

**G.P.I.S.D.
BECKER EARLY
HEAD START**

**PARENT
HANDBOOK**

A guide for Becker EHS Parents

2023-2024



WELCOME TO EARLY HEAD START!

Dear Families,

We are happy to have you and your child in the Galena Park ISD – Becker Early Head Start Program. We hope your time with us is a rewarding experience for you and your family.

This Early Head Start Parent Handbook is designed to provide you with information about the program and the important role you play in your child's experience and in the success of our program. You are your child's first and most important educator and you have the primary responsibility for your child's development.

Working together as a team, we will provide the support your child needs to succeed in school and in life.

Please read this handbook and become familiar with our policies and procedures. Keep this handbook in a safe place so that you can refer back to it as needed and let us know if you have any questions.

If we can be of assistance, please feel free to call the center at 832-386-2000.

Sincerely,

Becker Early Head Start Team!



Galena Park ISD

GALENA PARK ISD BECKER EARLY HEAD START



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GPISD BECKER EARLY HEAD START

ABOUT US

Galena Park ISD Becker Head start program provides comprehensive services to children six weeks to three years old, their families and pregnant women, including full-day education services for all enrolled children. The program's mission is to prepare children and engage families for school readiness and life-long success.



GALENA PARK I.S.D.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Galena Park Independent School District is to prepare students to become productive citizens and lifelong learners.

MOTTO

Leading... Learning... Serving

THEME

Excellence in all, for all, by all.

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YOUR EARLY HEAD START SERVICES

EDUCATION AND DISABILITY

- Individualized Teaching
- Low Child/Staff Ratios
- Structured Routines and Schedules
- School Readiness Skills
- Culturally Diverse Settings
- Services for Children with Disabilities
- Screenings and Ongoing Assessments
- Individualized Activities
- Dual Language Curriculum
- Inclusive Classrooms



HEALTH

- Medical and Dental Case Management
- Staff Certified in First Aid & CPR
- Clean and Safe Environments
- Indoor/Outdoor Physical Development
- Mental Health Services through GPISD



NUTRITION

- Healthy Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks
- USDA guided menus

FAMILY SUPPORT

- Parent Engagement Activities and Leadership Opportunities
- Supporting Families to Meet their Need and Achieve Goals
- Community Resources and Services
- Transportation Services
- Fatherhood Initiative



BECKER EARLY HEAD START

SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

School Readiness: “Children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning in life.” (Office of Head Start)

Becker Early Head Start School Readiness Goals follow a birth-age through three years old approach and align with the Little Texans, Big Futures, Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) and the Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) Outcomes Framework.

Becker EHS School Readiness Goals are organized into five Developmental Domains.

Domains of School Readiness:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- Cognition
- Perceptual Motor and Physical Development

****Becker Early Head Start School Readiness Goals and Program Goals are displayed in every classroom’s Parent Information Board.**

Curriculum and Assessments: Research based curriculum and assessments are used to measure child outcomes and to plan for individualized instruction that supports the development of each child.

****Weekly Lesson Plans are displayed in every classroom’s Parent Information Board.**

Research- Based Teaching Curricula:

- Frog Street Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers: Offers learning experiences and materials to support toddlers' development and learning. The curriculum is organized around 13 thematic *Activity Guides* that include choices for weekly activities and learning centers.
- Partners for a Healthy Baby (Prenatal-age 5): Focuses on strengthening the family by addressing the overall well-being of both the child and the family.

Assessment and Screening Tools:

- Early Learning Accomplishment Profile Assessment (ELAP)
- The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)
- The Ages & Stages Questionnaires-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE)

The following policies and procedures provided in this handbook guide the operation of the Galena Park ISD Early Head Start child development program. This handbook is designed to answer many of the questions about the operation of the program. Any changes or updates to this handbook will be communicated in writing.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The GPISD Early Head Start (GPISD – EHS) child development center is open from 7:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents should arrive with their child(ren) no later than 8:00 a.m. to fully maximize the benefits of the education component and services.

The GPISD EHS child development program is open on a year-round basis. However, there are certain days when the center will be closed for staff development /training, building maintenance and special school holidays (See GPISD Calendar and Becker EHS monthly calendars).

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

For information regarding school closings due to inclement weather or emergency conditions check the district's website - www.galenaparkisd.com, on Facebook at [facebook.com/ GPISD](https://facebook.com/GPISD) and Twitter at www.twitter.com/galenaparkisd, and/or GPISD Becker EHS Class Dojo app; or monitor the following television or radio stations:

- TV Stations KHOU - Channel 11 KTMD - Channel 47 KPRC - Channel 2 KTRK - Channel 13 KRIV - Channel 26 KXLN - Channel 45 KIAH - Channel 39
- Radio Stations KTRH - AM (740)

ENROLLMENT

The Galena Park ISD Early Head Start program provides services to income eligible families and pregnant women residing in zip codes 77015, 77029, 77049, and 77547 within the Galena Park ISD boundaries. Early Head Start is a federal program designed to promote school readiness for children of enrolled families including those with disabilities or difficult family circumstances.

Enrolled families are strongly encouraged to actively participate in child development, child health and safety, family goal settings, parent education and other program content areas. Enrolled families must follow the program's policies and procedures as described in this handbook, Head Start Performance Standards, the Head Start ACT (As Amended December 12, 2007), state childcare licensing regulations and Galena Park ISD policies and procedures. Parents must immediately notify the administrative staff and infant/toddler Educare Teacher of any changes in family data that occur after they are enrolled in the Early Head Start program. These changes may include the following: change of address within the GPISD service area, phone numbers where parents can be reached in case of emergencies, current health condition of the child, individuals authorized to pick up their child(ren) and changes in school/work schedules or employment.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Becker EHS prohibits the use of expulsion or unenrollment because of a child's behavior. Temporary suspension is severely limited and used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances, and only after collaborating with a mental health consultant, parents and utilizing appropriate community resources.

TRANSITIONS

The initial transition process begins at the time a child is accepted into the EHS program. The second transition takes place when a child is two and a half years old to appropriately assist parents with the transition of their child from the EHS program when they turn 3 years of age. EHS will share information about the Head Start Program in the area, available resources, provider lists and required information for child registration in a manner that is most appropriate for each family, via brochures and/or face-to-face meetings. All of the partners who work with the family are involved in the transition process. For children with disabilities, this may include Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and/or Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) staff. Transition activities are planned for each family based on their individual needs and preferences.

ATTENDANCE

It is important that you and your child participate regularly in the program. Your child must maintain at a minimum, **85% attendance monthly**. (*Refer to the Parent Attendance Agreement signed at enrollment.*)

Regular attendance benefits children. If attendance is not regular your Family Service/Fatherhood and Partnership Specialist will be contacting you to develop a plan to help improve attendance.

It is very important to call the EHS office before 8:00 am if you know that your child will not be attending the center or will be late on any given day.

Children who attend every day are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

CHILDREN'S DRESS CODE

The environment changes frequently, therefore, it is important to dress your child according to the weather. Send your child to the center in clothing and shoes that fit properly, shoes for normal-everyday activities must be closed-toe. Sandals are allowed, as long as they are closed-toe and have a back strap.

Bracelets and necklaces are not permitted.

Hair accessories and earrings **must** be firmly and securely attached.

NOTE: Staff may remove any accessories that are potential hazards in the environment for the infants and toddlers.

The center will not be responsible for lost or damaged hair accessories or jewelry.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

To ensure confidentiality for all children and families, Early Head Start parents/guardians may take pictures/videos of their own child in our classrooms as long as their child is the **only** child in the picture.

Early Head Start staff and parents/guardians may not share any photos or videos shared through the Class Dojo app that contain images of classmates or their families on their personal Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other online social networking platforms.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Every precaution is taken to safeguard your child while he/she is in our care.

Children are only released to someone other than their parents using the following arrival and departure procedures:

1. The person picking up a child will be asked for picture identification (valid driver's license or Texas i.d. Card).
2. Child(ren) must be signed in and out of the center by you or authorized person each time they are dropped off/ picked up.
3. Try to schedule enough time in your arrival and/or departure to speak with your child's teacher, to share important information, complete health/ safety routines and diapering/toileting routines.
4. When signing your child in each day, please leave two emergency phone numbers and the name of the person to contact. Make certain that this information is current and legible.
5. Children will only be released to those people indicated on the Admissions Information form. If someone other than the parent picks up the child from the center, parents must inform them of the release procedures.
6. In a case of emergency that will delay the pickup of a child, parents must contact the center as soon as possible so that an alternate plan can be made.
7. If late pick up becomes a persistent problem, the parent will need to meet with EHS staff to discuss an alternate pick-up arrangement. (refer to the late pick-up policy.)
8. If you or an authorized person appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while attempting to pick up your child, local authorities will be contacted to ensure your child's safety.

EMERGENCY RELEASE PROCEDURES/AUTHORIZED PERSONS

Upon enrollment, all parents will list on the **emergency contact form** the persons who are authorized to pick up their child (authorized persons must be at least 17 years old and possess a state-issued picture identification). Persons who are not listed on this form will **not be allowed** to pick up the child.

Whenever someone on this list picks up a child, the following procedure must be strictly followed:

1. Parents are required to personally call and inform the center who will pick up their child. The classroom teacher will be notified as soon as possible. The parent should give the full name, full description/relation of the person and any other information that can be used to identify that person (ex. Address, phone number).
2. The person picking up a child will be asked for picture identification (valid driver's license or Texas i.d. card).
3. A copy of this identification will be placed in the child's file.
4. The authorized person must personally sign the child out of the center.
5. Any person authorized for pick-up must meet the state of Texas licensing standards for release of a child.
6. In the event that a non- authorized person is the only one available for pickup, a parent can call the center and fax/email his/her consent. Procedures 2 -5 will be followed.

LATE PICK UP/LATE DROP-OFF

Becker Early Head Start program operates from 7:15 am to 3:00 pm.

Late pick up and/or drop-off negatively impacts the children and staff; therefore, it is highly discouraged. If you realize you are unable to pick up and/or drop-off your child on time, please notify the center immediately.

In the event that we are unable to contact parents/guardians, and a child has not been picked up from the center beyond service hours, local authorities may be contacted.

After three late pick-up and/or late drop-off notices have been issued, a plan of action will be developed. Failure to comply with the action plan may result in change of enrollment status.

CENTER SAFETY/SECURITY

All visitors to the Early Childhood Center are required to sign in at the front desk and pass a Raptor Visitor Management System check that screens for sex offenders, alerts staff of custody violations, and provides a report to the district for all visitors.

Visitors are required to wear a visitor's pass and sign out and return the pass when leaving the center.

All building guest are asked to assist with center security by not allowing others to walk in behind them without signing in and/or checking in with EHS staff.

PARENT VISITATION

You may visit the center at any time during our hours of operation to observe your child, the center's program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval.

GANG-FREE ZONE

The GPISD Becker Early Childhood campus is a Gang Free Zone in accordance to the Texas Penal Code. Any area within 1000 feet of the child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

DRUG-FREE ZONE

A person commits a criminal offense (enhanced) if the person knowingly or intentionally possesses a controlled substance in, on, or within 1,000 feet of this school.

GUN-FREE ZONE

Gun-Free School Zone Act and Texas state Weapon-Free School Zones law prohibit the possession of weapons within 300 feet of the premises of a school.

TOBACCO PROHIBITED

All visitors are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes, or any other vapor devices, while on center's property at any time.

HITTING/SPANKING-FREE ZONE

Parents will be asked to follow EHS guidance and discipline policy while at the center. No hitting/spanking their child while on the center premises.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING

Program staff is trained annually to recognize signs of child abuse and/or neglect.

- Texas law requires that we report all concerns about child abuse and/or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) for investigation. These reports will be handled confidentially.
- EHS staff will make reports to TDFPS based on observations or referrals from other reliable sources.

- Early Head Start staff will cooperate with TDFPS and other law enforcement agencies in their investigation. To the extent possible, any family reported for suspected abuse or neglect will be supported with referrals for assistance.

Parents may take the following procedures if needing to report a suspected case of abuse:

- Name and address of child and parent or other persons having custody
- Child's age
- Nature of child's condition
- Other information which might be helpful in establishing causes of child abuse and neglect (CA/N) and who may have perpetrated it
- Call the 24-hour DFPS State Central Registry (Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400).
- Online reporting at <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>

Parents are informed during orientation that The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards (English/Spanish) are always available electronically in the Parent Center along with the most recent licensing inspection report for review.

You may also contact licensing online at https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/

Please contact any administrative staff person if you have any questions.

DIAPERING/TOILETING

Staff will follow EHS diaper changing/toileting/sanitation procedures throughout the day and each time a child's diaper is soiled.

Parents will:

- Drop off their child at the center with a clean diaper.
- Bring at least two changes of clothing for their children and;
- Implement procedures at home to promote the health and safety of their child, including personal hygiene practices.

Non-prescription diaper creams, ointments or lotions will only be applied with parent's written permission. Product must be labeled with child's name. EHS staff will adhere to product directions.

NAP AND REST

Infants will be provided with as needed supervised sleep or rest periods daily. *Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep* will be implemented.

Toddlers will be offered a quiet nap and/or rest time daily after lunch.

During rest time, calming music will be played, lights will be dimmed and each child will be provided with a cot and center-provided sheet and thin blanket. These will be washed daily.

The cots will be stored in an area that is easily accessible and during rest time will be placed so there are clear aisles and adult/child access on at least one side. After the children have napped or rested, they will have the option to get up and engage in a separate quiet activity that does not disrupt the remaining napping children.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILIES AND EHS STAFF

The Early Head Start program believes communication between families and staff is critical to the success of your child.

The Early Head Start building has been designated as a “**No Cell Phone Zone**” in order to ensure the effectiveness of parent, teacher/staff communication. While on premises, parents will be highly encouraged to refrain from using their personal cell phones.

A variety of methods are used to stay in contact with the families and children we serve.

1. Daily interaction: Parents and EHS staff will communicate during drop-off and pick-up.
2. Phone calls/Electronic Communication: Parents and Teachers will communicate regularly by phone, email or through Class Dojo messages.
3. Home Visits: These visits give everyone the opportunity to get acquainted with one another and for the Early Head Start staff to collect the needed information to create an individualized plan for your child. First visit will take place within 45 days of child's enrollment. Second visit will take place in the second semester.
4. Parent Conferences: Early Head Start holds at least two parent conferences during the year. During these conferences your child's progress and development will be discussed with you. Parents can discuss their child's progress at any time with their teacher, but during a parent conference the information discussed will be recorded, dated and signed by the participants.
5. Monthly Calendars: Families will be given a calendar each month with the scheduled center days, multicultural activities, curriculum themes for each week, character education & school readiness goal for the month and two *Love and Learn Parenting Curriculum* activities.
6. Policy Council: Family members attending parent meetings will elect a representative to be on the Early Head Start Policy Council. Policy Council members meet monthly to review program goals and oversee the general program operation and budget. Policy Council participation is an excellent leadership opportunity. This great learning experience provides you with first-hand experience in parliamentary procedure and decision making which better prepare you for community involvement.
7. Early Head Start Committees: Parents, School Readiness Committee, and HSAC Committee.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Galena Park ISD provides transportation services to Early Head Start families.

These services are provided on an as needed basis for families who do not have transportation. Parents should request this service through the Fatherhood & Partnership Specialist.

If you request GPISD transportation services but will not need bus service any given day, please notify the **GPISD Transportation Department at (832) 386-2720** and the EHS Center at (832) 386-2000, **before** the bus arrives at your home to pick you up.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY HEAD START

PARTNERS IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Part of your child's Early Head Start experience will be spent interacting with other children and caregivers.

- Educare Teachers provide a learning environment which invites your child to learn as he/she plays.
- Education activities in Early Head Start are individualized for children based on learning styles, interests and developmental needs.
- Early Head Start is most successful when parents and staff work together by linking home and school activities.
- Each of us has something valuable to contribute.
- You are the most familiar with your child's interests, routines, and experiences.
- This important information will be used to plan your child's Early Head Start year to develop cognitive, social, physical, and emotional skills.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

As you partner with your child's teacher to set goals and individualize your child's classroom experience you will find that planning opportunities for literacy and language development will be provided in the classroom and at home.

In order to be ready for school, young children who are dual language learners (DLLs) and those who speak English all require high-quality experiences.

- Becker Early Head Start will provide you with two simple, high-quality language and literacy activities on a monthly basis that can be done with your child at home.
- Becker Early Head Start believes that a child's environment can enrich his/her language development.

ENVIRONMENTS

INDOOR

A well-planned classroom or home environment supports children's ability to learn skills at their own rate.

A quality environment includes:

- Caring and nurturing adults that encourage a child's natural ability to learn. Adults give children opportunities to practice the literacy skills of listening, speaking, book knowledge, and print concepts.
- Early Head Start staff and parents working together to develop individual plans that include goals at each child's level.
- An organized EHS classroom with enough appropriate equipment and diverse, non-stereotype learning materials that offer opportunities to experience language in every aspect of their day.
- Every area in the classroom is carefully planned to include literacy items such as books, writing and drawing tools, maps etc.
- Intentionally teaching skills such as letter recognition and phonological awareness.
- Interaction with classmates creating the opportunity for children to practice their language and social skills.

OUTDOOR

Outdoor play extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in an indoor space. When outdoor play is shortened or canceled to accommodate weather or air quality, increased time of indoor physical activity will be provided, so the total amount of physical activity remains the same.

The following will be followed:

- Outdoor play opportunities for infants and toddlers are offered year-round.
- Toddlers will participate in at least 60 minutes of outdoor physical activities daily. Infants younger than 12 months, as long as they comfortably tolerate it.
- Clothe your child(ren) to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing).

WATER ACTIVITIES

During the warmer months, Infants and toddlers may use the outside water tables, water sprinklers and splashing pools (2 ft or less) as water play activities.

No other bodies of water, such as swimming pools, lakes, etc., are used for water activities.

Becker EHS ensures proper ratios for water activities by having additional caregivers to properly supervise children during water activities.

Precautions are taken to ensure healthy practices:

- Water tables/toys are cleaned and sanitized after each use;
- Children are not allowed to drink the water;

- Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play; and fresh potable water is used for all water activities.
- On days when water play is scheduled, parents are asked to send children in swim suits and water shoes, with a towel and change of clothes and shoes.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Early Head Start believes play is an important part of your child's learning. During play children are solving problems, experimenting, developing social skills and increasing language and vocabulary. These activities help your child to develop physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. Your child's classroom is divided into very specific areas. Listed below are some of the skills the children are working on while they are playing.



Manipulative (Small Motor Area): This area helps to enhance children's fine motor skills and cognitive (thinking) skills. They practice sorting objects into categories. A variety of materials are here such as puzzles, stacking toys, shape toys, homemade games, peg sets, or small building sets.

Active Play (Large Motor): This is an active area where children work on developing and improving large muscle skills.



Dramatic Play Area: This is a "make believe" area. Children have a chance to practice family and community roles. They begin to understand themselves, their culture and other cultures better. They are able to practice problem solving by coming up with solutions to everyday problems. This area is often set up as a house but might also be turned into a grocery store, post office, doctor's office or veterinarian's office etc.

Discovery/Science Area: Invites children to explore & investigate. This area may include some basic tools as well as objects & materials from the natural world.



Block Area: This area contains large and small blocks plus props such as trucks, animals, block people etc. Children learn pre-math skills, eye hand coordination and practice social interactions.

Creative Art Area: In this area children are exposed to as many "messy" art projects as possible. We are not concerned with the end product but rather the process of creativity and doing. Children are able to express original ideas and feelings creatively.



Reading Area –This is a quiet area where children can relax. A variety of books are provided. This area may have beanbags, stuffed animals, pillows, or small chairs. Children can explore books by themselves.



This area may also have a flannel board, story tapes, puppets, etc. Children practice pre-reading skills such as: sequencing, right to left progression, page turning and predicting outcomes.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Behavior is one of the ways a child communicates with adults. Becker EHS uses behavior re-direction and positive guidance, not punishment. Redirection and positive guidance teach children the behaviors we want them to show. Appropriate guidance meets the individual needs of each child.

The general policy for guiding the behavior of children is based on respect for the child as a person. This involves respectful communication and the following will be used as a guidance:

- Kneel or get down to the child's eye level to assure their attention
- Tell children what they CAN do rather than what they cannot
- Set secure limits
- Remind children of the rules
- Value the child, while changing his/her behavior
- Teach children the appropriate language skills to help them tell about their emotions
- Teach children language for solving problems

Creating positive, respectful communication helps us to meet each child's needs.

In the same way, interaction and involvement with family and community members ensures that we address each child's needs and interests.

When a child displays challenging behavior, they will be redirected to another activity. If a child is very distressed, staff may work with the child away from the group until the child can gain control of his/herself. Children are always within sight and hearing of an adult.

The following types of discipline and guidance are **prohibited**:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed or open; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Each classroom is set up to support development of social-emotional skills, cognitive skills, language and literacy, and fine and gross motor skills.

**Remember that YOU are your child's
most important teacher.**

PHYSICAL AND ORAL HEALTH IN EARLY HEAD START

CHILD HEALTH AND SAFETY

This section describes the procedures used in the center to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all children and staff.

DAILY HEALTH CHECKS

Each day, EHS staff will conduct a routine health check of the child when he/she arrives at the center. Parents are encouraged to verbally notify staff and document any existing health concerns on the daily sheet.

In keeping with the health and safety standards, items such as extra blankets, stuffed animals and toys from home are not allowed at the center.

CLASSROOM SAFETY CHECKLIST

On a daily basis, infant/toddler teachers will use a safety checklist to monitor the classroom and outdoor play areas. If any areas and/or equipment is determined unsafe, the teachers will immediately notify the appropriate EHS administrative staff. Children will not be allowed to be in the area until the issue/concern is resolved.

Any concerns will be addressed as quickly as possible. Defective equipment will not be used if it is not in proper working condition.

IMMUNIZATIONS, PHYSICALS, DENTAL EXAMS

Our program shares a common goal with you: that your child is healthy and ready to learn! To promote healthy development, every child in Early Head Start needs a physical and dental exam plus any follow-up from these exams.

Because parents have a primary long-term responsibility for their child's health, we expect you to be fully involved in your child's medical and dental services.

Becker Early Head Start program follows the Texas Health Steps Well Child Exam schedule. All children must have **current** immunization records, physical and dental exam (if applicable) prior to enrolling in the program and follow the recommended schedule throughout their enrollment in the program.

In accordance with the Texas department of Health Services Tuberculosis screening requirements, children will begin getting screened at 12 months of age. A Tuberculin Skin test is to be administered by a health care provider when the screening tool indicates a risk for possible exposure.

All children's health requirements must remain current. Parents will be given time limits to get them on the proper schedule.

Any child, who is not in compliance, after proper notification or assistance by the Health Specialist or program designee, will be temporarily excluded from program attendance until all health requirements are current.

MEDICATION

Prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with your child's name, date, directions for administration, and the physician's name. The parent must administer the first dose of medication at home. Medications given once /twice or three times per day must be administered at home. Any medication left at the center at the end of the program year will be discarded or returned to the parent.

Medications given "as needed" will only be administered when symptoms appear while the child is in EHS center care.

Medication will not be given without authorization from the child's parent(s). Parents must complete and sign the Medication Authorization Form each day the child is to receive the medication. Parents are asked to contact the Health Specialist at (832) 386-2000 immediately if they have any questions about medications.

The Health Specialist will maintain a record of all medications administered as well as the child's reaction to the medication. The Health Specialist will administer all medications and train EHS staff to administer medication to children at the center in the Health Specialist's absence.

The following procedure must be followed if the parent administered medication at home:

1. Parents must inform infant/toddler teacher what medication the child received.
2. Parents must sign their name as the person who administered the medication.

ILLNESS OF CHILD

Specific health procedures must be followed to protect the health of all children and staff. Parents should not bring a child to the center if he/she appears to be ill. Parents are asked to contact their health provider, or feel free to call the Health Specialist if they have concerns about their child's health.

If a child appears ill while at the center, he/she will be checked by the Health Specialist or program designee and his/her parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. Parents should pick up sick children within 30 minutes of being notified. Please make sure that EHS staff has on file all current telephone numbers where you can be reached while your child is in EHS care.

In order to ensure the safety and health of our children and staff, children who have any of the following conditions may be excluded from the classroom until either the condition subsides, the child is no longer contagious, or we receive a note from the child's doctor stating the child is no longer contagious.

The Health Specialist is responsible for determining if a child is ill and needs to be sent home – and if a physician note is required for return. * The EHS Program does not provide sick child care. If your child exhibits any symptom below he/she should not be brought to the Center.

Symptom	Procedure
Fever	The child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before coming back to the Center. This rule is from the Texas Minimum Standards. (See Appendix for Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Child Care centers).
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	The child should be on medication for 24 hours and be clearly responding to the treatment before returning to the Center. Child must return with a note from the doctor.
Strep Throat	The child should be on medication for 24 hours before returning to the Center. The child must be showing signs of improvement and be willing to eat and drink. Child should be fever free for at least 24 hours without medication before returning. Child must return with a note from the doctor stating the child is no longer contagious.
Diarrhea and/or vomiting	The child should not come to the Center until he/she is deemed noncontagious by a doctor or has had no diarrhea (2 episodes or more) in the past 24 hours or vomiting (more than once) for 24 hours without medication
Chickenpox	The child should not return to the Center until all sores are scabbed over. Free from symptoms for 24 hours without medication. Child must return with a note from the doctor.
Runny noses/Coughs	If your child's runny nose will require frequent attention from the teacher or if the child is irritable or running a fever or if mucus is any color other than clear he/she should not be at the Center.
Head Lice	Children should be free of live lice and nits (eggs) to be at the center. Should a child be sent home with lice, they will need to be checked upon return to care.
Hand, foot and mouth	The child may return to the center when the blisters are scabbed over. Fever free for 24 hours without medication.
Scabies	Child should have received 1st treatment prior to returning to care. Rash should be scabbed over and a note from the doctor must be turned in stating child is clear to return to child care.
Rash	Any type of unidentified rash (open sores, fluid filled bumps/blisters, etc.) should be scabbed over and requires a note from the doctor stating not contagious and can return to child care.
Ring worm	Child should not return to care with ring worm. 24 hours of treatment should be started before returning.
Thrush	Child must return with a note from the doctor.

VOLUNTEER HEALTH

Volunteers must remain healthy and free of contagious disease in order to provide a healthy environment for the children. Staff development and volunteer orientation/training will include information about increasing employee wellness, strict hand washing procedures, blood borne pathogens and disease prevention. Employees and volunteers must follow the GPISD policy for returning to work after an extended illness.

INCIDENT REPORTS

If an incident occurs while your child is in our care, the staff will immediately provide first aid and then complete incident report form. Form will be filled with all the required information and signed

by Director and/or Health Specialist. Parent will be notified either by phone, ClassDojo or in person, parent or authorized adult picking up child will sign in acknowledgment of incident notification.

NOTIFICATIONS OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If an emergency or significant incident occurs while the child is in the center's care, parents will be notified immediately.

If it is a head injury or an injury that requires more than minor first aid, parents will be contacted so that they can decide about whether or not their child should be taken elsewhere for medical care.

All other emergencies (loss of consciousness, breathing problems, serious allergic reactions, etc.) will be handled accordingly by immediately calling 911 and then notifying the parents.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

HOLD. In your classrooms, clear the halls:

1. Clear the hallways and remain in your classroom
2. Close and lock the door
3. Take roll to account for all students
4. **Conduct business as usual**

SECURE. Get inside and lock outside doors.

1. Bring everyone indoors
2. Lock outside doors
3. Increase situational awareness
4. Account for students
5. **Conduct business as usual**

LOCKDOWN. Locks, Lights, Out of Sight

1. Remain in classroom (bring children in classroom if possible)
2. Doors are locked
3. Turn out the lights
4. Move away from sight
5. Maintain silence
6. Do not open door
7. Prepare to evade or defend
8. Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

SHELTER- Hazard and Safety Strategy:

1. Shelter is announced over PA system;
2. Appropriate safety strategy will be used:
Tornado- Evacuate to shelter area (designated hallway area)
Hazmat- Seal the room with tape
Earthquake- Drop, cover and hold
Tsunami- Get to high ground
3. Account for students and adults
4. Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults
5. Wait for instructions

Fire Evacuation Procedures:

1. The Health Specialist or designee will lift the Fire Alarm Case to activate the fire alarm.
2. All occupants will exit or be assisted to the designated "Safe Area", children younger than 24 months and who have limited mobility will be placed in evacuation cribs. (Outdoor Playground).
3. Teachers will bring their attendance rosters, emergency cards and first aid kits to the "Safe Area".
4. Classrooms will be checked and doors will be closed after the room has been evacuated by the assigned Emergency Operation Team Member.
5. Once outside and in the designated "Safe Area" of the building, all teachers will take roll; if any children are unaccounted for the teacher should immediately alert an Emergency Operation Team member.
6. Once it is determined that the building has been safely evacuated all staff, parents, children and building guest must remain in the safe area until given further instructions.

NUTRITION IN EARLY HEAD START

CHILD NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

All foods and beverages provided to children during the day at socializations and celebrations will meet the USDA Guidelines and the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy guidelines. Toddlers are offered breakfast at 8:00 am. In the event that a toddler arrives past 8:05 am, the parent will be encouraged to remain with their child in the classroom throughout breakfast.

Toddlers are offered lunch at 11:00 am and a snack at 2:00 pm. Infants do not have scheduled meals, they eat on demand.

FOOD IN/OUT OF THE CENTER

In order to protect the health of staff, families and children and prevent the spread of food borne illness, foods not prepared at the center will not be permitted to be served. Foods served by Early Head Start cannot be taken out of the center. Items must be consumed or thrown away before leaving.

BREASTFEEDING

EHS will provide support for mothers to breastfeed their infants. Mothers are welcome anytime during the day to visit, nurse, or express milk.

- Nursing room will be available for breastfeeding mothers to nurse or express milk.
- This area will provide an electrical outlet, comfortable adult size rocking chair, and nearby access to running water.
- Mothers also have the choice to breastfeed in the classroom and/or other common areas.
- All breast milk brought into classroom must be labeled with child's name and the date the milk was expressed and properly stored/handled.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN EARLY HEAD START

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents must inform the EHS administrative staff and/or their infant/toddler teacher of any health, safety or other special needs required for their child. All requests will be handled confidentially. EHS will provide parents with a copy of *Commonly Asked Questions About Child Care Centers* and the ADA during enrollment.

Information will be shared with appropriate staff on a need to know basis.

Note: Should your child have health concerns that require diet modification, a signed physician's statement or feeding guidelines from a licensed feeding therapist will be required by Early Head Start.

DEVELOPMENTAL AND SENSORY SCREENINGS

All children will receive a developmental, social/emotional, hearing and vision screening within 45 days of enrollment into the program.

- Parents are required to participate in the developmental screening process.
- Parents are required to sign a screening authorization form at enrollment. The results of the developmental screening will be discussed and provided to the parents.
- Hearing and vision screening should be conducted by the child's health care provider.
- Parents will assist in using the assessments and partner with their child's teacher to develop learning goals for their child.
- Developmental screening is a brief check to identify children who need further evaluation to determine whether they may have disabilities. Screening alone is not sufficient to diagnose a developmental, behavioral, or health concern.
- If the screening raises concerns, activities will be provided by teacher and child will be re-screened within an appropriate amount of time.
- If concerns are still present, then the child should be referred to the local Part C agency that will perform further evaluation.
- The parents along with the teacher will plan the early learning objectives across each developmental domain within the program's school readiness goals.
- Together they will use the information from all assessments and observations to develop the child's individualized care plan.

MENTAL HEALTH IN EARLY HEAD START

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Your child's social-emotional development is an essential part of his/her overall growth.

A portion of your child's physical exam focuses on mental health. EHS staff are available to assist with any referrals to community resources.

Referrals will only be made with parent or legal guardian's written permission.

GPISD LSSP department consultants are available to all parents and meet with Early Head Start staff as needed to support your child's mental health needs and/or concerns that may arise.

Individual goals based on a child's needs are developed by the parent and teacher to promote social and emotional development.

Information is available for all parents on:

- Developmental patterns
- Child guidance
- Child development
- Activities to enhance a child's social and emotional development
- Parental concerns or needs
- Resources available in these areas

The classroom environment and activities enhance a child's self-concept with the overall goal of developing social skills.

Becker Early Head Start program supports children's emotional development in the following ways:

- **Prevention:** Help children learn to control their behavior, problem-solve, take turns, share, make friends and be successful in the classroom.
- **Promotion:** Support children to form relationships with others, regulate their emotions and learn by exploring their environment.
- **Intervention:** Assist families with screenings and follow-up on referrals.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that parents share with the program staff or volunteers will be treated as confidential. With written parent consent, program staff may share information with community service providers only as needed. All volunteers will be trained on confidentiality. Anyone who breaches this confidentiality policy is subject to dismissal from the program. Concerns about child abuse or neglect are not under the confidentiality policy, as those concerns must be immediately reported to the proper authorities.

The center staff will not be able to share information regarding a child over the phone or in person with anyone other than parents/ legal guardians. A written request from the parent will be required in order to share information with any other family members regarding their child or child routines in the center.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS IN EARLY HEAD START

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Good partnerships mean Early Head Start parents and staff are learning from one another. Acting as a team, they identify the strengths, needs and interests of the family. Parents are supported as they meet their own goals and as they nurture the development of their children. Different family situations can have an impact on children.

The EHS Family Service/Fatherhood and Partnership Specialist is prepared to assist families in finding needed resources for self-sufficiency.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY FOCUS

You may already realize that Early Head Start is not just a program for children. It is also a program for PARENTS and FAMILIES.

Research says a parent supporting and encouraging their education strengthens children's success as learners.

Early Head Start wants to be there to support you during this important time.

Please let us know how we can help.

GUYS TOO!

Children do best in life when they grow up with the active, positive involvement of both parents. Moms and dads tend to parent differently and their complementary parenting skills and attitudes combine to give children the best environment.

Early Head Start works with parents to strengthen their role as the primary decision-makers for their children.

Parent Involvement is Important Together We Can:

- Make reading to your child a priority.
- Listen and talk with your child.
- Make class attendance an important choice.
- Stay in close communication about your child's development.
- Discover how your child learns best.

Get Involved By:

- Reading the monthly calendars and implement activities that are sent home.
- Volunteering or observing in your child's classroom.
- Attending Parent-Child events
- Joining Policy Council or Parent Committee to share your ideas.
- Talking with your Family Service/Fatherhood and Partnership Specialist about planning how you want to become involved.

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERING AND IN-KIND



There are several reasons volunteers are needed to work with the Early Head Start staff:

- Early Head Start must provide opportunities for parent involvement anytime during hours of operation.
- Parents benefit from their volunteer time.
- Parent involvement is significantly linked to children’s school readiness outcomes.
- Community support in Early Head Start is tracked and documented.
- Each donation is given a dollar value. These amounts add up throughout the year until our requirements have been met.

DID YOU KNOW?

For every hour you spend volunteering for Early Head Start or working with your child on education activities, you are donating \$10 to your child’s program!

Volunteers are encouraged to follow school district dress code policies when in the classroom. For the safety of your child and to provide the best learning environment, you must follow center’s rules about signing in at the school office and receiving a visitor’s badge before entering a classroom.

Individuals who want to volunteer in EHS must pass a criminal history background check as required by the local school district and child care licensing.

Child Care Licensing Rules have additional requirements for volunteers working in a classroom. Volunteers in Early Head Start will be trained prior to regular on-site volunteering.

You are an important part of your child’s education. If you are interested in working as a volunteer please contact the Education Coordinator/Center Director.

WAYS FAMILIES CAN PARTICIPATE

You will find there are many ways parents can be involved in Early Head Start. This next section of the Parent Handbook has information on each of them.

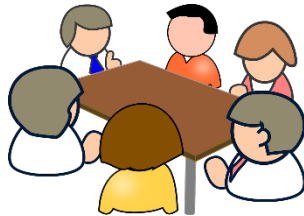
PARENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Committee meetings will be held on a monthly basis during the program year.

ROLE OF THE PARENT COMMITTEE

Parent Committees will:

- Assist in planning classroom and group activities--under the direction of their staff person and in agreement with the growth level of the children involved.
- Elect a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and a Secretary.
- Elect a delegate and alternates to Policy Council.
- Problems and concerns should be brought to staff before discussing them at parent meetings. Please give staff the opportunity to solve the concern.



Elected Officers and Roles of Chairperson

Role of President:

1. **Before** the Parent Committee Meeting:

- Plan with your Family Service/Fatherhood & Partnership Specialist the agenda items and program for the meeting.

2. **During** the Parent Committee Meeting:

- Call the meeting to order on time.
- Discuss the items on your agenda.

These items may include:

- Minutes of the last meeting - presented by Secretary
- Old Business - take action as indicated
- New Business - take action as indicated
- Adjourn meeting.
- Introduce the speaker or the program.

Role of Vice President:

Take over the duties of the president in their absence.

Role of Secretary:

Write minutes of the meetings and give to Family Service/Fatherhood & Partnership Specialist.

POLICY COUNCIL COMMITTEE

WHAT IS THE POLICY COUNCIL?

Policy Council is a group of parents and community members who meet monthly to oversee the delivery of services to children and families. Through Policy Council, members actively share in making decisions about the program.

WHO ARE THE POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS?

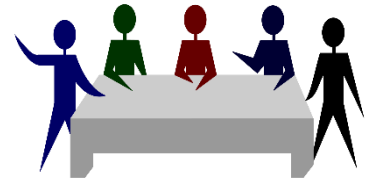
- Parents of enrolled children - Over half the Policy Council membership is made up of parents with enrolled children.
- Community representatives include; past parents, representatives from local resource services, professional organizations or collaborative adventures.

HOW DO I GET TO BE A POLICY COUNCIL MEMBER?

Parent group elects a parent to represent them at Policy Council.

The nomination process:

- At enrollment, parents are provided with information about Policy Council.
- Teachers explain process to parents at initial home visit and ask parents if they are interested. These names are brought forward to all the parents at their center.
- Nomination list is shared with all parents.
- An election is held at their monthly Parent Meeting or via ballot.
- Verification of election is documented.



WHAT IS THE WORK OF POLICY COUNCIL?

Policy Council works with Early Head Start Management Staff and the GPISD Board to develop, review, and approve or disapprove:

- Funding applications
- Procedures for shared decision-making about long and short-range program planning
- The composition of the policy group and their selection procedures
- The annual and on-going self-assessment process
- Criteria for recruitment and enrollment
- Personnel policies
- Decisions for hiring or terminating staff

WHAT IS MY ROLE ON POLICY COUNCIL?

- Attend the scheduled Policy Council meetings. Members who can't attend will arrange for their Alternate Policy Council member to attend in their place, making sure your center is represented.
- Listen to the needs of your local parents and represent their interest at the Policy Council meetings.
- Report the work of Policy Council to your local parent group.
- Call the office if you will be absent.
- Serve on committees such as hiring and firing of staff, budget or fiscal review, program self-assessment.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

All concerns regarding the operation of the GPISD-Becker Early Head Start should follow the procedures listed below:

- Please discuss any concerns about the care of your child immediately with your child's infant/toddler teacher.
- If the situation is not resolved, discuss the concern with the EHS Education Coordinator/Center Director, (832) 386-2003.
- If the situation is not resolved, please discuss the concern with the EHS Program Director, (832) 386-2005.

TDFPS, HSPTS AND BECKER EHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A copy of this operation's most recent Licensing inspection report can be found in the bulletin board in the Parent Center.
- To access TDFPS Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers, please go to <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-care-licensing/minimum-standards>
- To access Head Start Performance Standards, please go to <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- A hard copy of the GPISD Becker Early Head Start Policies and Procedures is kept in the Secretary's office. If you would like to electronically access the policies and procedures, log in to parent computer in the Parent Center and go to Desktop.

