

Parent Handbook

Mora Head Start Center

2022-2023

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On behalf of Lakes and Pines and especially the Early Childhood and Family Development Department, I would like to welcome your family to the Head Start Program. As your family begins this year, I want you to know that we appreciate your commitment to participate in Head Start and in partnership with your family, we hope to make your experience worthwhile. I believe as the year progresses, you will see your child's skills develop and you will attain the goals that you have set with staff for your child and family.

We believe strongly in teamwork at Lakes and Pines. Your family will be assigned Education Staff and Family Advocate. The Education Staff and Family Advocate will work with your family on a number of different things throughout the year. Your family will be able to ask questions, give input, and can expect to be treated as the great partner you are. The staff that work with your family are supported by Administrators and Coordinators for Health, Education, Disabilities/Mental Health/Literacy, and Family Engagement. Any of these Administrators and/or Coordinators are available as a resource to you if you ever need them. You can contact the Central Office anytime you may need something or if you have questions about the program.

We will provide your children with multiple opportunities to learn and play. These experiences will happen indoors and outdoors and will happen throughout the year. Activities may be messy or may happen outdoors in January so please make sure your child comes to Head Start with what they need to take advantage of these opportunities. If you need resources for winter clothing, please talk to the staff or contact the Central Office.

We hope that you find this Parent Handbook to be a helpful reference throughout the year. I wish you a fun and exciting Head Start year.

Tammy Arend, Director
Early Childhood and Family Development

Mission Statement

To build prosperous communities by serving local families and individuals in their pursuit of self-reliance.

Philosophy

The overall philosophy of Head Start is ***“Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher”***. This is true in early childhood as well as throughout life. The Head Start Program delivered by Lakes and Pines implements this philosophy by the use of a Center Based Model, Home-Based Model, Childcare Center Partnership, and Family Childcare Partnerships.



The meaning of the Head Start Blocks

The two squares represent early childhood by suggesting building blocks
The vertical stripes represent the child and parent working together
The arrow pointing up represents stairs by which this can be accomplished
To represent the U.S.A. the Head Start symbol is colored red, white, and blue

Holidays

Head Start is closed for all major holidays which include the following:

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President’s Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran’s Day
- Thanksgiving
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Terms of License

Lakes and Pines’ Head Start is licensed by the State of Minnesota to provide a preschool environment for children ages 3 to 5 years old. Lakes and Pines’ Head Start admits all children regardless of race, color, sex, handicap, religion, nationality, or creed. We are licensed for 20 children, with hours of operation being Tuesday – Friday 8:30-4:00. The state visits the site at least annually for inspection and licenses are renewed each January. To report possible licensing violations, call Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing at 651-431-6500.

Drop Off & Pick Up Time

Drop off time is 8:30 am and pick up time is 4:00. If you arrive early the center may not be open. If you are going to be picking up your child late due to an emergency, please call us as soon as you are aware of the issue. Lakes and Pines has policies in place to make sure your child is safe. If you are more than one (1) hour

late to drop off your child, staff will try to contact you or your emergency contact to make sure you and your child are safe. If you are late to pick up your child, staff will call you and your emergency contacts. Calls to County Social Services and/or Law Enforcement will be made if staff feel it's warranted.

When you arrive to pick up or drop off your child you will need to talk with a staff as part of the process to exchange any information. You will also be required to hold your child's hand coming from and going to the car. Multiple vehicles use the parking lots and these are busy times at the sites. To ensure your child's safety we expect compliance with these policies.

Communication and Parent Conferences

Your child's health, growth, and development are important to our staff. It is our priority to ensure that your child will receive the best possible care. Communication between the parents and teachers is extremely important. While we recognize each family has rights to their privacy, we ask you to keep us aware of any significant changes in your family life that may affect the progress of your child's development or behavior.

Lakes and Pines Head Start will conduct two (2) home visits and two (2) conferences during the program year. Staff use Desired Results Developmental Profile as an ongoing assessment tool and will provide parents the Parent Summary during conferences. The summary includes the progress your child is making in the areas of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs are required to share assessment and summary data with parents, the Office of Head Start, and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Health Services

Our program has a Health Coordinator and our health services are overseen by a contracted Licensed Nurse in Minnesota. Lakes and Pines also contracts with mental health consultants who may be present in classrooms from time to time.

Medical Requirements

Per state guidelines and Head Start/Early Head Start regulations your child must have a healthcare summary including proof of a physical exam and dental exam within the first 30 days of enrollment and an immunization record at the time of enrollment. All immunizations must be up-to-date at the time of enrollment or the first day of attendance at the site. Immunization catch up plans are accepted for children who are behind schedule. Please update your child's physical and health records annually or whenever your child has an exam.

Physical exams, dental exams and hearing and vision screenings are required annually. Lakes and Pines uses Child Plus to manage child and family records. As part of the comprehensive services provided by Head Start programs, Head Start staff will follow up with you if your child is not current on health requirements (Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Screenings/Minnesota Child and Teen Checkups). Staff will help you meet these health benchmarks and can be resources should there be any issues.

First Aid Policies and Procedures

Non-Emergency Accidents: Staff members will follow the appropriate first aid certification guidelines reflective to certification in accordance with the accident that has occurred. All staff members are currently certified in First Aid and CPR.

Medical Emergency: In the event of a medical emergency, Lakes and Pines will call 9-1-1 and then notify the parents. In the event that a child needs to be transported via EMS, a Lakes and Pines staff person will accompany the child.

Source of Emergency Medical Care

Nearest Clinic: 320-679-1212

Nearest Dentist: 320-679-1212

Police Department (Non-emergency): 320-679-8400

Fire Chief (Non-emergency): 320-679-5837

National Poison Control Hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Children with Illness

If your child is not feeling well, or displays any of the following symptoms, keep them home.

- Fever over 100 degrees;
- An undiagnosed rash;
- A child has vomited one (1) or more times in the past 24 hours;
- Diarrhea or loose stools: three (3) or more in the past 24 hours;
- A reportable illness or condition that the commissioner of health has determined to be contagious;
- A child that has contagious conjunctivitis or drainage from one or both eyes;
- A child who has a bacterial infection.

Upon arrival at the center, each child will have their temperature taken with a no contact thermometer. A verbal screener will be conducted to determine the child's risk factors.

If a child becomes ill during the course of the day, with any of the above symptoms, a staff member must isolate the child. In the Mora Center, children will be in the teacher office accompanied by a staff member. Staff will notify the parent or emergency contact person and stay with the child until they can be picked up.

Children should stay home until all symptoms are gone for at least 24 hours without medication.

Lakes and Pines requires all parents to inform the center within 24 hours (unless on holiday or weekends) if the child is diagnosed by a Doctor as having a contagious reportable disease (such as lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, strep throat, COVID 19, RSV or chicken pox). The center will post any exposures to such diseases outside the classroom

IF YOUR CHILD IS PRESCRIBED AN ANTIBIOTIC THEY MUST RECEIVE THE PRESCRIPTION FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CENTER.

Medication Administration Policies

Whenever a child requires prescription or non-prescription medication, a Medical Provider and the parent must fill out a written authorization form and an Individual Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP). A separate form

is required for each medication. Minnesota state law requires that the medication must be in its original container which states the child's full name, prescribed dosage, medication name, date, and Medical Provider's name. The staff member who administers the medication must sign the Medication Log and list the date, time, and amount given. Medication will be stored in proper medication lock boxes. All Lakes and Pines' classroom staff are trained in medication administration.

Diaper rash products, insect repellants, sunscreens, and toothpaste are an exception and need written parent approval only at time of enrollment. The Non-Prescription Medication Products Authorization Only form must be filled out in order for us to administer external products.

If a child has a known health condition prior to starting at the center, the written authorization and ICCPP, mentioned above, must be completed and signed prior to the child's first day of attendance. If a child is diagnosed while enrolled in Head Start, the written authorization and ICCPP must be completed and signed within 2 weeks of the diagnosis.

Ongoing emergency medications, such as epi-pens and inhalers, are kept on site or on staff (in backpack or fanny pack), out of reach of children, at all times. Other routine medications are kept on site in a locked box. Short term medications, such as antibiotics, are passed between parent/guardian and staff at the beginning and end of each day. These medications are stored in a locked box within the center.

Center Cleaning

Sites are cleaned on a regular basis. Toys which have been mouthed, countertops, and bathrooms are disinfected daily. Some of the disinfectants used contain bleach and can discolor clothing if children come into contact with materials treated with them before they are dry.

Head Start centers follow a daily, weekly and monthly cleaning and disinfecting schedule. In addition to staff cleaning, professional cleaners are contracted for routine and deep cleaning on a weekly basis.

Attendance

Lakes and Pines will maintain an electronic record of the daily attendance.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to sign their child in when dropping them off at the center. Upon arrival to the classroom, each child will have their temperature taken with a no contact thermometer. A verbal screener will be conducted with parent to determine the child's risk factors. All social distancing recommendations will be followed.

Head Start/Early Head Start regulations require children maintain an attendance rate of 85%. If your child cannot maintain that rate of attendance the center staff and a Family Advocate will work with you to resolve any attendance barriers. If attendance becomes a chronic issue a written attendance plan will be developed with your family. Children who attend school on a regular basis typically develop at a rate two times greater than those who have chronic absenteeism. Children are expected to attend everyday they are scheduled and healthy enough to do so. In cases when the center is closed additional makeup days may be added to the end of the year to meet program requirements.

Absences

It is the parent's responsibility to inform Lakes and Pines' center staff of any absences that will occur. Please call the center by 8 am if your child will not be attending that day. If the child has not arrived and there has been no phone call one (1) hour after scheduled arrival time, center staff will contact you or your emergency contact to confirm the absence.

Community Walks

There may be times during a school day when children and staff go on a walk within the community, near the center. Permission slips are signed at time of initial enrollment visit. Notice of these walks are posted in the center on the days they are planned.

Meals/Snacks

Lakes and Pines will serve breakfast, lunch and a snack in accordance with USDA/CACFP regulations. Breakfast, lunch, and snack menus will be posted for parents to follow along. A registered Dietician reviews all menus. Meals will be served according to the following schedule:

Breakfast = 8:30 - 9:00 am.

Lunch = 11:30 - 12:00 pm

Snack = 2:30-3:00 pm

All children will be offered something to eat for breakfast.

Special treats

Special treats provided by the child is an enjoyable way to celebrate birthdays, share culture, and teach about sharing. If a parent would like to celebrate an occasion by bringing treats for their child to share, the following must be met:

- Parents must plan with staff ahead of time to ensure there are no allergies that would keep a child from participating
- Staff must inform parents of the number of children the snack would be bought for so no child is left out
- All snacks must be store bought and come in original unopened packaging

Personal Belongings

We highly discourage children from bringing toys from home to the center except on sharing days. If items are brought at other times, the child will be asked that it remain in their cubby to go home at the end of the day. Lakes and Pines is not responsible for lost or damaged items brought to the center by the child.

Transportation Policy

Lakes and Pines will ensure children who receive transportation services are taught the following:

- safe riding practices;
- safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle;
- crossing the street to and from the vehicle at stops;
- recognition of the danger zones around the vehicle;

- emergency evacuation procedures (including three emergency evacuation drills conducted on the vehicle).

Lakes and Pines has implemented the following safety practices:

- 1) A Lakes & Pines staff person rides the bus to ensure child safety;
- 2) Routes are planned and they are to be one (1) hour in length or less;
- 3) Drivers will not back up or make U-turns, except when necessary for safety reasons or because of physical barriers, buses are equipped with back-up beepers;
- 4) Stops are located to minimize traffic disruptions and to afford the driver a good field of view in front of and behind the vehicle; buses will stop for 3 minutes. If your child will be absent, call the center before 7:00 am and the bus will not stop;
- 5) When possible, stops will be located to eliminate the need for children to cross the street or highway to board or leave the vehicle;
- 6) You must escort your child to and from the bus;
- 7) Families who “no show” for the bus may be removed from the bus route;
- 8) Drivers may use alternate routes or have to slow down in the case of hazardous conditions that could affect the safety of the children who are being transported, such as hazardous driving conditions. This may result in changes to typical drop off or pickup times. Please plan for at least a 15-minute time frame for drop off and pick up.
- 9) Children will sit in appropriate restraints at all times on the bus.

Weather Closing

In the event of severe weather the program will close. Lakes and Pines will follow local school districts for severe weather closings, this includes late starts, early dismissals, and full day closures. Lakes and Pines staff will try to notify parents using the contact information on record. Be sure to notify staff if your contact information changes. Closures will also be announced on local radio stations.

Nap and Rest Policy

Children will have a rest period of approximately 30 minutes in the afternoon. They can nap longer than that if needed. As children finish resting they will be brought into the planned activity that is currently underway in a separate area. Children will not be required to remain on a cot for longer than 30 minutes. Cots will be provided for each child in a quiet space within the site and bedding will be cleaned weekly or when soiled. Each child will have their own cot and bedding. Children will be supervised during nap time. Upon enrollment, parents should inform staff of their child’s sleeping patterns and of any concerns around sleeping. Staff will manage children during this time based on the individual needs of the child and the child’s developmental level. Cots will be on the floor, not stacked, when in use. Cots must be placed so there are clear aisles for access by adults and/or children on at least one side.

Pets

Lakes and Pines has implemented a no pet policy. Service animals with the appropriate documentation and health records will be allowed on a case by case basis.

Parent Involvement

Staff encourage and welcome parent involvement and visits to the center during any operating hours. Parents will have their temperature taken and complete the verbal screening prior to entering the classroom. They can be involved by giving activity suggestions, volunteering in the classroom, or preparing activities for the classroom. If you'd like to volunteer or participate in a classroom activity, please talk to one of the Teachers.

There will be four conferences, one at initial enrollment, and one for each assessment period. Two of these conferences will be held in the home. If the parent feels they need additional contacts with the staff at the center they are welcome to schedule those appointments. Lakes and Pines considers parents to be their child's primary educators and advocates.

Parents will be encouraged to participate in Lakes and Pines Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council and monthly parent meetings.

Custody/Court Orders

If your family has court ordered custody, visitation, orders for protection, etc., Lakes and Pines will need a paper copy of the document with valid dates. When needed, arrangements are made according to documentation and on a case by case basis. Under state statute staff must release a child to a parent or guardian unless current documentation provides different guidance.

Childcare Center Program Plan

Classroom programming includes hands-on, teacher directed, and child oriented activities. Our childcare center program plan is available upon request. The plan includes age appropriate plans that meet the developmental needs of each child. Individual childcare care plans are developed for children with special needs. Children's development is assessed on an ongoing basis using Desired Results Developmental Profile and educational goals are based on this data and parent input. *Creative Curriculum* is the curriculum used by Lakes and Pines, it is a research based curriculum and it is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Children with Special Needs

Parents have the responsibility to inform the center in writing when their child has any special medical condition, needs, or allergies so that we can provide appropriate care and support. If your child has a special need or is (one or more of the following) you will be asked to share the IFSP and/or IEP with us:

- eligible for case management through the state and has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP);
- receiving services through the local school district and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP); and/or
- determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or consulting psychologist to have a condition related to physical, social, or emotional development.

In addition, state licensing regulations require us to develop an Individualized Child Care Program Plan (ICPP) with you that will assist us to meet your child's needs. This plan must be signed by you and your child's source of licensed health care as listed above and be reviewed annually to assure that necessary modifications are made to the plan of care. If the special need requires that our staff be trained to perform a new skill we will ask that you participate in this training with us.

Staff

Staff that work in the centers or persons that volunteer on a regular basis receive training on child development and agency expectations. They are required to pass a state run background study prior to the first day of unsupervised contact with a child. Our staff receives multiple trainings throughout the year including first aid and CPR, Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) and SUIDs, curriculum and assessment, etc.

Public Relations/Research

Lakes and Pines will require written permission before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving your child at our center.

Data Privacy/Tennessee

Lakes and Pines will collect private data from your family for enrollment and programming purposes. As a parent or guardian you may choose not to provide the information. If you choose not to provide the information your child may not be able to be enrolled or may not be able to continue to be enrolled at the site. Your family's data is yours and you can request to review it in writing at any time. Lakes and Pines will only share data with other individuals or agencies after it has obtained a release of information from the legal parent or guardian. Lakes and Pines does have to share information with the Office of Head Start, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and with any legally required party. Lakes and Pines retains records as required by a funding source for six (6) years.

Behavior Guidance Policy and Procedure

Staff provides positive guidance, redirection, and setting of clear-cut limits for children. The policy is designed to help children develop self-regulation, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others. Staff receives training on an ongoing basis per Lakes and Pines Personnel Policies and Procedures. A copy of Lakes and Pines Personnel Policies and Procedures as well as Lakes and Pines Staff Code of Conduct is available for review upon parental request.

Prohibited Punishment

- 1) Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, grabbing by the arm, shoulder or hair, pulling a child roughly, or inflicting any form of corporal punishment.
- 2) Restricting a child's movements by binding or tying a child.
Children may be placed in a seat belt when involved in transportation.
- 3) Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child; cursing at a child or demeaning a child through use of name calling.
- 4) Depriving a child of snacks, exercise, rest, or necessary toilet items.
- 5) Separating a child from a group except when outlined procedures are followed.
- 6) Confining a child in an enclosed area such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.
- 7) Leaving a child/children alone or unsupervised either indoors or outdoors. Children must have direct staff supervision at all times.

Unauthorized Persons

Your child will not be released to any unauthorized person. Proper authorities and parents will be notified if a situation arises. Please follow the policies set forth by Lakes and Pines to ensure your child's safety when arranging for another person to pick up your child. You must notify us in advance either in person or via phone and ALL new persons or a person staff doesn't recognize **MUST** have and present a photo ID when picking up a child. If this condition is not met, the child may not otherwise be released. The ID may be scanned and electronically saved in the child's file.

Dangerous Weapons Policy

State law 609.66 forbids dangerous weapons to be in or on the grounds of schools or licensed child care centers when children are present unless the person is authorized to do so or they are performing the duties of a law enforcement officer or active military personnel. Firearms stored in private cars are not covered under this law.

Grievance Procedure for Parents

If you have an issue, please address it as soon as possible with the staff person caring for your child. If this does not resolve the grievance you are encouraged to contact Lakes and Pines directly at 320-679-1800. The ECFD Director's extension is 138. If the grievance is about a suspected licensing violation, parents should contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at 651-431-6500.

Mandated Reporting/Child Abuse and Neglect

Minnesota State Law requires Head Start staff to report all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

REPORTING POLICY FOR PROGRAMS PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect: any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.

Staff or volunteers working with children in a licensed facility are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to a supervisor or to anyone else at the licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is currently being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the last three (3) years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report.

Where to Report:

If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger call 9-1-1.

Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in a community should be made to the local county social services agency at 320-679-6350 (ask for the child protection intake worker). After hours call 9-1-1 or local law enforcement at 320-679-5170.

All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.

What to Report: Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.

A report to any of the agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report: A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the MN Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliations Prohibited: An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil action that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review: When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- I. Related policies and procedures were followed;
- II. The policies and procedures were adequate;
- III. There is a need for additional staff training;
- IV. The reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- V. There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.
- VI. Review will be completed within 30 calendar days.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed: The internal review will be completed by the Lakes and Pines ECFD Director and Human Resources Director. If this ECFD Director is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, Lakes and Pines Human Resources Director and Executive Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the internal review: The facility must document completion of the internal review and provide documentation of the review to the commissioner upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan: Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

Staff Training: The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under MN Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

Center Contact Information

My child's Teacher is: _____

My Family Advocate is: _____

The center phone number is: _____

The center address is: _____

The Head Start Director is: Tammy Arend

The Directors number is: **320-679-1800 Ext 138**