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Welcome to CAAS Head Start.

We are pleased to have you as a member of our Head Start family.

The program is designed to serve children 3-5 years of age from families who qualify for Head Start services in Somerville and Cambridge.

CAAS Head Start helps all children succeed by providing comprehensive services that help them grow: socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. These services lay the foundation for lifelong learning and continued school success. Children transition from our program ready to continue learning and growing.

Parents are encouraged to become partners with our Head Start program. CAAS Head Start recognizes you as your child’s first teacher. Working together will allow us to make your Head Start experience more valuable for both you and your child.

The CAAS Head Start program is operated by the Community Action Agency of Somerville, which also provides additional services in the Somerville community.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with our program and use this handbook as an easy reference throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Donna Cabral
Head Start Director
The CAAS Head Start Program's Guiding Principles

for our program....
To be viewed as an integral part of our community
To be seen as a valued community resource and an important enhancement to the community
To be reflective and inclusive of the diversity of the communities.
To be an organization that reflects and celebrates diversity and accepts people where they are at in their lives

for our children....
To foster an environment which encourages creative problem solving, individuality, and responsibility
To nurture the whole child - socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively
To provide for children's individual needs and interests
To guide children in the decision making process
To enrich the lives of children by providing educational opportunities to promote lifelong success

for our families....
To empower families because they are their child's first teacher
To provide support and encouragement to families as they work towards self-sufficiency
To partner with families in establishing and attaining their individual goals

for our communities.....
To value community pride and involvement
To ensure the community has an understanding of our program and is aware of the program's positive impact on the overall community
To work effectively with other community resources

for our staff.....
To be valued by our peers in the community
To promote an environment of team work
To develop and foster pride in our program and our agency
To continue to provide a variety of opportunities for planned and individualized professional development
To expect the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards at every level

The CAAS Head Start Program is licensed by The Department of Early Education and Care, 51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor Boston, MA 02210 Phone: (617) 988-6600 TTY: (617) 988-2454. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.
STAFF AND CENTERS

Main Office
66-70 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143
617-623-7370  Fax: 617-628-2512
Staff
Head Start Director: Donna Cabral
Executive Assistant to the Director: Adrienne Vigilante
Special Projects Coordinator: Allen Kesten
Director of Family Services: Sandra Ford
Child Development Supervisor: Maureen Villa
Family Resource Supervisor: Ginger Sanders
Director of Advocacy: Alba Perez
Health Services Supervisor: Marie Evans
Disabilities/Mental Health Supervisor: Roberta McCluskey
Building Supervisor: Paul Zimmerman
Child Development/Disabilities Specialist: Lori Harrington
Child Development/Disabilities Specialist: Eidy Williams
Health Services Specialist: Matthew Kardonsky
Enrollment Specialist: Chris Hosman
Data Specialist: Chrissy Mattson

Somerville Sites
Jack Hamilton Center
29 Allen Street
Somerville, MA 02143
617-623-2400
Rm. 101 extension 101
Rm. 102 extension 102
Rm. 103 extension 103
Rm. 201 extension 106
Rm. 202 extension 107
Rm. 203 extension 108
Rm. 204 extension 109

North Street Center
125C Alewife Brook Parkway
Somerville, MA 02144
617-625-5588

Mystic Center
35 A Memorial Road
Somerville, MA 02145
Mystic 1 617-623-2270
Mystic 2 617-628-2366
Mystic 3 617-764-3474

Arthur D Healy School
5 Meachem Street Room
Somerville MA 02145
617-6259-5420

Cambridge Sites
Frisoli Center
61 Willow Street
Cambridge, MA 02141
617-864-1138
Frisoli 1
Frisoli 2

Jefferson Park
280 Ridge Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-661-1679
Jefferson Park 1
Jefferson Park 2
CAAS Head Start understands that each child is an individual. Our teachers and curriculum support the individual abilities and learning styles of each child.

CAAS Head Start believes that parents and guardians are the first educators of their children and continue to be primary in their children’s development through the early years of life and beyond. Successful preschool experiences for children depend on the involvement and teamwork of parents, teachers and family advocates. Our program provides many opportunities for families to take part in their child’s development and learning. Families are always welcome in the classrooms!

CAAS Head Start creates inviting classroom environments that support children’s learning. The materials and equipment in our classrooms are appropriate for young children and are designed to encourage exploration, creativity, problem solving skills, and social engagement. We believe that children’s play is children’s work!

CAAS Head Start strives to do our very best to support children’s kindergarten readiness. We provide children with experiences and opportunities that guide their learning and expand their thinking. We dedicate ourselves to creating life-long learners by instilling a love of learning in our children.

**School Readiness**

Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and life. The Head Start approach to school readiness means that children are ready for kindergarten, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and that the receiving schools are ready for Head Start children. Head Start is a leader in the early childhood field with a strong, clear, and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development.

The five essential domains of school readiness are:

1. Language and early literacy development
2. Cognition — Mathematics and Scientific Reasoning
3. Approaches toward learning — persistence, attention, curiosity
4. Perceptual, Motor, and Physical development
5. Social and emotional development — managing emotions and being a member of a classroom community

All of these domains in combination are important for a successful education.
Children learn language over many years from interactions with adults and other children. During the preschool years, language develops rapidly.

The development of strong language skills—listening, speaking, and thinking with words—is a Head Start goal for all children. Many Head Start children speak a language other than English at home and will be dual language learners. Head Start has the responsibility to help these children to become familiar with English while continuing to develop strong language skills in their home languages. Language development is a long process that lasts for many years beyond Head Start. Human beings continue to learn language throughout school and life. Learning English is a long process too. A strong foundation in the home language is important when learning a second language. And a strong foundation in language, one or more, is important for learning to read and write.

When dual language learners move on to the public schools, they will continue to be supported in their development of English language skills. The journey does not end with Head Start.

Listening to speech and understanding a language develops earlier than speaking and communicating with language. In other words, at any point in time children understand more words advanced sentences than they use themselves. This is also true for dual language learners who may understand some of what is being said in English but are not yet speaking it.

All children in our society need to acquire English for success in school and in life. But they can learn English without losing their home language. Families should be aware that focusing only on English at a very early age might mean that children will give up their home language. If parents do not speak English well and their children lose the home language, serious communication and relationship problems are likely to occur.

Young children are developing language and early literacy skills at the same time. The two are interrelated. Reading to children supports their language development, because the words and grammar used in books are different from what we hear in regular speech. And talking with children about what is read, further boosts both vocabulary and comprehension. Knowing more vocabulary words and concept helps children make sense of stories and books.

Children need lots of real experiences and lots of interactions with adults to make language come alive for them. Our teachers, advocates and specialists will encourage you to talk with your child each day about what they did in school and what they do with you. **You should speak with your child in the language you know best so that you can teach them advanced vocabulary and complex thoughts.** Children learn from hearing adults speak. They learn by asking questions and responding to questions.

Our teachers use many strategies in the classroom to support language development and English learning throughout the day. We read with the children, discuss stories, sing songs, act out new words and concepts, and review what the children have done while playing and learning. Even meal time is a good time to encourage speaking, listening and thinking in Head Start!
The Big Rules: Fostering a Caring Classroom Community

Your child is still developing their sense of right and wrong in almost every action they take. They are testing limits, exploring their environment, and discovering how to get along with others.

Our teachers help children learn the boundaries of appropriate behavior by consistently and patiently communicating “The Big Rules.” These rules are the foundation of all our expectations for children’s behavior. We guide and educate the children as they develop the skills to make positive choices for themselves. Everyday we will welcome your child into the classroom community. We will care for your child and continue to teach them kindness, respect, and cooperation.

Big Rules
1. Careful, Safe Bodies
2. Kindness with Everyone
3. Respect for Work
4. Care for the Classroom

Developmental Screenings

A developmental screening will be completed for all children at the beginning of their first year. The screening will be completed by your child’s teachers and is presented to the child in a “game-like” way. The screening helps the teacher to know your child better. It helps us to individualize the education your child will receive.

We also do a social and emotional screening for new children. It is a questionnaire that is filled out by the child’s classroom teachers and you.

If there is a concern about the result of any screening, the concern will be evaluated by the Head Start Staff. With your participation and permission, along with Head Start’s child observations, a referral for additional services could be made. Results of screenings will be kept confidential and shared only with the child’s parent/guardian.
Head Start guidelines require us to keep records on children enrolled in the program. These guidelines also mandate that parents are aware of all records that are kept. The records are kept confidential, yet accessible to parents upon request. Confidential information will only be shared with appropriate Head Start Staff.

Some of our techniques:
- Encouraging children to talk about their feelings.
- Redirecting a child to a different activity where the child will succeed.
- Providing an example for children by speaking and interacting with children in a positive manner.
- Coaching children in specific skills that help them share, take turns, join a group, and make friends.
- Reading books about social conflicts and how to resolve them.

CAAS Head Start Program abides by the following:
- Corporal punishment will not be used, including spanking.
- No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- No child will be denied food as a form of punishment or force fed.
- No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Confidentiality Policy

Head Start guidelines require us to keep records on children enrolled in the program. These guidelines also mandate that parents are aware of all records that are kept. The records are kept confidential, yet accessible to parents upon request. Confidential information will only be shared with appropriate Head Start Staff.

At enrollment, CAAS Head Start has parents sign a permission form to share information with our program consultants from Riverside Community Care, the Somerville or Cambridge Public Schools, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care which licenses our program, and our funding sources.

CAAS Head Start will request a specific permission form to be signed when information needs to be shared with other providers outside of the program. The only time the Department of Children and Families (DCF) can access information without a signed permission form is during an investigation.

Candy/Sweets

CAAS Head Start encourages children to eat healthy foods. Birthday cakes, candy, gum, donuts and any sugar-based sweets are not allowed in classrooms.
Children participate in field trips several times during the school year. Field trips are usually local trips in Cambridge and Somerville. These trips help children gain a better understanding of their community. All parents or guardians must sign a permission slip for their child to participate in a trip away from the center. Parents, guardians, and other adult family members are always welcome to go on a field trip with the children and teachers.

Jewelry

Children should not wear jewelry to school as it may not be safe. It is easy for jewelry to get lost or broken. The program will not be responsible for lost or broken jewelry.

Balloons

Balloons are never allowed in classrooms. They are very dangerous for young children. Small pieces of a broken balloon can cause a child to choke if swallowed.

Backpacks

If your child is bringing a backpack to school, it is your responsibility to ensure they are not bringing anything unsafe into the classroom. Backpacks are not required to attend Head Start.

Attendance

Regular Attendance is important for all children. The more your child is in school, the more they will learn. Children feel more comfortable in the classroom if they don’t miss a lot of days. Irregular attendance causes confusion for your child and the other children in the classroom.

If you need help to get your child to school every day, talk with your Family Advocate. If your child is having health problems that prevent regular attendance, talk with your Family Advocate or call our Health Services Supervisor at 617.623.1392 extension 126. If your child has strong feeling about school and doesn’t want to come, talk with your child’s teachers. We can help.

Tardiness and Late Policy

Children should always arrive in the morning on time and be picked up on time at the end of the day. Consistent schedules and routines help children feel safe and relaxed. It is also important that children are not dropped off prior to the classroom’s starting time. Please sign your child in and out of the classroom everyday.

If children arrive late or are picked up late, the parent or guardian will be required to meet with their Family Advocate. When a child is picked up late for a third time, the parent will be required to meet with the Director of Advocacy before the child can return to the classroom.

If you or an emergency contact individual attempt to pick up a child from the program and there is a suspicion of alcohol or drug use, the teachers will suggest an alternate emergency contact comes to pick the child up. If the person suspected of alcohol or drug abuse does not co-operate with the request to have someone else come for the child, the Police Department will be called immediately and the Department of Children and Families will be notified.

Please understand that the above policy was created to ensure that all children leave the Head Start Program safely.
At least 10% of CAAS Head Start enrollment is made available to children with disabilities. Our program is designed to bring children with different strengths and needs together. We want to foster an understanding of individual differences for all children. We focus on the child, not the differences in ability. Every child deserves the opportunity to develop and learn in the best possible inclusive classroom.

Head Start staff follow the progress of each child through observations and assessment. Meetings and conferences are scheduled with the family for the purpose of planning activities for home and school to meet the child's individual needs.

Services:
- Helping families understand their child's growth and development.
- Ensuring that children receive evaluations and services if needed.
- Helping families to understand the referral process, including rights and appeal procedures.
- Giving families the information and skills they will need to advocate for proper services and placement for their child.
- Support for successful transitions from Head Start to the next school the child will attend.

Emergency Plans: Communication

When there is an emergency in your child's classroom, such as: no heat, no water, or flooding,

Termination Policy

CAAS Head Start Program will only terminate a child if our program is an inappropriate placement or a child is not attending regularly. We will work closely with a family before terminating the child and will help with the transition to a more appropriate program or school.

Suspension Policy

The CAAS Head Start Program does not suspend children from the program.

Discrimination Policy

No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be discriminated against by this program, including in employment, because of race, religion, sex, national origin, cultural heritage, age, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status. No child shall be discriminated against because they are not toilet trained.

Snow Days

If there is a snow storm, you should listen to the local weather and news on radio or television. If the Somerville Public Schools are closed than all our classrooms are closed. Our Cambridge and Somerville classrooms close when the Somerville Public Schools are closed. If our program must close and the Somerville Public Schools are open, then your Family Advocate will contact you.

Emergency Plans: Communication

When there is an emergency in your child's classroom, such as: no heat, no water, or flooding,

Termination Policy

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MENTAL HEALTH

CAAS Head Start supports children's social and emotional development and their good mental health. Our teachers work to create welcoming, comfortable, and emotionally safe classrooms. Teachers individualize plans for each child based on each child's unique needs and temperament.

Mental Health Pyramid of Supporting Children

CAAS Head Start’s Supervisor and Child Development Team help the classrooms achieve the foundational levels of Positive relationships and supportive environments help all children. We use teaching tools such as books, songs, feeling charts, and puppets to help children learn how to express and manage feelings, cooperate with others, and achieve their goals in appropriate ways.

As a result of this work, we can more readily identify children and families who need more specialized interventions - the top of the pyramid.

CAAS Head Start has a Mental Health consulting agreement with Riverside Community Care. We use their services to provide support to teachers as they work with individual children. These consultants can also provide “coaching” to individual children, helping them become more successful members of the classroom community. They can also work with small groups of children who have common social development needs. No consultant will work with your child on an individual or small group basis without your written consent.

Our consultants are available to meet with families at our centers or our Main Office. Call Roberta McCluskey, CAAS Head Start Mental Health Supervisor, to arrange a time: 617-623-7370.

Any child can need extra help sometimes. Being involved with a mental health professional is a great way to get that help!

CRISIS INTERVENTION

The CAAS Head Start Program provides services in the areas of alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, home safety, depression and other challenges.

If any of these issues are a problem within your family, we can help you. We hope you will welcome that help. If we think there is a problem, we will come to you with our concerns, because that is what we must do for the health and safety of your family.
CAAS Head Start has these goals for our families:
1. **Families will experience well-being.** They will be safe, healthy and have increased financial security.
2. **Adult/child relationships** will be positive and nurture children’s learning and development.
3. **Parents and guardians will be lifelong educators** of their children by observing, guiding, promoting and participating in the everyday learning of their children.
4. **Families will continue to be learners,** advancing their own learning through education, training, and other experiences that support parenting, careers, and life goals.
5. **Families will be engaged in transitions,** especially to kindergarten, supporting and advocating for their child’s learning and development.
6. **Families will be connected to other families and the community,** forming connections that support well-being.
7. **Families will be advocates and leaders,** participating in decision making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children’s lives across the years.

Get involved with CAAS Head Start! Tell us your goals for your child. Visit your child’s classroom. Come to a workshop or a center meeting. Attend Classroom Visiting Day. Share a talent with us. Make time for conferences with your child’s teachers. Share your culture, language and personal history with us. Participate in an advisory group. Make time to share a book with your child. Set goals for yourself and let us help!

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**Family Resource Center**

The Family Resource Center offers a variety of activities for families. The center is a safe and comfortable place for adults. Come in and meet other parents and guardians. You can use the computers and internet, sewing machines, and crafts materials. Or just have a cup of coffee.

If you’re interested in visiting the center, call Ginger Sanders, Family Resource Supervisor at 617-401-6313. The center is at our main office at 66-70 Union Square.

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**Policy Council**

The Policy Council is a governing body which is made up of parents and guardians of children currently enrolled in the program. You can be part of it!

Each Head Start classroom sends a representative to participate on the Policy Council. Other members of the Council are past parents, community people, representatives from local community agencies, and a member of the CAAS Board of Directors. The Policy Council is involved in the development of Head Start budgets, our work with other community agencies, the hiring of new staff, and assisting in the evaluation of our Head Start program.

All parents are welcome to attend Policy Council meetings. Call Ginger Sanders, Family Resource Supervisor at 617-401-6313 for more information.
Family Partnerships — Working with your Family Advocate

You and your Family Advocate will discuss your family’s strengths, needs, and goals. Then you will develop a Family Partnerships Agreement together. Your Family Advocate can help you find the resources and support for your goals.

Family Advocates make at least two home visits during the program year to each family. Additional home visits may be arranged as necessary.

Family Advocates are always available to help with any problems or concerns that you may have. Family Advocates can make referrals for your family to appropriate service providers. They will follow-up on those referrals to ensure that services have been received.

Family Advocates want to work with you. They are committed to finding ways to communicate with you regularly. CAAS Head Start wants to hear from you!

Trainings and Groups for Families

The CAAS Head Start Program offers a variety of training opportunities for families throughout the program year. Parents and guardians are encouraged to come to workshops, trainings sessions and parenting groups. Head Start is not just a preschool program for children, it is also a program for the whole family.

Every year, we offer a series of trainings to give parents and guardians the opportunity to learn more about children’s growth and development. This training helps participants become successful classroom volunteers. For information, please contact Maureen Villa at 617-623-7370 ext. 151.

If you have a child with special needs and would like support and information, contact Roberta McCluskey at 617-623-7370 ext. 118.

If you would like to explore the joys and challenges of being a parent with others, you may want to join our “Exploring Parenting” group. For more information contact Ginger Sanders 617-401-6313.

Families Partnerships — Working with us for your child’s success

We can discuss your child’s progress and build connections between home and school during home visits and family/teacher conferences. Conferences are scheduled by the teachers in December, March and June. When teachers aren’t with the children, they can talk with you anytime. Let your child’s teachers know if you have concerns about your child’s development and learning. Share your goals for your child with CAAS Head Start.

Teachers and advocates can suggest activities to do at home that will support your child’s development and learning. These will be fun activities you can do with your child. Some suggestions will also be on our Facebook page. Friend us. CAAS Head Start.

Teachers want to work with you. They are committed to finding ways to communicate with you regularly. CAAS Head Start wants to hear from you!

All of the Head Start staff are here to help you, to listen to your concerns and goals, and to support you.
Family Literacy

Reading and writing are an important part of the Head Start program. Every classroom has a book area with good children's books and a "writing" center with materials for children to explore. Strong language skills are the foundation for early literacy. Talk with your children often. Talk about the activities in your home, what children do in school, and what's happening in the city. **Use lots of new vocabulary words in your home language.** Find time to sit with your child and share a book—look at the pictures and talk about them! Ask us about using the public libraries. Library cards for borrowing books are free!

**Look for the Red or Blue book bags** in your child's classroom. They are for your family to borrow each week so that your home will have books for your child.

We work with other community organizations to support literacy. They visit our program, read to our children, and donate books. Some of our partners are the Kiwanis Club of Somerville, the Somerville Neighborhood Foundation, the Cambridge Agenda for Children, the Harvard Readers, and the Jump Start Program.

Communication

**Communication:** If a family does not speak English, our staff, other parents, and community members will be utilized to interpret. We want all families to receive important communication in a way that is understandable and meaningful.
As a parent or guardian, you have the primary responsibility for your child. You are required to care for and supervise your child. You have the right to accept or reject any services offered to your child and your family.

CAAS Head Start requires parents and guardian to do the following:

- Your child needs a change of clothes in the classroom in case they get wet due to the weather, water play, or toileting accidents. This change of clothing should include socks and underwear.
  
  **Labeling:** It is very important for you to label your child’s clothes, as it is impossible for teachers to distinguish each child’s things. Please label everything!

- Your child should wear play clothes to school because they use paints, glue, sand, and other messy materials. Sometimes these materials do not wash off clothing completely.

- Your child needs to wear closed shoes or sneakers to school. Sandals, flip flops, high heels, etc. are not safe in classrooms or at the playground.

- Your child needs to be appropriately dressed according to the weather. This includes hats and gloves or mittens during cold weather. Children go outside every day for 45 minutes, weather permitting, even in winter.

- Children must be brought into the classroom and signed in. Do not leave children outside the building.

**Child Abuse: Mandated Reports Policy**

The CAAS Head Start Program is committed to the well-being and safety of children. Parent education and support are important factors in keeping children healthy and safe. By providing education and support we hope to have a role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, the law requires a 51A report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). All staff are mandated reporters. They are required to document and report any concerns to the Director of Family Services.

Family Advocates, whenever possible, will talk with the parents before making a report.

CAAS Head Start’s goal is to work with the families to help them access services which will improve their lives.

If a 51A report is filed against the program we are required to notify the State office of Early Care and Education and the Administration for Children and Families immediately.
CAAS Head Start’s Health Services believes that a child’s health and well-being affects his or her ability to develop and learn. Head Start works closely with families to ensure that children have comprehensive and preventative health care. Families are required to take their child for an annual physical examination and dental examinations. Documentation of these examinations must be promptly submitted to the Health Services Supervisor at the CAAS Head Start office in Union Square or put in the Health mailbox at the centers. Children must be tested for lead by age 3 and have a T.B. risk assessment. Head Start requires that all children be fully immunized for Diphtheria, Tetanus Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, HIB, Hepatitis B and varicella. CAAS Head Start measures children’s heights and weights twice during the program year. Children also receive a hearing and vision test when they enter the program. Children receive a dental screening as well. We work with families and health care professionals to meet all of the individual health and nutritional needs of children in the program.

**Sick Policy**

Children should not come to school when they are sick. If your child has a fever, sore throat, cough, ear infection, runny nose, diarrhea or is vomiting, they should be kept home until they are feeling better. Children need rest for their bodies when they are sick.

Children who arrive at school sick will be sent home. If a child shows symptoms of illness while at school and can’t participate in all activities, parents will be called at home or work to come pick up their children.

There are many contagious diseases that children may contract. You must notify us if your child has any of the following: Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever, Hepatitis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Scabies, Pinworms, Ring-worm, Conjunctivitis, Impetigo, the Flu.

**Medication**

All medication for children must be prescribed by a doctor and can only be given with written authorization from the health provider and the parent or guardian. Parents are responsible for administering newly prescribed oral medications and monitoring their child’s reaction for the first 24 hours.

The Lead Teacher in the classroom will administer the appropriate medication to the child. The Teacher will assume this responsibility in the Lead Teacher’s absence. All medication is kept in the original, labeled container with the child’s name, the name of the medication, the directions for usage and the expiration date.

All non-rescue medications will be stored in a locked metal box and refrigerated, if necessary.

**Head Lice**

Head Lice are contagious and increasingly common in all kinds of schools. **Do not send your child to school if they have an active case of head lice.** If your child has head lice, they must be treated before returning to school. When your child has been treated, a parent or emergency contact person must accompany them to school to be checked and admitted in to the classroom by the teacher. Ask your health provider to help you with head lice. **Call CAAS Head Start’s Health Services staff if you have questions. 617-623-7370, extension 126 or 161.**
HEALTH & SAFETY

Allergies: No Nut / Peanut Policy

Due to the increasing number of children and staff who are allergic to peanuts or other nuts, CAAS Head Start is “Nut/Peanut Free Zone.” We strive to have NO nuts and peanuts in any of our buildings. Peanut/nut allergies are very serious and can be life threatening. For this reason we ask for your full cooperation to keep all of our children and staff safe.

CAAS Head Start guidelines:
- No recipes or foods containing peanut butter or any form of nut are on the menu.
- All labels are carefully read by the cooks and staff to ensure that none of the foods served contain “nuts”, “peanuts” or any other variation of nut that may cause an allergic reaction.
- All staff, children, parents, and volunteers must wash their hands immediately upon entering classrooms/buildings.

Staff members and children are asked not to eat peanut butter or nuts before coming to school. These requests may seem excessive, but they are necessary for the safety of all the children.

Tooth Brushing

Tooth brushing is part of the daily curriculum in Head Start classrooms. Children brush their teeth at least once a day. Teachers supervise children as they brush their teeth. They teach children how to brush properly. They talk about the importance of good dental hygiene. Dental health is part of our curriculum. Children should brush their teeth at home too.

NUTRITION

Head Start children receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch each day. All meals are prepared by the Somerville Public Schools. These meals provide two-thirds of the children’s daily nutritional needs. Families receive a menu every month. CAAS Head Start has a Nutrition Consultant that assists the Health Services Supervisor in assessing children’s nutritional needs and meeting them. The Nutrition Consultant is available to families who would like additional support.

Head Start is committed to providing children with a variety of healthy and seasonal foods that reflect diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Parents are welcome to contribute ideas for the program’s meal and are encouraged to participate in the Health /Nutrition Advisory Committee.

For more information about health and nutrition, contact Marie Evans, Health Services Supervisor at 617-623-7370 extension 126.
Seat Belt Requirements

Transporting Children Safely

Did you know?

- Massachusetts Law requires children to ride in child safety seats until they are 5 years old and weigh 40 pounds.
- Infants under 20 pounds and one year olds should ride in a rear-facing child safety seat.
- Children who weigh 20-40 pounds and who are one to four years of age should ride in a forward-facing child safety seat.
- Children between 40 and 80 pounds, and less than 4’9” tall, should ride in a booster seat. A booster seat helps the seat belt to fit correctly and safely.
- Children 12 years old and under should sit in the rear seat whenever possible to reduce their risk of death and serious injury.

Never leave children in an unattended motor vehicle!

Don’t text and drive!

3 Things to Learn about Car Safety

1. The Right way to install a car seat. 85% of child safety seats are installed incorrectly. Ask a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to inspect your car seat - it’s free! Visit www.seatcheck.org or call 1-866-SEATCHECK.

2. Seat belt safety rules. All children must be seat-belted. Every child must have his or her own safety belt. No sharing.

3. Airbag risks. Passenger side airbags pose significant risks to children. If the airbag deploys, an infant or toddler could die and an older child could be seriously injured. All children under 12 should not ride in the front seat if there is an airbag.