible, plan your child's medicine schedule so that it will not need to be given at the center.
- Medications must be given directly to the faculty. **Do not put it in the child's backpack.**
- If your child receives medication at the center, faculty will share the child's medication log (a record of the dates and times given) with you every month to help you monitor the child's progress/condition while on medication.

SICK CHILD POLICY

Children, upon arrival at center or EHS playgroup, will have a health check every morning to observe for signs of illness. Children may be too sick to attend if:

1. They do not feel well enough to participate in program activities.
2. Faculty cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
3. Fever (101 degrees) accompanied by behavior changes and other signs or symptoms of illness.
Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness include: persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, extreme fatigue
4. Diarrhea (increased frequency, watery, loose stools)
5. Vomiting
6. Mouth sores with drooling
7. Rash with fever or behavior change

If a child becomes ill while at the center, parents will be notified by faculty and the parent must then pick up the child as soon as possible.

In the following diagnosed contagious diseases, the child may return to center:

- 24 hours after treatment has been started for infectious conjunctivitis/pink eye with proof of treatment.
- 24 hours after treatment has been started for scabies with proof of treatment.
- 24 hours after treatment is started for impetigo with proof of treatment.
- Six days after start of rash or all sores have crusted over for chicken pox.
- After treatment for head lice has been started and child is free of nits.
 1. A parent will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible when they have active head lice or nits.

2. Child must be checked by faculty before returning to center. Parent may bring child to center prior to start of center day to be checked.

For other illnesses, you may be asked to have a signed paper from the doctor stating that the child is free of contagious disease and able to participate in group activities, to return to the center.

NUTRITION NOTES

Meals

All program children will be offered breakfast and lunch at no cost to the family. These meals are served family style and children are encouraged, but never forced, to try new items. Meal time at Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K is an important teaching tool used to discourage picky eating and to educate children on how to make healthy food choices. Children will often try a new food if their friend, parents or teacher will try it too. Food is never used as a punishment or reward.

If your child has special dietary needs such as an allergy or intolerance this must be documented by a physician and substitutions will be made. Please let faculty know if there are specific ethnic foods you would like to see served in the program. Any concerns may be addressed with the Nutrition Manager.

The safety of children is our priority. Due to known and unknown food allergies and necessary food substitutions for children we **DO NOT permit any food** (pizza, cupcakes, candy, etc.) wrapped or unwrapped to be brought into the classroom from the home.

USDA CHILD AND ADULT FOOD SERVICE CIVIL RIGHTS REGULATIONS

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, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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

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, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all 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 Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **E-mail:** program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Westmoreland Community Action receives monies from the federal and state governments to operate the Head Start/Pre-K programs. The federal government requires us to have community support to assist in operating the program. This support consists of grants from the state, cash donations from the county, donations of items the program needs, and the time parents spend assisting the program by working with their child, volunteering at

the center, attending Parent Power Hours and many other ways. For every \$4 we get from the federal government, we need to have \$1 in local contributions. We don't ask parents to pay for any of our services, but we need your help to meet our local contribution requirement.

FUNDRAISING POLICY

The general policy of the W.C.A. Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Counts Program is that any type of fundraising or asking for donations by center faculty and parents is prohibited.

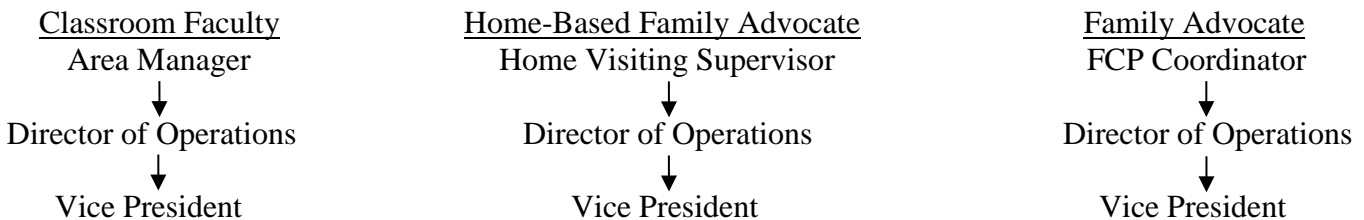
PARENT/GUARDIAN COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

When a parent or guardian has a complaint, the following procedure should be followed:

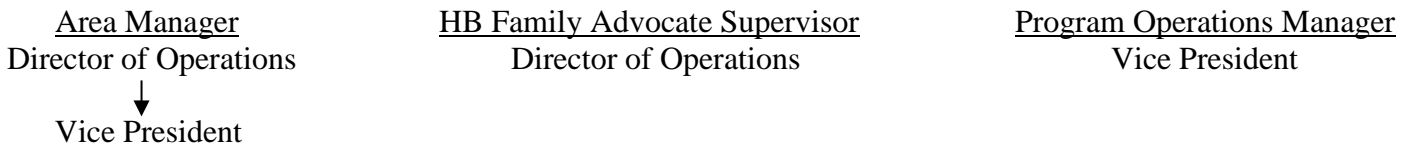
Please note that parent concerns or complaints should be addressed privately (not on field trips, parent meetings, special events). Written documentation of conversations may occur and/or parents may be asked to provide written documentation during process.

We would like to ensure that any concerns are addressed in a timely and fair manner. In the very best of situations, not everyone can always agree on every given issue. When a problem arises, we ask that you first discuss it with that individual to come to an amicable and agreeable resolution. In the event that you cannot resolve your conflict by first discussing the concern with the individual directly involved please contact the following people:

Conflict with:



Conflict with:



COMMUNITY COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

1. All community complaints will be presented in writing to the Policy Council Chairperson through the Family & Community Partnership Coordinator. The Coordinator will notify the Council Chairperson immediately upon receiving the complaint.
2. The Family & Community Partnership Coordinator (acting for the Chairperson) will schedule a meeting to take place within five working days. The Council Chairperson and Family & Community Partnership Coordinator will meet with the Vice President, Head Start Director of Operations, and the WCA Chief Executive Officer to discuss the nature and detail of the complaint.
3. At the next Policy Council Meeting, the Chairperson, Vice President, and Director of Operations will present a verbal and written summary of the community complaint to the Council Members.
4. At this same meeting, the Policy Council Chairperson will assign a Resolution Committee to hear the community complaint and seek a mutually agreeable outcome. Members of this committee will be the Chairperson, a second parent council member, a Community Representative to council, the Vice President, the Program Operations Manager and/or the Content Area Manager.

5. Within three working days of the Council Meeting, the initiator of the community complaint will be notified by a Central Office Resolution Committee member of their opportunity to present their complaint to the Resolution Committee in a formal meeting.
6. Within ten working days, a formal Resolution Meeting will be held between the Resolution Committee and not more than five representatives of the community complaint. The results of this formal Resolution Meeting will be the resolution of the complaint or an agreement on a method of resolution.
7. Minutes will be taken at this meeting for Council documentation and the resolution or agreement will be put in writing.
8. The Vice President will immediately inform the WCA Chief Executive Officer of the decision verbally.
9. If an agreement or method of resolution cannot be reached at this meeting, the complaint initiator can request to go before the WCA Board of Director's and the Chief Executive Officer for further action.
10. The Vice President will notify the CEO for this further action.
11. If an agreement is reached at the first meeting, the Council Chairperson will inform the Council members and the WCA Board verbally and in writing at their next regularly scheduled meetings. If WCA Board action is needed on the issue, the Chairperson will continue to inform council members at their monthly meetings of any outcome, until the issue is settled.

REVIEW AND/OR COPY OF RECORDS

Parents and legal guardians who wish to review or obtain copies of their child's file should contact the Center Director to make the request and to complete necessary paperwork. All requests to **review** the child's folder will be processed within 72 hours. All requests to **copy** the child's folder will be processed within two (2) weeks.

TRANSFER OF RECORDS TO PUBLIC/PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

Records of children who are age-eligible for kindergarten are normally provided to the respective school district with parents/guardians written permission.

*No records will be released to any outside agency without the express **written consent** of a child's parent and/or guardian.*

Westmoreland County Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-K Counts, an affiliate of Westmoreland Community Action, an Equal Opportunity Employer, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex or disability, or veteran's status in the administration of any of its educational programs or activities in accordance with applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations.

