

Irvine Unified School District  
Early Childhood Learning Center

HEAD START  
PARENT  
HANDBOOK

2011-2012

## **WELCOME TO HEAD START**

The staff of the Irvine Unified School District's Head Start program welcomes you and your child to the Early Childhood Learning Center. The program is operated by the Irvine Unified School District and is funded with a federal grant through Orange County Head Start, Inc. and is licensed by the State of California Community Care Licensing Division.

This early childhood program has a 46 year history of providing comprehensive services to young children and their families and was reauthorized by Congress in 2008. The program supports a child's growth and development by providing early education, health, nutrition and mental health services and by strengthening families through parent education, parent volunteer opportunities and linkages with community resources. This program works collaboratively with the Special Education Preschool on-site to ensure services to children with special needs. All staff meets State Department of Education certification requirements and participates in ongoing training opportunities.

Parents are welcome and are allowed access to their children and the staff providing care for their children during normal hours of operation. The program refrains from religious instruction or worship.

Please take time to review this handbook and keep it handy for reference. Using the guidelines will help make your Head Start experience more enjoyable for you and your child.

We look forward to a productive school year!

*The Head Start Staff*

## OFFICE HOURS

8:00 am – 4:30 pm  
Monday - Friday

## CLASSROOM HOURS

**Morning (AM) classes**  
8:00 am – 11:30 am  
Monday – Friday

**Afternoon (PM) classes**  
12:30 pm – 4:00 pm  
Monday – Friday

\*\*Wednesdays are non – student days.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

September 12, 2011-June 21, 2012

## SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

October 17 - Staff Development Day November 11 - Veteran's Day November 24-25 - Thanksgiving Recess December 19 - January 2 - Winter Recess January 16 - Martin L. King Day	February 13 - Lincoln's Day February 20 – Washington's Day April 2-13 - Spring Recess May 28 - Memorial Day
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## HEAD START STAFF

Pat Desimone	Coordinator	(949) 936-5855
Roberta Lum Hugoboom	Program Assistant	(949) 936-7555
Suzanne Robert	Program Assistant/Enrollment	(949) 936-5885
Addie Valasquez	Family Service Advocate	(949) 936-5882
Mona Pinyan	Health & Nutrition Specialist	(949) 936-5891
Aurora Valencia	Clerk	(949) 936-5883
Gabriela Avalos Giles	Food Service Assistant	(949) 936-5869

### TEACHERS

Maria Garcia  
Amber Shore  
Donna Simensen

### ASSISTANTS

Bertha Hart  
Amanda Lopez  
Najia Salehi

### ROOM #

12  
13  
14

### TELEPHONE #

(949) 936-5886  
(949) 936-5887  
(949) 936-5888

Please visit our website [www.iusd.org/eclc](http://www.iusd.org/eclc) for all things ECLC!

# INFORMATION TOPICS

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Please keep this handbook available for reference.

## **ADMISSION**

Head Start and Irvine Unified School District operates in accordance with federal and state policies which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap or disability, religion or national origin. Each family must meet the federal requirements for eligibility. Eligibility is based on family income and age of the child. The IUSD Head Start program will make reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

It is expected that children will attend according to the regular scheduled class times. It is important for your child to arrive and leave school on time.

- Morning session begins **promptly at 8:00 a.m.** and ends **promptly at 11:30 a.m.**
- Afternoon session begins **promptly at 12:30 p.m.** and ends **promptly at 4:00 p.m.**

### **Pick-Up Procedures**

Only authorized persons at least 18 years old can pick up a child from school. If you are not able to pick up your child, the person, who is picking up your child, must be listed on the emergency card. **That person will be required to show a picture ID.**

If you want a person, who is not on the emergency card, to pick up your child, you must complete the "Authorization for Pick-up" form. These forms are located in each classroom. This will enable us to release the child for *one time only*, or you may use this form to add people to the emergency cards. People can be added or deleted to your child's emergency card at any time

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

If a child is not picked up on time, the teaching staff will call the parent/guardian and all emergency numbers listed on the Emergency Card. Staff will make every effort to place the child with someone listed on the Emergency Card. However, if the parent or anyone on the Emergency Card cannot be reached or is unable to pick up the child, the Irvine Police will be notified, as determined by staff.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call the Head Start office or appropriate authorities to locate their child after school has closed.

Office Telephone (949) 936-5882 or 936-7555  
Irvine Police (949) 724-7000

**Failure to meet the attendance time schedule, for both arrival and departure, will jeopardize your child's participation in the Head Start Program.**

## **ATTENDANCE**

Good attendance will be vital to your child's future success in public school. Now is the time to develop habits that support regular participation. We hope to see your child at school each day.

When a child's attendance record becomes **irregular**, an appropriate contact with the family will be made. Efforts to support regular attendance will be initiated at that time. Families are expected to participate in an attendance plan and re-establish regular attendance. If those efforts fail, the family's need for services will be re-examined.

The program may limit the attendance of an enrolled child, if keeping that child poses a significant risk to the health and safety of the child or anyone in contact with the child.

### **Absences**

If a child misses school due to illness or other important reasons, please follow the procedure below.

- Call your child's teacher to report the absence and the reason; as soon as you determine that your child will not attend school.

**Room 12 – Maria Garcia (949) 936-5886**  
**Room 13 – Amber Shore (949) 936-5887**  
**Room 14 - Donna Simensen (949) 936-5888**



After 4 days of illness, a note from a doctor may be required to re-admit your child.

Accommodations will be made for children that will be absent for a one-time-only extended period of 5-10 consecutive days on a case to case basis. Please contact the Family Service Advocate when an extended absence is anticipated.

If your child will be leaving our program, please notify the office as soon as possible. This will enable staff to enroll children who are waiting to attend.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

The Head Start staff supports the development of appropriate behavior and social skills for children by implementing the following practices;

1. Developing a positive, supportive relationship with each child.
2. Establishing appropriate routines and expectations.
3. Providing developmentally appropriate materials that promote children's engagement.
4. Using positive attention and encouragement to support pro-social behavior.
5. Teaching children about the expectations of the environment, using friendship skills and solving problems.

Parents of children with the following challenging behaviors which occur on a routine basis will be expected to meet with staff members to develop a joint plan of action to support the child's continued participation in the program.

- Behavior which interferes with learning
- Behavior which interferes with engagement in pro-social interactions
- Behavior which jeopardizes the safety of self and/or others.

Parents may be notified to pick up their child in extreme behavior situations. If a child's behavior continues to compromise the safety of other children, and/or exhausts the resources of the program alternate placement will be recommended.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Children's birthdays are important to us. Birthdays will be acknowledged in the classroom on your child's birth date with special activities planned by the teacher. Birthday cake, goodie bags, special treats, balloons, etc. are not permitted.

## **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

By law, all staff members on site are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect for any reason.

## **CIVILITY**

It is our goal to promote positive communication, mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among employees, parents and the public to ensure a safe, harassment free workplace for children and staff. Volatile, hostile or aggressive behavior that disrupts school/office operations or threatens the health and safety of children and/or adults will be reported to the appropriate authority.

## **CLOTHING**

"In fashion" at Head Start means clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for the weather. Please select clothing and shoes that is easy for your child to manage alone. Belts are not recommended for this reason. Sweaters, jackets, and other clothing should be ***clearly labeled*** with your child's name.

In the Head Start classrooms, children use paint, glue and other messy materials that may get on their clothing. Although children wear smocks during paint activities, we encourage you to send your child to school in washable play clothes.

For safety reasons, we ask that children wear shoes that cover the entire foot. Open-toed sandals are discouraged because they can be dangerous when children climb and run. Thong type sandals are not allowed.

## **COMMUNICATION**

It is important to establish open lines of communication between school and home. We try to provide a variety of ways to keep in touch.

### **School-to-Home Communication**

Please check the classroom bulletin/message boards, parent mailboxes, sign in/out area, parent resource areas, your child's "cubbie" for important notices of events and meetings. Program information and newsletters are sent home, along with announcements of community and site events, parent classes and activities on a regular basis.

Parent conferences and home visits are conducted 4 times throughout the school year by the teaching staff and the Family Service Advocate.

### **Home-to-School Communication**

The Head Start staff encourages parents to keep us informed of changes that may effect your child's participation in the program. You can help us stay in touch with you and your child's needs. A conference with a teacher or other Head Start staff can be requested at any time.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted to the purposes directly connected with the administration of this program. Any release of information must have written prior approval from the parent.

## **CURRICULUM**

Head Start uses Scholastic's Big Day for PreK in our classrooms. This instructional program is aligned with the California State Preschool Learning Foundations and is supplemented by the High Scope Preschool curriculum. All instructional practice is supported by current educational research and best practices for Early Childhood Education. Our staff meets State Department of Education Early Childhood certification requirements and receives ongoing training opportunities.

Big Day for PreK encourages children to learn, play and engage with the world around them. Instructional activities are organized into three ways of learning:

1. Large group instruction-circle time/story time experiences
2. Small group instruction-directed activities that build on curriculum areas
3. Learning centers-intentional play, social interactions and independent exploration.

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

The classroom consists of materials what are carefully selected to promote “hands on” learning. The classroom is divided into at least four areas organized around specific kinds of play experiences; creative/art; role playing/housekeeping; block/manipulative; and book/print materials. In each area, materials are selected to meet the interest and developmental needs of children and organized so that children can access them easily and put them away independently.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The daily schedule establishes a consistent, balanced routine for children consisting of teacher directed and child initiated activities, meals, naptime (full day), and outdoor play activities. Please check the Parent Bulletin Board for the posting of the daily routine and weekly activity plans.

## **EMERGENCY CARDS**

**Please keep your child’s emergency card up to date!** We use emergency cards to contact you (or the people you designate) if your child becomes ill, injured, or an emergency arises. Please inform your neighbors, relatives, or friends if you have included their name on your child’s emergency card.

Whenever there is change with phone numbers, addresses and/or emergency contacts, please complete the appropriate form found in the classrooms. Your response in keeping us up-to-date on important changes in home, work and emergency numbers is essential to the safety and well being of your child and may be vital in providing the best medical emergency care.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of an emergency or disaster, children will remain with Head Start staff until a parent or authorized person arrives. The Early Childhood Learning Center site has emergency food and health supplies needed to sustain children during an emergency or disaster. Children practice evacuation and *duck and cover* drills on a monthly basis. A school wide disaster drill is conducted twice each year.

Parents are requested to provide the following items for your child's "Comfort Kit: a change of clothing including underwear, shirt, pants and socks.

- **Label each clothing item with your child's name.**
- Please put these items together in a zip lock baggie with your child's full name printed clearly on the outside.
- The Comfort Kits and will be stored in or near the classroom. The kit will be returned to you at the end of the school year or when your child leaves the program.

**PLEASE BRING YOUR CHILD'S COMFORT KIT  
DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL.**

## **FEES**

Consistent with federal regulations, there are no fees charged to participating children and families for program services. This includes, meals served, transportation, field trips and classroom or program supplies.

## **HEALTH**

The teaching staff will assess the well being of each child upon arrival to the program and throughout the day.

Parents can help by verifying that your child's health is adequate for participation in school activities before bringing her/him to school. **Please do not send sick children to school.**

If within the past 24 hours your child has shown signs of illness and does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities, please keep her/him at home.

These are examples of reasons to keep your child home:

- **Fever**
- **Red throat or earache**
- **Persistent cough**
- **Swollen neck glands**
- **Heavy nasal discharge**
- **Unexplained rash or skin eruption**
- **Vomiting**
- **Difficulty breathing, wheezing**
- **Swollen, red, crusty or itchy eyes**
- **Any communicable disease**

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you immediately. Please arrange for your child to be picked up within an hour. All sick children will be isolated from the other children until they are picked up as needed.

If your child contracts a communicable disease (chicken pox, measles, head lice, conjunctivitis, etc.), please notify the office as soon as possible. Children absent with a contagious illness cannot return to school without a signed doctor's note.

Minor injuries sustained at school, will be handled by the staff. Soap, water and band-aids will be the extent of first aid rendered. Parents will be notified via the classroom *Ouch Report*, and contacted immediately in cases of severe injuries or concerns.

Cleanliness and good grooming help to increase each child's sense of self-esteem. Parents are requested to bring children to the school clean and dressed for the day. Hand washing, grooming and brushing teeth are also part of the daily activities for each child. The program encourages children to develop independence and self-help skills.

Children will brush their teeth with toothpaste after breakfast in the morning and after lunch for the afternoon session.

## **MEALS /SNACKS**

The children who attend the morning session are served breakfast @ 8:00 AM and lunch @ 11:00 AM. The children who attend the afternoon session begin their day with lunch @ 12:30 and are served a snack @ 3:30 PM. Monthly menus are provided and posted in each classroom.

Please do not feed your child right before he/she leaves for school. Mealtime is an important part of our school day and we want all children to participate. Meals are served “family style” and children are encouraged to take small servings of new foods. Nutrition education, developing coordination and motor skills, teaching independence, and providing children with choices are examples of skills taught during meals/snacks.

**Please notify your child’s teacher if your child has any food allergies. Children requiring special diets due to food allergies must have a physician’s statement on file.**

Substitutions for non-medical reasons (religious, vegetarian, etc.) will be evaluated by the Health and Nutrition Specialist.

## **MEDICATION**

We urge you to arrange your child’s medication schedule so that doses are given before or after school hours.

If it is necessary for your child to take *prescription or non-prescription medication* during the school day, we must have written directions from the doctor and the medication must be brought to us in the original container with a prescription label. **Please check with the office for the proper forms and procedures.** Please take the medication and a child’s measuring cup to your child’s teacher. Preschool children are not allowed to keep medications in their cubbies or back packs.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Head Start strongly believes that **parents are key to each child’s success.** Support your child’s experience in the Head Start program by getting involved! Volunteering is a rewarding opportunity for you and your

child. We encourage you to select among the variety of volunteer opportunities listed as follows:

### **Classroom Assistance**

Put a smile on your child's face by helping in the classroom. Parents work in the classroom under the direction and supervision of a teacher. Your help enhances the instructional program by providing supportive services to the classroom staff and participating in the daily meal experience.

Parent volunteer training sessions will help parents to better understand their role in the classroom, program philosophy, how to work with children and how to develop learning activities that will support the classroom instruction.

### **Classroom Observation**

Parents are invited to observe their child in the classroom setting and to share their observations with the classroom teacher for the purpose of setting goals and planning learning experiences. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule an observation.

**Siblings are not allowed to accompany parents while observing or assisting in the classroom.**

### **Parent Center Committee (PCC)**

The objective of the PCC is to plan and implement program activities for children and parents. This committee consists of 100% Head Start parents. The PCC activities will be supported by the Parent Activity Fund.

### **Policy Committee (PC)**

The purpose of the PC is to maintain a structure of shared governance and involvement among parents, program administration, Board of Education and the community. At its monthly meeting, the committee will participate in the decision making process regarding program operation, such as, budgets, planning, policies, and procedures.

If parents cannot volunteer on site, we welcome grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends to volunteer on behalf of your child. If you are interested

in “at home” activities such as, labeling, tracing, cutting, etc., please see your child’s teacher. If you are willing to help, we will make it happen!

## **Orange County Head Start Inc. Volunteer Opportunities**

### **Policy Council**

A parent representative and alternate are elected to attend the Policy Council monthly meetings at Orange County Head Start, Inc. The purpose of the Policy Council is to maintain an opportunity for shared governance with the OCHS Board of Directors by participating in policy making decisions regarding Head Start Programs in Orange County.

### **Safety Assistant Monitor (SAM)**

Promote and ensure safe school environments by volunteering as a Safety Assistant Monitor. Volunteers will meet monthly and complete safety checklists regularly at their child’s school.

### **Parent Nutrition Assistant (PNA)**

This is a great volunteer opportunity for someone who is interested in nutrition. Parents will attend monthly classes, assist with nutrition related activities in the classroom and report monthly to the Parent Center Committee. College credit is earned for participation.

### **Dad’s Matter**

Join other Head Start fathers to improve your parenting skills and to get involved in the lives of your children by attending meetings and family activities.

### **In-Kind Donations**

*In-kind* is a term you will hear often in Head Start. Because our program is funded by a grant awarded by the federal government, we are required to provide local matching funds. These funds can be actual dollars or in-kind dollars. The time that you volunteer is very important to us in Head Start. It will be converted into a dollar amount, thus the in-kind contribution.

## **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

All volunteers must complete the required forms and participate in training prior to volunteering. Classroom volunteers must also have a TB clearance within the last 4 years.

All volunteers must accurately record volunteer hours using the appropriate forms provided by the Head Start staff.

**Reminder!** Unless offered, we do not provide child care services for siblings of the Head Start child. You must make arrangements for child care during your volunteer hours.

## **PEDESTRIAN AND PARKING LOT SAFETY**

To ensure that families and children are safe at all times, please be mindful of the rules below:

- **Never** leave children unattended in your car when you walk your Head Start child to class.
- **Always** hold the hands of any children you are escorting across the parking lot and street.
- **Always** have your child exit onto the sidewalk, not the street!
- **Lock** your car when leaving it.
- **Buckle up! It is the Law!!** Both you and your child need to be *buckled in* while in a motor vehicle.
- **Always** park in the parking lot or on Smoketree. Do not park at the red curb in front of the school or on Cambium (private street).

## **“READ AT HOME” PROGRAM**

Take advantage of a great opportunity to earn books for your child. By reading at home, your child can earn a free storybook each month for every 10 books read. Please ask your child’s teacher for the “Reading at Home” form to list the books read.

## **SCHOOL ETIQUETTE**

- Supervise your children at all times in the building.
- Use indoor voices and avoid gathering near the offices.
- Turn cell phones OFF or on vibrate while in the building.
- Keep gates and doors with signs indicating “please close” closed.
- Children are not allowed to play on school campus before or after school hours for safety reasons. Please leave the campus after picking up your child.
- Keep children out of the bushes and off the retaining walls.
- No pets are allowed on school campus.

## **SCHOOL SECURITY**

All parents are required to wear a visitor badge while in the building. This badge will be given to you on the first day of school. Keep it in a convenient location for easy daily access. Please inform friends and family members that they must sign in when entering the building and will be given a visitor badge for identification purposes. Please enter through the main school entrance as all other doors will remain locked throughout the day.

Classrooms are closed after 4:15 each day.

## **SIGNING IN AND OUT**

State law requires that each child be signed in/out daily by a parent or other person designated by the parent. If your child attends another program on site, program staff will be designated to sign your child in and out as appropriate.

## **TOYS, ETC.**

The Head Start program has many wonderful materials at school. Please leave toys, candy, etc. at home, except for planned “share days”. This includes toy weapons or replicas as indicated by Irvine Unified School District’s “Zero Tolerance” policy.

## **UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

It is the intent of the Irvine Unified School District to fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Individuals, including parents, students, employees, an authorized representative, an interested party, public agency, or organization can file complaints regarding the alleged violation of a statute or regulation that the CA Department of Education is authorized to enforce. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination in any program funded directly by the State Department of Education. All complaints will follow the IUSD uniform complaint procedures.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Irvine Unified School District operates  
the **Head Start** program at the  
**Early Childhood Learning Center.**

1 Smoketree Lane  
Irvine, CA 92604  
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Fax: (949) 936-5889

