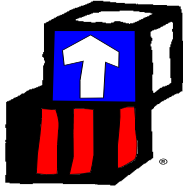


Fowler Head Start

Parent Handbook

2019-2020



What Is Head Start?

Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program for three and four-year-old children. The federal government has established income guidelines for eligibility. The City of Phoenix is one of seven regional grantees that receive federal funding to deliver Head Start services in the state of Arizona. In addition to early childhood education, Head Start provides social services, nutritional services, mental health services, and many involvement opportunities for families. The City of Phoenix has delivered Head Start services to children and families since 1965.

Fowler Head Start Mission Statement

The mission of the Fowler Head Start Program is to provide children with opportunities to grow socially and academically, through rich learning environments, open-ended experiences, and opportunities for the development of high order thinking skills.

Location of Head Start Classrooms

Fowler Elementary School- 6707 W. Van Buren Phx, AZ 85043 (623) 474-7263

Sunridge Elementary School- 6244 W. Roosevelt Phx, AZ 85043 (623) 707-4600

Western Valley Child Care Center- 6250 W. Durango Phx, AZ 85043 (623) 474-7260

Tuscano Elementary School- 3850 S. 79th Ave Phx, AZ 85043 (623) 707-2300

Head Start is a federally funded program, there are no fees charged for services provided to enrolled children and their families.

The Head Start Program is licensed through the Arizona Bureau of
Child Care Licensing

150 N. 18th Ave Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602) 542-1025

Facility Inspection Reports are located at each site. The district is covered under liability insurance.

Prior to pesticide application a 72-hour notice is posted on the front door of the facility.

Admission & Records

The Fowler Head Start Program admission requirements:

1. Families must meet the Head Start income guidelines for 2019. Income and eligibility are verified at the time of intake.
2. Children must be three or four years prior to September 1st.
3. Preference is given to students who reside within the Fowler School District boundaries.
4. Evidence of a child's birth certificate must be presented at the time of intake.
5. Children's immunizations must be current and will be verified using the child's immunization record.
6. Parents must provide proof of residency. A utility bill or other appropriate forms of documentation may be presented at the time of the intake.

Enrollment Process

1. Completion of a pre-registration process.
2. Completion of Head Start intake process (Completed by a City of Phoenix caseworker).
3. Parents attend a Head Start orientation.
4. Teachers conduct a home visit at the start of the school year.



Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Full day Head Start begins at _8:00 am_ and ends at __3:00 pm__.
2. Part Day AM Head Start begins at _8:00 am_ and ends at __11:30 pm__.
3. Part Day PM Head Start begins at _12:30 pm_ and ends at __4:00 pm__.
4. Part Day Head Start (AM and PM) do not attend school on Thursdays.
5. Full day Head Start will dismiss early on Thursdays. Release time varies by school.
6. Please call your child's teacher if your child will be absent or late.
7. Your child must be picked up at the end of class time. If a child hasn't been picked at the end of class time, teachers will attempt to contact the parent/guardian first. If parents are unable to be contacted the emergency contacts will be called. If a child has not been picked up after 30 minutes, and no contact has been made by the parent or the emergency contacts, Phoenix Police Department will be called to assist in locating the parent. Excessive late pick-ups may result in a meeting with the teacher and the director. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue prior to the meeting.
8. Parents are required to sign their children in and out on a daily basis. Under no circumstance will a child be released to a person under the age of 18, or someone who is not listed on the Emergency Card.
9. Inform the teacher or the office if the following changes occur: address, telephone number, or emergency contact information. Parents/guardians are required to make changes to the emergency in person.
10. Refer to the parent board for classroom and program updates.

11. Participate in monthly parent meetings and attend program functions and events.
12. Complete all program requirements which include: physical and dental exam, immunizations, and medical follow-up as needed.

Attendance Policy

- If a child is absent from school, the parent/guardian must contact the child's teacher no later than 9:00 am on the day of the absence. The parent/guardian must provide the teacher with a reason for the child's absence.
- Children who are ill for more than three days may be required to provide a physician's statement. The school nurse may contact the parent/guardian for additional information if needed.
- **If a child is absent for 5 days without contact, the child may be dropped from the program.**
 1. **First Day Absent-** If the parent/guardian has not made contact with the school, the teacher will contact the parent/guardian to determine the cause of absence.
 2. **Second Day Absent-** A follow-up call will be made by the teacher to determine the cause of absence.
 3. **Third Day Absent-** A follow-up referral will be written and forwarded to the Head Start caseworker. The caseworker will contact the parent /guardian to determine the cause of absence and facilitate the child's return to school.

Tardiness

All children must arrive to school no later than 8 am.

- If a child is tardy the parent/guardian must visit the school office for a tardy slip.
- If a child is tardy more than three times, the child's teacher and caseworker will make an appointment with the parent/guardian to discuss the situation.

- If a child has been tardy more than 5 times the parent/guardian will be required to meet with the Head Start Director. The parent/guardian will be required to make an appointment with the Head Start Director no later than 24 hours from the time the notice was received. A plan will be developed with the parent/guardian to ensure the child arrives to school on time.
- If the issue is unable to be resolved, the Head Start Director will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss placement options.

Child Development & Health Services

In Head Start, services are provided to children and families in the following areas: Education, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, and Special Education.

Fowler Head Start Curriculum and Philosophy

Reggio Emilia Philosophy

The Fowler Head Start Program has selected the Reggio Emilia Approach as a model for teaching and learning. The first Reggio Emilia school originated in Italy and was created by parents and community members after World War II. The Reggio Emilia Philosophy fosters meaningful relationships between children, parents, and staff. Additionally, the Fowler Head Start Program uses art media to support the Reggio Emilia Approach. The Reggio Philosophy is based on the following set of principles:

- Children must have some control over the direction of their learning
- Children must be able to learn through experiences of touching, moving,

listening, seeing, and hearing.

- Children build community with other children to enhance social skills.
- Children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.
- Children use long-term projects as a vehicle for learning.
- Children are exposed to art, music, and creative media on a daily basis.
- Children's work is valued, preserved, and treated with respect.

Curriculum

The Fowler Head Start program uses the Creative Curriculum to support children's social and academic growth. The Creative Curriculum is a research based curriculum that responds to children's needs, strengths, interests, and learning styles. The Creative Curriculum is a balance between child initiated and teacher initiated experiences. The Creative Curriculum focuses on the following domains:

- Social Emotional Development
- Fine & Gross Motor Development
- Language and Literacy
- Math & Science

Student Assessment Tool

The Teaching Strategies Gold instrument assesses children's growth and development in the following areas: language, literacy, physical development, math, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. The assessment is

continuous and teachers regularly. Student outcomes are shared with parents three times per year at home visits and parent teacher conferences.

Education:

- Head Start offers education in a multi-cultural dual language setting designed to meet the needs of all children.
- Head Start provides rich educational experiences that support the Head Start School Readiness Framework. The goal is for children to develop the academic and social skills needed to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.
- Head Start classrooms serve a maximum of 17 children in part day classrooms.
- Head Start classrooms serve a maximum of 20 students in full day classrooms.
- Head Start classrooms maintain a 1:10 teacher/child ratio. Three-year-old classrooms serve 13 children per session.
- The program supports both teacher and child-initiated activities.
- A weekly lesson plan is posted in the classroom.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in the program.
- Parents are provided with progress reports three times per year.
- A minimum of two home visits and two parent/teacher conferences are conducted each school year.

Identified Language Model

Head Start regulations affirm the value of supporting children in learning two (or more) languages, the importance of reaching out to families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and learning. Both the Head Start Act as amended in 1998 and related Head Start Program Performance Standards clearly speak to the need to support children in the acquisition of language-including English and the home language. The Head Start Performance Standards also require that Head Start services be provided to children and families in culturally appropriate and respectful ways (eclkc 2011).

Research has shown the best approach for a young child's language and overall cognitive development is to support their home language as they are learning the English language. National research has proven that a dual language model is beneficial in early learning environments.

- English skills- when learned as a second language, are best acquired when students have strong oral language development in their home language.
- Young children, who are provided with intentional learning opportunities in their home language, demonstrate the highest achievement in both their home language and English by the end of second grade and beyond.
- Dual language programs enable students to acquire advanced second language skills without compromising their first language development.
- The Fowler Head Start Program is committed to following the Head Start Performance Standards for language development.

Strategies used in the classroom to support language development

- Teachers will provide instruction in multiple languages throughout the day.
- Daily Storytelling in English and other languages.
- Phonological activities to improve children's awareness of sounds and their connections to print in the environment
- Music and movement experiences in multiple languages
- Integrate technology to enhance academic skills and language development. This includes: computers, listening centers, compact disk players, overhead projectors, etc.
- Resources provided to children and families in their dominant language whenever possible.
- Provide visuals for language development (pictures, children's dictation, posters, daily schedule, charting activities, etc).
- Assess children's language development regularly for growth.
- Provide resources to families in multiple languages (parent meetings, parent trainings, parent teacher conferences, etc).
- Results of children's developmental progress provided to parents in their dominate language when possible.
- Services in the following areas are provided to parents in their home language when possible. These services include: education, nutrition, mental health, social services, health, and program governance.
- Special education documents provided to parents in their dominant language when possible.

Nutrition:

- Children who attend part day classrooms are served 2 meals per day. This includes: breakfast and lunch, or lunch and a snack.

- Children who attend full day classrooms are served 3 meals per day. This includes: breakfast, lunch and a snack.
- Mealtimes are special times for children and adults. Family meal style service is practiced daily and children are encouraged to try new foods. Family meal style service is an optimal time for children to engage in meaningful conversation with their peers and teachers.
- Food is never used as a punishment or a reward. Children are encouraged to try new foods and participate in food tasting activities when possible.
- Parents/guardians must inform the caseworker and the teachers if their child has any type of food allergy or intolerance. In order for the cafeteria to provide an alternative meal, a physician's statement is required.
- Arizona Bureau of Child Care Licensing requires that any food or treats brought into the classroom for special occasions are "store bought".

Health and Dental:

- Head Start requires that all enrolled children have a complete physical and dental exam.
- Head Start caseworkers work with families to ensure that all necessary services are completed.
- Children participate in tooth brushing daily.
- Children are screened for vision and hearing one time per year.
- Children's height and weight is documented as part of the child's developmental history.
- Any prescribed medication must be checked in to the school nurse by the parent/guardian.

Disability Services:

- The Fowler Elementary School District Special Education Department provides special education services.

Diapering

- If diapering is required, arrangements will be made in accordance with Arizona Bureau of Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations.
- If diapering is required, the program will determine a diapering location. The school nurse or Special Education staff will diaper the child.

Mental Health Services:

- Mental Health services are provided to Head Start by the City of Phoenix Head Start Program.
- The primary goal of the Mental Health Services is to promote mental wellness in children and families. Social competence and self-sufficiency are promoted through education, guidance, and support from the teachers and the mental health professionals.

Family and Community Partnership

Social Services:

Social services are provided by the City of Phoenix Head Start Program. A caseworker is assigned to each child in the program. The role of the caseworker is to offer family support and provide resources as needed. Caseworkers meet regularly with parents/guardians to discuss family strengths and challenges. Caseworkers also work with parents/guardians to ensure that all program requirements are met. This may include: children's physical and dental exams, medical follow up, and other areas related to the child's well-being. Caseworkers will meet regularly parents/guardians to discuss family and community engagement opportunities.

Parent Involvement:

Head Start views the parent as the child's first teacher. Therefore, parents are encouraged to participate in the educational process. Parents/guardians should consider participating in the following experiences:

- Parents are welcome to visit their children in the classroom. Upon arrival, parents will be given a visitor name tag. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher in person or by telephone to make them aware of their visit. After three classrooms visits, the Head Start Program requires that a parent produce a negative TB skin test or negative chest x-ray.
- The Bureau of Child Care Licensing requires that long-term volunteers provide additional documentation. Parents/guardians who are interested in becoming a volunteer can visit the Head Start office for a list of necessary documents. Please see the Head Start Secretary, Annette Zamora, for more information.
- Discuss special family times, music, art, foods, and cultural traditions.
- Reinforce classroom-learning experiences at home with children.
- Serve on Classroom Committee, Parent Policy Committee, or Policy Council
All three committees meet one time per month.
- Attend classroom field trips.
- Attend monthly parent meetings and parent trainings offered throughout the district.
- Read monthly Head Start classroom newsletters.
- Parents who cannot volunteer at school may volunteer in other ways such as: preparing classroom activities at home. Please see the classroom teacher for more opportunities.

Confidentiality Policy:

Confidentiality of children's records will be maintained at all times. Only Fowler School District Staff, City of Phoenix Head Start, Arizona Department of Child Safety, or emergency services have access to children's documents.

- A parent/guardian may review their child's electronic file upon request. Parents/guardians are required to sign file request form prior to viewing their child's documents.



Accident/Emergency Procedures

- In the event of an accident or injury, staff will assess the injury and determine the type of medical attention that is needed. All injuries will be reported to the school nurse.
- Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone the same day the accident or injury occurred.
- Parents/guardians will receive an accident injury report the same day the accident or injury occurred.
- If parents/guardians can't be reached, the staff will make contact with the individuals listed on the emergency card.
- In the event that a serious injury occurs, 911/emergency services will be called.

Discipline Policy:

In Head Start children are treated with dignity and respect. All classroom experiences support the development of social emotional development. The classroom environment provides children opportunities to self-regulate and problem solve using the following strategies:

- Adults model positive appropriate behavior.
- A classroom routine that is consistently followed.

- Clear and consistent rules developed by the children and staff.
- Consistent communication between parents and teachers.
- Encouraging appropriate behavior by helping children make positive choices.
- Help children explore appropriate activities.
- Help children understand the consequences of their actions.
- Provide opportunities to develop social skills such as: cooperating, negotiating, and communicating.

In the case of a peer on peer biting incident, staff will utilize the following guidelines.

1. Staff will provide immediate attention to any student who is bitten.
2. Staff will contact the school nurse to assess any injury or need for medical attention.
3. The parents of both students will be notified in person or by telephone.
4. The school nurse will complete an injury report or any other necessary documentation. One copy will be sent home and one will be kept documented in the school office.
5. A classroom safety plan will be developed in effort to prevent future occurrences of biting.
6. In the event that a student does not respond to the appropriate interventions, the director, staff, and parents/guardians will meet to discuss placement options.

Child Abuse Reporting Policy:

All school personnel are required by law to report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Child Safety and/or the Phoenix Police Department.

Illnesses:

If a child becomes ill at school, the staff will separate the child from others and request that the parent/guardian pick up the child as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to keep the child comfortable. A child may not return to school until they are symptom free, or until a physician has treated the illness (physician's

statement may be required when the child returns). The school nurse will provide guidance and support as needed. The Arizona Bureau of Child Care Licensing requires that all infectious diseases are reported and notices sent to all families.

Medication Policy:

- The child's physician must prescribe the medication.
- Prescription medication must be in a pharmacy container labeled with the child's name, date, medication dose, time to be taken at school, and date of discontinuation.
- Prescription medication must be checked into to the school nurse by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be required to complete a medication consent form prior to leaving the medication.
- The Fowler Head Start Program follows the Fowler School District Medication Policy.

Toy Policy:

Children are discouraged from bringing toys to school unless the teacher has planned a special day for sharing toys. To avoid toys being lost or broken, please do not allow your child to bring toys to school. Toys that are brought to school will be set aside and returned to the child at dismissal time.

Under no circumstances are toy guns and weapons allowed at school.

When appropriate it is encouraged that children bring books or music from home to be shared with the classroom.

Field Trip Policy:

- All trips off campus will be announced in written form.
- Children attending a field trip will require a permission form signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parents/guardians are required to participate on field trips. Parents are permitted to ride on the school bus with their child. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend, they may delegate a family member or friend (18 years or older) to attend on their behalf.

- Children will be transported by school bus.
- Siblings under the age of 18 are not permitted to ride the school bus.
- Children will wear identification tags at all times.
- Any child who does not have a signed permission form will not be allowed to attend the field trip. The parent/guardian will be called to pick up their child from school.

Grievance Procedures

Parents must follow the proper procedures for grievances.

Informal/Verbal Complaint

1. Discuss the issue with the staff member directly involved in the incident. (Allow 5 business days for a resolution)
2. If the problem isn't resolved after 5 business days, contact the Head Start Director, Elizabeth Camu at (623) 474-7263. (Allow 5 business days for a resolution). If the assistant director is unable to resolve the issue you may contact the Early Childhood Director, Vincent Medina, at 623 707 4500 (Allow 5 days for a resolution).
3. If the director is unable to resolve the issue, a written complaint may be submitted to the Fowler School District Superintendent's Office at 1617 S. 67th Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85043. (Please allow 15 days for a resolution)
4. If the problem remains unresolved you may present, your complaint in writing to the "Fowler Head Start Policy Committee". (Please allow 15 days for a resolution)
5. If the issue remains unresolved you may present your complaint in writing to the City of Phoenix Head Start Policy Council at 200 W. Washington Phoenix, AZ 85003. (A resolution could take up to 30 or more days)

CDC 13634, 12294, 14433, 15330, 17371