

**PROGRAM**

**POLICIES & PROCEDURE**

**HANDBOOK**

**WELCOME TO ABORIGINAL HEAD START!!**

We’d like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux (So-toe), Blackfoot, Métis, Dene (De-nay) and Nakota Sioux (Sue). We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries, and honor those who stand before us.

Revised – June 2024

**Guidance provided by Aboriginal Head Start Parents, Staff,**

**Elders, and Culture & Language Instructors**

**This is a “fluid” document. This means that changes may occur to**

**program policies and procedures throughout the year.**

Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada & Alberta Education

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**Aboriginal Head Start**

Our Head Start program is a referral-based program that aims to strengthen and prepare Indigenous children ages 3-5 years of age with the necessary school-readiness skills and cultural foundation to enter mainstream schools on an equal basis with all other children in a positive, fun, stimulating, and respectful learning environment. Our main program philosophy is “Learning through Play”.

Program Goals

* Foster the holistic growth of our children guided by **SPICE**.

**Social** **Physical** **Intellectual** **Cultural** **Emotional**

* Ensure high quality program delivery through culturally relevant traditional teachings
* Employ qualified and caring staff
* Support parents/caregivers as the primary teachers of their children
* Engage Parents/Caregivers in program participation
* Recognize and support extended families in teaching and caring for children
* Seek community Elders participation and support
* Involve community partners and/cohorts
* Build the child’s self-esteem and preserve cultural identity
* Foster in the child a desire of life-long learning – making learning meaningful
* Ensure transparent evaluation and accountability frameworks

**AMISKWACIY CULTURAL Society**

The Amiskwaciy Cultural Society will assume a broad role in the Aboriginal community, helping children and families not only through the schools but from the larger Edmonton area as well. Services for the society focus primarily on providing Aboriginal students with the necessary academic and cultural supports in order to enter post-secondary institutions as regular students. The society has a further objective to also support Aboriginal children and families with early intervention strategies to assist with a link into mainstream education. Through these processes, children and students will develop an understanding of Aboriginal values, the respect for the Elders and their teachings along with an awareness of current events that affect Aboriginal People today.

To register or to speak to someone about the program call

780-640-9799 Ext #102

**aBORIGINAL hEAD sTART URBAN AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES (AHSUNC)**

In 1995, the Government of Canada established Aboriginal Head Start Urban & Northern to help enhance child development and school readiness for First Nation, Métis and Inuit children living in urban centres and large northern communities. Health Canada currently funds 131 early childhood development programs for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and their families across Canada. The primary goal of the initiative is to demonstrate that locally controlled and designed early intervention strategies provide Aboriginal children with a positive self-identity, a desire for learning, and opportunities to develop fully as successful young people. The program is aimed at serving preschool children ages three years 6 months to 5 years of age.

AHSUNC focuses on six program components:

**butter bullet Culture and Language**

**butter bullet Education and School Readiness**

**butter bullet Health and Safety Promotion**

**butter bullet Nutrition (using the Canadian Aboriginal Food Guide)**

**butter bullet Social Support Networking**

**Parental Involvement**



**PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA (PHAC)**

The Public Health Agency of Canada provides the primary funding for the Aboriginal Head Start program. Their overall mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their overall health outcomes for all people. The mandate focuses on three broad areas:

**butter bullet National Health Policy Systems, including Health Care**

**butter bullet Health Promotion and protection, including disease, illness and injury prevention**

**butter bullet First Nation, Metis and Inuit Health**

**Head Start SENIOR Management**

**Program Executive Director** oversees the Head Start program in its entirety providing direction, leadership, guidance and mentorship to all components of the Head Start program by ensuring that program goals, implementation, funding requirements & sponsorship direction are being met through fair, constructive, transparent and accountable processes.

**Program Manager** works closely with the management team to collaborate and support all components of the program while assisting with the supervision, mentorship and coaching of all Educational Assistants in the program and is a right hand to the Executive Director.

**Family Support Manager** works closely with the management team to collaborate and support all Family components of the program while overseeing the registration process, supervision, mentorship and coaching of the Family Support Workers and is a direct link between the classroom and the Head Start families.

**Transportation Manager** works closely with the management team to collaborate and support all components of the program while assisting with the supervision, mentorship and coaching of all Bus Drivers in the program.

**Head Start MENTORSHIP TEAM**

**Inclusive Education Contractor** is a certified Teacher and is responsible for mentoring the teaching team, providing direction and support to the Team Lead and monitors program operations and deliverables at the site level.

**Teacher Team Lead** is a certified Teacher and is responsible for coordinating and managing teacher directed site activities and program planning. Requests and monitors the use of supplies and materials. Schedules and conducts team meetings as necessary. Represents the team at program leadership meetings.

**Culture Coordinator** is responsible for the direction of the culture component of the program and shares their knowledge, direction, oversight and support to the program in its entirety. They are also responsible for cultural supports brought in or explored outside of the program.

**HEAD START staff**

**Classroom Teachers** are certified Teachers and/or Early Childhood Educators responsible for developing, planning and delivering the daily programming and cultural curriculum.

**Educational Assistants** from each site work under the direction of the Classroom Teacher. They directly support the classroom teacher and children with classroom preparations, routines, behaviour management, cleanliness and overall classroom maintenance.

**Family Support Workers** serve as the direct link between the home and Head Start classroom helping to bridge the gap. They also provide parents/caregivers with referrals to the necessary social and community supports and resources, as well as participate in Family Programming Sessions and home visits.

**Bus Drivers** ensure safe and efficient transportation services to and from Head Start and support hands on in the classroom when needed.

**Culture Staff** visit each site andshares wisdom, knowledge and guidance as well as Culture and Language to support and enhance curriculum through traditional teachings.

**Home Educator** works closely with the entire Head Start team to provide additional supports for children experiencing challenges in the classroom as well as collaborating with families providing home visits to assist with home-based supports, strategies and suggestions.

**Project Liaison** works closely with the senior management of the program to research, support and enhance special projects within the Head Start program that enrich the overall delivery of our teachings and learnings.

**Office Administrator** works closely with program management providing administrative support, form creation and/or revisions, makes program purchases as well as provides data entry or data clean up that may arise throughout the Academic School Year.

**additional classroom Professionals**

**\*These professionals, may or may not, work with your child throughout the school year\***

**Alberta Health Services Team** in partnership with the Edmonton Head Start programs provide our children with the primary health screenings which include dental, height, weight, vision & hearing. The professional team includes a Health Nurse, Dental Hygienist, and Project Assistants.

**CASA (Mental Health) Therapist** is a professional working with the entire program-specifically Classroom Teams to provide support in the area of mental health, behaviour management and referrals to additional more specialized mental health services if required.

**Speech and Language Pathologist** is a contracted professional who works closely with the Classroom Team and provides speech and language assessments, provides input to child Individualized Program Plan (IPP) development, assists with classroom guidance and support.

**Occupational Therapist** is a contracted professional working alongside the Classroom Team who provides assessments, consultation and treatment services for children experiencing difficulties in sensory/fine motor/gross motor skills development.

*\*\*Should any other therapists be required, referrals go out and further supports to our children and families may occur.\*\**

**\*All Head Start staff and program volunteers must provide the program with current criminal record checks and vulnerable sector searches dated no later than 6 months prior to application to work in the program. All searches must be presented to the Amiskwaciy Cultural Society Administration before the individual can enter the classroom to work with our children. The searches are then renewed each fiscal school year and submitted prior to the first day of school. \***

**\*\*All individuals (staff, volunteers, contracted supports, etc.) receive initial job orientation at the beginning of their employment with the program. Throughout the school year, continual performance and program review occur. All staff sign off on their employee handbook that outlines Head Start policies and procedures and staff guidelines as well. \*\***

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTION (FOIP) / PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT (PIPA)**

Protects personal information that is collected, used or disclosed by private-sector organizations in the province. Balances the rights of individuals and the needs of organizations to collect, use and disclose personal information for reasonable purposes.

PIPA applies to provincially regulated private sector organizations, businesses and, in some instances, to non-profit organizations for the protection of personal information and to provide a right of access to an individual’s personal information.

Organizations that are subject to PIPA must develop and follow policies that are reasonable to meet its obligations under the act.

When PIPA refers to any thing or any matter as 'reasonable,' it is that which a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances.

When registering with the Aboriginal Head Start program, all caregivers will be asked to sign a FOIP/PIPA consent form.

**Program Admission**

Priority for admission will be given to those children who will turn **4 years old by December 31st** of the academic year and reside within the Head Start Transportation boundaries.

* Minimum age: child is 3 years as of their program start date.
* Toilet Trained **(This means your child does NOT wear pull ups, wears underwear on a daily basis, is accident free, and requires little assistance)**
* A registration form and child assessment **must** be completed prior to admission to the program. Our Family Support Workers will complete the intake process in the home, on site or at the Amiskwaciy Cultural Society office (when it is safe to do so) and assist with the registration forms
* A copy of your child’s Birth Certificate must be provided at time of registration.
* A copy of your child’s Health Care Card must be provided at the time of registration.
* A copy of any legal documents pertaining to the child’s access/restrictions must be provided at the time of registration.
* Parents will be notified in writing regarding the status of their child’s admission.
* A child may not be registered in two no-fees Head Start programs in Edmonton and/or require shared funding between two organization’s programs.

**Parent/Caregiver Advisory Circle**

The primary role of the Parent/Caregiver Advisory Circle (PAC) is to gain knowledge, awareness and understanding of the various Head Start program activities to support the many children and families and their overall growth and development as a family unit.

The Parent/Caregiver Advisory Circle is a monthly meeting that occurs on the third Wednesday of each month where parents/caregivers come together at one main location to learn about the 6 main Principles and Guidelines of our program, meet with families from across the 3 program site locations and make connections and participate in activities that support every unique family’s lifestyle. This is done through various topics and training provide through our Head Start team and runs October to June, as determined by the Head Start leadership each Academic Year.

All parents/caregivers are encouraged to become active participants and attend any/all activities, fundraising initiatives and events, celebrations, and large group meetings/sessions, when it is safe to do so.

All parents/caregivers are encouraged to share ideas, thoughts, and concerns with their child’s PAC site Family Support Worker (FSW).

A meal or snack and childcare for children ages 3yrs to 11 years old will be provided for PAC meetings and approved large group sessions. Please make alternate arrangements for older siblings.

Transportation will also be provided to families living in the bus boundaries and want to attend the in-person PAC meetings. It is the responsibility of the family attending PAC to contact the site bus driver/classroom to arrange a pickup and drop off for the meeting. You have up until noon the day before the meeting to secure your spot on the bus as transportation is on a “first come-first served” basis.

A designated Head Start Staff will work closely with all to advise and support the meetings, events and developments of the PAC.

Elder/Cultural participation is encouraged to be present at all PAC meetings and events.

**Parent/Caregiver Involvement**

Parents/Caregivers are the primary teachers of their children, and their participation is an integral part of our Head Start program. Involvement in the program will provide parents/caregivers the opportunity to share in the exciting development of their children. This is done in many ways and events or activities will always ask for RSVP’s so we can manage the numbers coming out to our program. The program will also assist in providing parents/caregivers with the community resources to support and assist parents/caregivers in order to empower them to play a major role in the education of their children. It takes a whole community to raise a child.

Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to communicate with classroom staff regularly to ensure quality programming, ask questions, gain clarity and have an overall awareness of their child’s progress.

Each parent/caregiver who has a registered child in the Aboriginal Head Start Program is required to volunteer a minimum of 9 hours within the academic year. Please take this commitment seriously. You must not leave the education of your child totally in the hands of the Head Start staff.

Parents who successfully complete the 9-hour requirement each year will be recognized and rewarded for their participation.

Parents are encouraged to provide feedback to let us know how we are doing with your child or any ideas for what you would like to see happen. Your voice is important!

There are many areas where you can use your talents, creativity and care to participate in your child’s program.

 Volunteer in the classroom

 Volunteer to do at home preparations (making play dough, project prep, etc.)

 Participate as a regular Parent/Caregiver Advisory Circle member

 Participate in PAC activities, events, fundraising events, crafts, etc.

 Volunteer on community, cultural and other related outings /field trips or attend special classroom scheduled activities.

**EQUINOX / SOLSTICE CELEBRATIONS**

Indigenous nations are people of the land. Our ancestors as well as many Indigenous people today still turn to mother earth, the sun and grandmother moon to direct their daily activities.

At Aboriginal Head Start we honor, acknowledge and celebrate our seasonal patterns by gathering during the spring and fall equinoxes and the summer and winter solstices.

Spring and fall equinoxes mark the time when the days and nights are equally long. Summer solstice marks the day with the longest amount of daylight. Winter solstice marks the day with the shortest amount of daylight.

Spring is a time of new beginnings and new life both in the animal and plant nations. Mother Earth is waking up. Ice begins to melt and waters start flowing again. Spring is considered our New Year celebration.

Summer is a time of movement. We visit relatives, pick berries and medicines, attend cultural gatherings and summer ceremonies.

Fall is a time of preparation for winter. We pick berries and medicines and we harvest and prepare our food for the winter. We also hunt and prepare hides for our clothing and footwear. We attend round dances and remember our family and friends who have crossed over to the spirit world.

Winter is a time for rest and reflection. We tell stories for entertainment and teaching. We make clothing and footwear spending many hours decorating them with beads, quills and embroidery.

Aboriginal Head Start celebrates these times by inviting parents/caregivers to join us, come together and honor and acknowledge the natural patterns of our universe and our existence.

\*\*Confidentiality and privacy are respected therefore any of the above data will be collected by sign in sheets or volunteering, or by information shared by the parent / caregiver. All data will be kept confidential on site or at the society’s main office. \*\*

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

**September to June, Two full days a week per group**

**Kihew (Eagle) Class: 9:00 a.m. – 3:05 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday**

**Muskwa (Bear) Class: 9:00 a.m. – 3:05 p.m., Wednesday and Friday**

***\*\*Additional programming may be provided one Monday each month for our children requiring additional supports, and working in collaboration with Alberta Education\*\****

## Site Locations

## St. Francis site-North East St. pius x-central OUR LADY of peace – West

## 6770-129 Ave NW 12214-128th st nw 15911-110th ave

**Edmonton, AB-2 sites at this location Edmonton, AB Edmonton, AB**

**ACCEPTANCE**

Aboriginal Head Start makes every effort to enrol children into the program in a timely and efficient manner. All applications go through our Family Support Services Coordinator and scheduled intake meetings are set up to get the enrolment process moving. Pending the completion of our intake procedures, placements will occur, and families will be notified which site location, along with class and Family Support Worker your family will be working with throughout the school year. We do our best to maximize the learning potential at each site location, and should your child be enrolled at a site where the numbers are too high, adjustments may be made to balance out the needs in each class. ***The program reserves the right to move children from either class to class (am/pm) or program to program (site to site)*** to ensure that there is a maximum learning potential for your child. This will be completed by your Family Support Worker and all parents/caregivers will be notified of any changes prior to them occurring.

**Late**

Aboriginal Head Start encourages families to have their children at school on time. The late arrival of children disrupts the program routine and may interrupt the learning process. An allowable acceptance of 15 minutes for dire weather conditions will be the exception. **(Therefore,** **children are not to be dropped off before 9:00am and will not be accepted into class after 9:15am).**

**Attendance**

It is very important that children attend class every day. Your child will benefit and gain from attending classes regularly. When the children are absent, they miss valuable learning experiences. Children are excused from school if they are sick or have a medical or dental appointment. Parents are encouraged to schedule such appointments before or after class hours and inform both your classroom Teacher and Bus Driver before class and/or pick up time begins. Unexcused absences occur when the parent/caregiver fails to notify the classroom of their child’s absence that day.

If your child(ren) rides the bus and will not be attending school, please notify the Bus Driver prior to your child’s pick-up time. If you bring your child to Head Start and he/she will not be attending, please notify your Classroom Teacher. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to indicate length of absence and date of return.

If a child misses two consecutive days, with no communication between the Bus Driver and the Caregiver, the Bus Driver will notify the Site Family Support Worker. If a third consecutive day is missed by a child, the Bus Driver will suspend the Transportation Service until instructed, by the Site Family Support Worker, to resume the service.

If your child misses an excused week or more of in class programming, please contact your Family Support Worker to complete a Re-entry Form before your child returns to class.

Aboriginal Head Start reserves the right to withdraw a child from the program if the family does not adhere to the program policies and procedures listed in this handbook.

**Program Changes**

If you are transferring, moving or withdrawing your child from school for any reason, please notify the site Family Support Worker along with the school at least two days in advance, so records can be prepared for your child. If you are moving at the end of the school year, please notify the school as soon as possible so that any necessary documents can be forwarded.

Should someone other than the designated individuals listed on your intake form be added or removed from your approval to drop off or pick up your child, the classroom and Family Support Workers for your site must be notified as well.

**Arrival & Pick-up of children**

**If you are bringing your child to school, you are asked to adhere to the hours of school.** Please notify your site by phone upon your arrival where at that time a staff member will come and meet you to sign your child in or out of class.

If someone other than who is listed on your child’s intake forms is picking up your child from school, they **MUST be 18 years of age or older and photo ID will be required for the release of your child.**

**Change of Address and/or Telephone**

Please notify the Family Support Worker and Classroom Teacher of any change in address or telephone number (including work, home or emergency numbers). It is very critical that we are able to reach a parent or authorized adult in case of an emergency.

**EMERGENCY Numbers**

Every household must provide the program with a minimum of 1 (one) **emergency contact persons living within your city limits that have working phone numbers**. Should all contact numbers be out-of-service, Aboriginal Head Start reserves the right, for the safety of your child, **to suspend the child until contact information is in working order**.

**School Closures**

The school may experience some emergency situations that would warrant school closure. If this happens, every effort will be made to give parents/caregivers advance notice. (For example, with extreme temperatures of **-30** degrees or colder with the windchill, transportation will be cancelled, but the classroom remains open. During extreme weather, regular programming will not occur-modified programming will be provided and hours of program will be from 9am -12pm).

**OUTBREAK/Epidemic/Pandemic Procedures**

In the case of an outbreak/epidemic/pandemic, in order to stop the spread of infectious diseases, we have adopted the following policies and procedures:

\*All staff, children, parents/caregivers will be screened before entering the classroom or the school bus (this may include, but not limited to, temperature check and symptom checklist)

\*Strict cleaning practices are in place such as sanitizing all surfaces and supplies throughout the day and between groups

\*Maintaining cohort groups (a group of staff and children who stay together throughout the day)

\*Ensuring each cohort has their own supplies

\*Each child will have their own designated supplies where possible (cubbies, yoga mats, etc.)

\*Ensuring physical distancing when not within our classroom space

\*Restricting the number of people entering the classroom who are not part of the cohort group

\*Using one door for all drop offs and pickups of children

\*Encouraging one parent/caregiver to be the designated pick up and drop off person for their child

\*No non-essential visitors or volunteers in the classroom or on the bus

\*Ensuring that masks, hand sanitizer and hand washing stations (where possible) are available for use at all times

\*No family style meals/snacks nor will children be self-serving. Staff will serve children at meal/snack times to avoid any cross contamination

\*Non-essential personal items will be discouraged from entering the classroom

\*Encouraging face masks or shields for each child and staff member when entering public places. These will be provided by the program

\*Staff members may put a mask or other personal protective equipment on your child if they are displaying any symptoms

\*Following all regulations that may be set out by the government during these times

Aboriginal Head Start will always try to maintain an in-class teaching model. When it is not safe to do so, the program will move to an online model. There may be times that both teaching models are used.

**Classroom Clothing & Footwear**

One of the program goals of the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) is to encourage independence in our students. To promote this, parents may want to consider the following suggestions regarding school clothes.

a) Pants that are fairly loose and without difficult fasteners are easier for young children.

b) Zippers on coats and jackets are often easier to pull up or down if a zipper pull is attached.

c) Velcro-fastened shoes and slip-on boots are more easily managed by young children.

Please send a spare set of clothing with your child to school. This is required in case of a washroom accident, messy play, etc. These clothes will remain on site for the school year.

It is important that each child have a pair of shoes, which can be worn in the gym (ex. non-slip soles). Running shoes with Velcro are a good choice. These shoes are to be left at school and clearly **labeled** with your child’s name.

**\*\* Please Note \*\***

Please **do not** send your child in JEANS or SKIRTS or any jewelry on gymnastics or yoga days.

Again, each site bus driver has the right to refuse the pick-up of your child if he/she is coming to school not dressed for the weather or activity. Please be mindful of this.

**ALL clothing items, bags, shoes etc. MUST be clearly labeled with your child’s full name.**

**Clothing for Outside Activities**

Our children spend time outdoors throughout the year and are expected to wear appropriate seasonal clothing to protect them, especially during winter months.

Children not dressed appropriately during winter will **NOT** be allowed on the bus or accepted into program if your child is driven in. This is a safety concern and will be enforced by the Bus Drivers and classroom staff for the protection of your children.

**Fall/Winter Spring/Summer**

**Snow pants, coats, boots, Sun hat, light jacket,**

**Sweaters, neck warmer or scarf, Close toed shoes/rubber boots**

**Toques and mittens. (Sunscreen & Bug spray should be applied at home)**

**\*\* Should you need support obtaining any outside clothing for your child, please reach out to your site Family Support Worker directly for assistance. \*\***

**children’s “Celebrating My Learning” FOLDER**

Each child will receive a “Celebrating My Learning” folder at the end of the school year that details the various work they have completed throughout the year. Items may include but are not limited to writing samples, craft samples, drawing samples, cultural activity samples, coloring samples as well as classroom and field trip pictures. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to go through their child’s folder when visiting the classroom and as a way to celebrate the accomplishments made throughout the school year.

**OPEN HOUSE/MEET THE TEACHER**

Parents/Caregivers will be invited to meet the classroom staff in the fall to simply check in and see how your child is settling into the program and provide the opportunity to ask questions and/or gain clarity. Families are also encouraged to contact the Classroom Teacher at any time to discuss any concerns and/or positive feedback they may have about their child and/or program.

**Assessments - What are they?**

Assessment is the process of gathering important information about your child. This provides the classroom staff with your child’s current skills level, abilities and/or challenges. Head Start staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment tools as part of the ongoing process to measure your child’s progress and develop individual goals for your child. Early identification and intervention for young children with learning delays and/or disabilities is the first step leading to better school performance and long-term gains.

Parents are asked to provide the Head Start with all reports from doctors and/or other professionals prior to admission as well as updated reports as they become available.

**Individual Program Plan (IPP)**

**(Only occurs for your child if Alberta Education funding is in place)**

Should your child require modified programming and be working along-side Alberta Education, your child will receive an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in the identified area of need. The IPP details short term and long-term goals and objectives for the child. Our AHS professional team is responsible for creating and updating your child’s IPP. The team includes your classroom teacher, assistants, therapists supported by their Inclusive Education Coordinator. Your child may receive direct 1-1 or small group therapy from the Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and/or Educational Assistant to assist the child in reaching his/her goals.

The IPP requires:

* Parents/Caregivers input and signature
* Parents/Caregivers to attend a minimum of 3 IPP conference during the academic year. These can be completed through a face-to-face, online or phone call meeting.

Children receiving IPP’s will also attend classes the scheduled one Monday of every month for intensified programming focused on the IPP goals. Parents/Caregivers are expected to support these extra learning days.

The IPP is a working document and is updated during the course of the academic year. Parents/caregivers will receive a copy of the IPP and a copy of the IPP will be made available on request to follow the child into Kindergarten.

**CHILD CENTERED PROGRAMMING**

**SESSIONS (CCP’S)**

**(Only occurs for your child if Alberta Education funding is in place)**

Child Centered Programming Sessions are an extension of the Head Start program. The goal of the session is to work with the child and parent/caregiver on an identified IPP goal to offer ideas and strategies and model ways for parents to support their child’s development. The Child Centered Programming Session must include at least one parent/caregiver, the Head Start child, the classroom teacher, the site Home Educator and additional classroom staff if needed.

Child Centered Programming Sessions will be completed by a Head Start employee that works directly with the child and are required by Alberta Education as part of the Early Education program.

Each child who has an IPP requires Child Centered Programming Sessions in the academic year. Sessions are usually 2.5-3 hours each. Head Start Staff will schedule these visits with parents/caregivers directly.

**SOCIAL SUPPORT HOME VISITS**

During the MANDATORY Caregiver Program Information Sessions or during your In-Person intake meeting prior to your child starting Head Start, parents and staff will review the Parent/Caregiver Handbook in its entirety.

Social support home visits provide opportunities for Parent’s/Caregivers to identify needs, set personal and family goals and are intended to assist families to develop a positive learning environment for their child at home.

Each family can expect a minimum of 2 visits per school year. Parents/Caregivers and/or Program Staff can request additional visits when necessary.

Home visits will/may provide for the following:

* **For values, culture & resources**
* **Family Action Plan to help work toward the identified goals.**
* **Family Support Workers can provide families with meaningful information on child development, parenting, health and nutrition, cultural awareness, life skills and other community resources.**

Parents/Caregivers will be given advance notice (when possible) of each visit, either by telephone and/or a note delivered by your child.

**school year Calendar & daily schedule**

A monthly calendar and daily activities will be given to you at the beginning of each month clearly identifying field trips, statutory holidays, school breaks, and days off. It will also be posted on our social media platforms by your classroom teacher.

**Nutrition**

Nutritious snacks and a hot meal is provided to the Head Start children via a hot lunch program supplied by the Lunch Lady. The menu is prepared using the Canada Food Guide and meals include foods from at least three food groups. The serving, eating and clean-up of meals is conducted so that all children experience positive socialization and individual responsibility.

**Food Allergy**

Please indicate if your child has any food allergies on the admission form as well as notifying your child’s teacher upon the start of your child in the program. A note from the doctor may also be required to explain the severity of the allergy and treatment procedures if necessary.

**Release of Information**

There is a possibility that pictures will be displayed amongst classroom activities, field trips, outings, culture camp, events and celebrations will be published and/printed in Head Start material and/or local radio or television media. A release form permitting Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) to use these pictures and/or videos is signed at time of registration and kept on file.

Any parent/caregiver who objects to having their child’s photo, picture, voice, drawings or dancing published for public display should not sign these permission forms. If you have signed this permission form and want to withdrawal your permission, you can do so in writing to your Family Support Worker.

**Field Trips – outings**

Field trips and outings are an important part of your child’s learning process and occur often throughout the year. A general field trip permission form allowing Head Start children to attend all field trips is signed by the parent/caregiver in the registration package.

Parents will be notified in writing prior to each event to remind them of the activity and provide opportunities to volunteering. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to volunteer and assist with all scheduled outings. **Please make alternate arrangements for younger siblings unless otherwise stated.** Spending focused time with your Head Start child is important and will create memories that last a lifetime.

A completed Field Trip consent form is part of the program’s intake package and all parent/caregivers are asked to have this completed upon the enrollment of their child into the program.

**There is no wiggle room waiting for children on special field trip days. Sites must leave their sites on time; therefore, no child will be accepted after 9:00 a.m. on these days.**

**\*Please Note\***

When regular, in class programming occurs smoking **IS NOT** permitted by any staff member, volunteer or parent/caregiver while attending any fieldtrips or child outings.

**\*\*on all off-site field trips, the site’s portable children’s file information is taken with the class along with any important medication, forms, and program cell phone. in cases of emergency, parents/caregivers will be contacted first at the numbers given to the program, and if you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed will be called.\*\***

**Illness**

An obviously ill child is not expected to come to school and will not be accepted. Parents are asked to exercise their best judgment in determining when their child is too sick to attend Head Start. Please **do** **not send a sick child to Head Start if any of the following symptoms are present within a 24 hour period:**

**\*a fever of any kind** \***an upset stomach**

For reference, normal temperatures are: \***pink eye**

**Mouth:** 35.5 – 37.5°C \***vomited**

**Underarm:** 36.5 – 37.5°C \***diarrhea**

**Ear:** 35.8 – 38.0°C \***productive coughing**

**\* coloured or heavy nasal discharges** \***unexplained rashes, hives**

**\* open wounds are not permitted.**

**Classroom staff reserve the right to send a child home to prevent any infection from occurring.**

***If a teacher or other staff member observes any of these symptoms and this appears to be a chronic condition, at the discretion of the staff member, the child will be taken home or asked to be picked up****.*

***In the case of an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic, the program will adhere to all government and Alberta Health Services policies concerning screenings for signs of sickness as well as when to close program doors for in class programming.***

**Medication**

Only medications prescribed by a doctor will be administered. The label on the prescribed medication must have the Head Start child’s name on it. The date on the prescription must be current and the medication must not be expired. Medication will only be administered by certified staff. It is encouraged, whenever possible, for your child to be administered any medication at home before coming to class.

**Communicable disease**

Communicable diseases, also known as infectious diseases or transmissible diseases are illnesses that result from the infection, presence and growth of pathogenic (capable of causing disease) biologic agents in an individual human or other animal host. They are illnesses that spread from one person to another or from an animal to a person or from a surface or a food.

Children who have an identified communicable disease will be sent home immediately when recognized. Parents/Caregivers must provide a medical clearance from doctor or public health nurse upon their child’s return to the program. The program will notify the Health Center when a communicable disease is present in the site. The Family Support Worker will support and ensure follow-up with families.

**VIOLENCE**

The Aboriginal Head Start Programs have a **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE POLICY**. This includes lateral violence as well. Children found biting, hitting, swearing, kicking etc. may be immediately removed from the activity and parents will be notified of child’s behavior. The incident will be discussed with the child’s parent/caregiver and an Incident Report will be filled out each time and kept on file. Every effort will be made to address this behaviour. Continuous violent behaviour will not be tolerated and could result in an indefinite suspension from the Head Start program.

Verbal and physical abuse by any parent/caregiver to ANY program staff will not be tolerated at any time and could be cause for verbal and written warnings and/or may result in the child being withdrawn from the Head Start program.

If any member of the Head Start team receives abuse of any kind at any time throughout the school year, the program reserves the right to suspend the child from both the program and transportation until management has made the appropriate decisions pertaining to the specific conduct.

**CHILD SAFETY CONCERNING ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Aboriginal Head Start and its partners make every effort to support families and their children. They understand that removing children from the care of their parents, extended family and communities is painful for everyone.

We understand that many families are under pressure, need assistance in dealing with addictions, need some form of respite care or are in need of support to deal with other concerns or issues that may result in abuse.

As citizens we have a legal obligation required by law to report all forms of abuse.

Should parents/caregivers require additional supports during times of crisis, you are encouraged to request assistance from your Family Support Worker. They will be sure to assist where needed and refer you on to the appropriate community resources as needed. They will be sensitive to maintain cultural relevance and community support while healing occurs. Please call 780-640-9799 Ext #102 and ask to speak to the Family Support Services Coordinator.

**TOYS**

We discourage children from bringing toys from home, as often this causes disruption on the bus and in the classroom. As well, when bringing items from one location to another, there is the risk of cross contamination of bacteria and viruses between locations. Please have your child leave their toys at home or in the car.

The program provides toys for the children within the classroom, which are not for borrowing or lending. If you find your child has accidentally taken any toys home, please return them as soon as possible.

**Classroom & behavior Management**

The use of any form of physical punishment as a form of behaviour management is strictly prohibited. Staff will implement positive strategies and follow these criteria:

* Respect for the children. - Each child deserves respect and dignity as a human being.
* Knowledge of individual children. - Discipline cannot be applied fairly if it is applied without knowledge of the individual child.
* Knowledge of age appropriate/typical child growth, development and behaviour. - Children who are behaving in ways that are not typical or age appropriate may be helped to learn more acceptable responses to be used in a classroom environment.
* Willingness to accept discipline as an opportunity for teaching. - Staff will help the children control their behaviour in ways that will teach them new strategies for interacting successfully in groups or with individuals.
* Avoidance of judgmental words. - Each child will receive consistent, positive reinforcement of desirable behaviour.
* Inform children. - Children should be told what behaviours are expected of them and why rules are in effect.
* In the case any child is in immediate danger (running away, climbing on unsafe play structures, refusal to transition, hurting self or others. Staff will be able to physically assist (picking up, carrying, moving or guiding) child to safety.

**The following strategies will be used for misbehaviour:**

1. Help the child state the problem**.**
2. Help the child become aware of their own and other’s feelings**.**
3. Demonstrate to the child why the behaviour is both inappropriate for the situation and ineffective to achieve desired results. Teach the child that all behaviour produces a natural and logical consequence.
4. Defiance. If a child is defiant in following simple classroom rules, the staff will take the time and privately find out what makes the child defiant. Parents/caregivers will be informed of the child’s behaviour and request for their in-put to help and/or the child may be removed from class should his/her behaviour cause harm to self and/or others.
5. Should behaviours be extreme, such as running away (flight risk)-physically harming self or others including staff, parents/caregivers will be asked to accompany their child to class and/or on outings until the child’s behaviour has improved.

**Accident/INCIDENT/Disclosure Procedures**

Every effort is and will be made to ensure your child’s safety; it is of the utmost concern for all program staff. However, accidents, incidents or disclosures may happen. In the event that your child is involved in any way, the following procedures will be followed:

* All Head Start staff have First Aid Certification
* The staff will immediately apply first aide treatment if needed.
* If necessary, the child will be immediately transported to either the closest Medical Centre or Hospital, and contact will be made immediately with Parents/Caregivers or your Emergency Contacts listed in your child’s intake form.
* Parents and primary caregivers will be contacted by program staff regarding any accident/incident.
* The accident/incident/disclosure will be documented immediately and be put on your child’s file, as well as a copy submitted to the main office.
* If needed, a call will be placed to the appropriate regional child care office if a incident/disclosure has been shared with a Head Start staff member.
* Follow-up will be done to ensure all procedures have been followed.
* An evaluation will be completed to determine that any additional preventative measures are in place.
* If any recommendations are determined as a result of this, these will be implemented immediately.

**Parents will be encouraged to provide feedback**

**and participate in the above process.**

**LICE – Our aim is prevention!**

**Our program ‘s policy on head lice is as follows, and due to the highly transferable nature of head lice there will be no exceptions to this policy**:

All children attending the Head Start will be checked thoroughly every week for head lice.

Children found to have live lice or nits will be sent back to their home, daycare, day home or babysitters at the end of the day upon discovery.

* Parents/Caregivers will receive a phone call from the classroom teacher or FSW directly.
* Notes will also be sent home to all families to inform parents/caregivers that the Head Start class has been exposed to a case of head lice.

**Treatment**

* Children need to be treated with an appropriate medicated shampoo or ‘vinegar and mineral oil’, to kill the adult lice.
* Hair needs to be combed and all nits need to be removed from the hair.
* Your Family Support Worker will provide follow-up to ensure the parents/caregivers have treated the lice condition and the child is nit free prior to returning to Head Start.
* [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org) is a great website to gather additional information and resources

**Parent/CAREGIVER Grievance & Procedure**

Amiskwaciy Cultural Society is committed to the fair, equitable, accessible and structured process to receive, investigate, respond to and document the outcomes of client grievances. A grievance is a written complaint filed by a client expressing dissatisfaction with service or conditions. Any client who has a complaint and has been unable to resolve the matter through regular channels of communication may use the grievance process to be heard and to find resolution.

All clients are informed of their right to appeal decisions that relate to them. A copy of the client grievance procedure will be given to them upon intake.

An additional avenue of dispute resolution for youth/children is the Office of the Children's Advocate. All youth/children with Children’s Services involvement are informed of the Office upon intake, and provided with telephone access to the office when they request it.

Clients wishing to make an appeal must do so in writing within **30** days of the problem or incident occurring.

The procedure for filing a grievance must be followed.

Persons responsible for reviewing the grievance must maintain confidentiality as necessary to effectively investigate the grievance.

Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to address and attempt resolution of any issue or concern they may have with a Head Start staff, Society staff or any other parent. In the event you feel your problem-solving attempts have been unsuccessful, the Amiskwaciy Cultural Society’s grievance procedure is as follows:

A grievance is a written complaint filed by a client to express dissatisfaction with the service or staff at the Aboriginal Head Start program.

Any client who has a complaint and who has been unable or unsuccessful at resolving it verbally may use the grievance process to be heard and to attempt resolution.

Within **30** days of the problem or incident occurring, the client must complete a written grievance to the Program Executive Director indicating;

- The allegation being made;

- Specifics of the allegation, including names, dates, time;

- Prior attempts to resolve the issue; and

- accepted outcomes for the client.

The Program Executive Director will investigate the allegations by speaking with the client, reviewing file documents, interviewing staff and or other means aimed at seeking resolution. A written response to the grievance will be prepared and forwarded to the client within ten **10** working days of receiving the grievance.

If this is not satisfactory the client may submit a written appeal to the Board of Directors of the Amiskwaciy Cultural Society within five **5** working days of receipt of the Program Executive Director’s response.

The Board of Directors will investigate the allegations by speaking with the client, reviewing file documents, interviewing staff, case workers and the Program Executive Director, or other means aimed at seeking resolution. A written response to the grievance will be prepared and forwarded to the client within ten **10** working days of receiving the grievance. If this response is not satisfactory the client may submit a request for final appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee will review all of the written documentation submitted and written responses of the program staff. A written response to the request for final appeal will be prepared and forwarded to the client within **10** working days of receiving the grievance.

If this response is not satisfactory the client may submit a request for final appeal to the Board of Directors Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will review all of the written documentation from both parties. A written response to the request for final appeal will be prepared and forwarded to the client within **10** working days of receiving the final appeal.

**head Start PHONE NUMBERS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Head Start Management | |  |
| Executive Director | | 780-640-9799 Ext #100 |
| Program Manager | | 780-640-9799 Ext #101 |
| Family Support Manager | | 780-640-9799 Ext #102 |
| Transportation Manager | | 780-640-9799 Ext #113 |
| OFFICE STAFF | |  |
| Office Administrator | | 780-640-9799 Ext #109 |
| Program Liaison | | 780-640-9799 Ext #115 |
| FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS | |  |
| St. Francis Site East | | 780-640-9799 Ext #103 |
| St. Francis Site West | | 780-640-9799 Ext#108 |
| Our Lady of Peace Site | | 780-640-9799 Ext #104 |
| St. Pius X Site | | 780-640-9799 Ext #111 |
| HOME EDUCATORS | |  |
| St. Pius/St. Francis Site | | 780-640-9799 Ext #110 |
| Our Lady of Peace/St. Francis Site | | 780-640-9799 Ext #112 |
| ST.PIUS SITE: 12214-128th Street | |  |
| Classroom | | 780-477-1596 |
| Bus Driver | | 780-604-3633 |
| OUR LADY OF PEACE SITE: 15911-110TH Ave | |  |
| Classroom | | 780-930-4215 |
| Bus Driver | | 780-604-5408 |
| ST. FRANCIS SITE: - 6770 – 129 Ave | |  |
| Classroom | | 780-448-9632 |
| Bus Driver East 780-604-5204 | / West 780-604-3634 | | |

**classroom Prayer**

**Thank you Creator** for this new day

Thank you for new beginnings

Thank you for the sunshine, the warm weather, the rain

Thank you for this new season,

which is Spring (summer, etc.)

**Thank you Creator** for our Families

Our Moms and Dads, our Brothers and Sisters,

Our Aunts and Uncles for all their love

They share with us

Thank you Creator for our Kokums,

our Moosoms and our Teachers

For all their teachings they share with us

Thank you Creator for our Bus Driver

For bringing us to school, and back home safely

**Thank you Creator** for the four Legged, the two legged,

the winged ones, those of the water and

those that crawl above and below

Mother Earth

Hiy Hiy…

**AWARDS**

**Bus Ready And Waiting Award**

This award is presented to a parent/caregiver from each morning and afternoon class from each site for the parent/caregiver who had their child dressed and ready to go for the bus on the most regular occasions.

**Volunteers of the Year Award**

This award is presented to the parent/caregiver from each site who have met their 9 hours of volunteering throughout the academic school year.

**Outstanding Volunteer Award**

This award is presented to the parent/caregiver from each site who goes above and beyond with their volunteering throughout the academic school year, attends more than one scheduled field trip and has an excess of 20+ hours of volunteer time.

**PAC Recognition Award**

This award is presented to the members of the Parent/Caregiver Advisory Committee who represent their classroom site at regularly scheduled monthly meetings and work to provide outstanding ideas and possibilities to the children and classrooms throughout the academic school year.

**All awards are presented at the PRORAM Year end CELEBRATIONs!**

**THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING OUR PROGRAM**

**AS YOUR CHILD’S FIRST EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE!!!**

Amiskwaciy Cultural Society

11510 102nd Street NW

Edmonton, Alberta

T5G 2E7

Phone 780-640-9799 Fax 780-452-3072