

Chugachmiut Head Start Birth to Five Program



PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-24

“We promote the best practices in language and literacy development, mathematics skills, and a foundation in science and creative arts at an age-appropriate level for school and life success”

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF NANWALEK AND PORT GRAHAM



Chugachmiut Head Start

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Chugachmiut Mission Statement

Chugachmiut is the tribal consortium created to promote self-determination to the seven Native Communities of the Chugach Region. We provide health and social services, education and training, and technical assistance to the Chugach Native people in a way which is acceptable to Native cultural values and tradition in order to enhance the well-being of our people by continuing to strengthen the tribes and increase self-determination opportunities for community operated tribal programs.

Chugachmiut Head Start Program Philosophy

We promote the best practices in language and literacy development, mathematics skills, and a foundation in science and creative arts at an age-appropriate level for school and life success.

Welcome to Chugachmiut Head Start!

Dear Families:

Welcome to Chugachmiut Head Start!

We look forward to working with you this school year.

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. Our doors are always open to your family and we value your input. We are committed to supporting our Head Start families and will make sure that you have many opportunities to be involved in your child's education throughout the school year.

If at any time you have questions or concerns about the program, please contact Chugachmiut Head Start Staff in the Anchorage office at 1-800-478-4155.

Kristin Ramstad, Head Start Director
Heather Arreola, Education & Disabilities Coordinator
Frani Guttin, Family and Health Services Coordinator

Thank you for enrolling your child in Head Start. We hope that you and your child enjoy a year of learning and discovery.

Sincerely,

Kristin Ramstad
Head Start Director
Chugachmiut

Welcome Parents and Families to the new school year 2023-2024!

We are looking forward to working with you to help our young children have a great start in life! We are happy you have enrolled into the Head Start Birth to Five Program! We are here to help in any way that we can, just give us a call!

Birth to Five Program Eligibility

Head Start is a program for children who meet age and income eligibility requirements. Additionally, for a community to have Early Head Start services (pregnant women and infants and toddlers to age 3) a community must have a teacher with a Child Development Associate (CDA) teaching credential. Services are planned with federal regulation compliance. For children ages 3 – 5, staff must have a college degree or a waiver stating they are attending college to earn their required degree.

Federal Income Guidelines for Alaska 2023

Annual Household Income Limits (before taxes)

2023 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR ALASKA	
SIZE OF FAMILY UNIT	100 PERCENT OF POVERTY
1	\$18,210
2	\$24,640
3	\$31,070
4	\$37,500
5	\$43,930
6	\$50,360
7	\$56,790
8	\$63,220

For households in Alaska at 100 percent of HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines with more than 8 members add **\$6,430** for each additional member.

A limited number of families may be over income. Homeless families, foster children and SNAP recipients are categorically eligible.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

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Steps to Enrollment

Submit Chugachmiut enrollment checklist and application with **Income Verification for Family**, to either the Head Start teacher or Admin. Selection criteria points are applied to all applications. Head Start Staff will contact families when their child is eligible and accepted into a slot for our program. Waitlists are maintained and vacancies are filled within 30 days of a slot opening.

When enrolling, these health items are required for children to attend their first day of school:

- Current immunization record no more than 12 months old.

An updated physical within 12 months must be submitted to Head Start staff no later than 90 days after the child's first day of school

- The physical exam must include basic physical assessment, blood pressure, height, weight, hearing, vision, hemoglobin screen. In addition, a lead screen and Tuberculosis (PPD) screening form must be included. Children may start school with an up-to-date physical exam and immunizations, and staff will help obtain the other required health screenings and assessments as soon as they can be completed, as close to the school start date as possible.

Dental Exams not more than 12 months old are required with 90 days after child's first day of school. If a child does not have an up-to-date dental exam, staff will assist parents to schedule a dental exam as close to the start date of school as possible.

General Information

Family Connections to Peers and Communities

Head Start partners with all enrolled parents and families! Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit their child's school any time to observe or participate in activities when school is in session. Of course, we are coming out of a pandemic, so limited adults in classrooms may occur. Please respond to Facebook posts including messenger, texts or emails to ensure you have received information about your child's education services. During the year, families will receive flyers, e-mails and texts which tell them about special events and activities, attendance concerns, classroom meals and health provider travel. Please feel free to let us know how we are doing; we welcome your recommendations to help us continually improve our services!

Head Start and Chugachmiut Policies and Procedures comply with Office of Head Start Federal Performance Standards. Office of Head Start Federal Performance Standards can be found here:

[Head Start Program Performance Standards | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.eclkc.gov/standards)

Chugachmiut classrooms maintain a minimum staff/child ratio of at least one staff for every 10 children for preschool aged children, with a minimum of two staff in the classroom. The lead teacher provides supervision for the Center staff. In the lead teacher's absence, there is a teacher's assistant who will provide direct supervision. There are occasions when teacher assistants are placed in charge of the classroom when teachers are in training, completing certification requirements, or on leave.

Parents are encouraged to first discuss any concerns with their child's teacher. If additional discussion is requested, please contact the Head Start Director. The Head Start Director supervises, monitors, and investigates complaints involving the Head Start centers. If the outcome is unsatisfactory, the parent may contact the Deputy Director of Chugachmiut and a meeting will be scheduled to attempt to resolve the issue. The Executive Director has the final decision on any matter. Complaints are shared with the Policy Council.

Chugachmiut maintains a tobacco-free environment at all centers, including any vehicle used to transport children. Tobacco is prohibited inside the center and in the play yard. The smoking areas are located farther than 100 feet from openings into interior space which children access. Chugachmiut personnel may not smoke or use tobacco while responsible for the care of children and they may not expose children to second or third-hand smoke.

Parents are the first and most important teacher in their child's life. There are many ways in which parents can be involved at Head Start:

- Help in the classroom, when classes are in session and no covid restrictions in place.
- Help with lesson plans or prepare class activities
- Read to children
- Participate in home visits and parent teacher conferences
- Participate in parent committee meetings
- Join the Policy Council and help guide the program
- Volunteer for a special event
- Participate in Kindergarten transitioning
- Dads are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom.

Head Start is a national program, and its key goal is to prepare children for school success. Head Start Performance Standards identify child educational outcome areas which provide quality standards for child development and family services. Parent input is important when setting goals for children. Please feel free to share ideas and concerns with the Lead Teacher.

School Readiness means:

Children are ready for school

Families are ready to support their children's learning

Schools are ready for children.

Head Start offers your child:

- quality care
- respect
- nurturing
- guidance
- a developmentally sound learning experience based on solid research in early childhood education.

Our program actively encourages parents to become volunteers, and many of our own staff members began their careers as parent volunteers. Many volunteers are Head Start graduates themselves!

Building Blocks of a Quality Early Childhood Program



- **Dial 4 Screening**
- **Health Screening**
- **Creative Curriculum**
- **Cavity Free Kids Curriculum**
- **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)**
- **My Teaching Strategies (MTS) child assessment**
- **Pedestrian Safety**
- **USDA Food and Nutrition Program (CACFP)**
- **Environmental Health and Safety**

Goals for Children That Help Guide Them to School Readiness

Social & Emotional Development - Children will develop the ability to express, recognize, and manage their own emotions as well as those of others. They will learn to follow classroom rules, routines, and directions.

Language & Literacy - Children will develop the ability to listen, use, and understand language. They will understand that print carries meaning, and that each word can be broken down into smaller pieces of sound. Dual language learners will continue using their home language while gaining the ability to understand and speak English.

Approaches to Learning - Children will show initiative, curiosity, and creativity in their interactions and use of materials. They will demonstrate persistence, interest, and be able to pay attention when working with others in the classroom.

General Knowledge - Children will use math every day to count and to solve problems. They will question their environment to better understand their surroundings and will draw on that understanding to seek solutions to problems. Children will understand individual roles of people in their family and the community.

Physical Development & Health - Children will develop large and small muscles so they can do more and more difficult things. Children will identify and practice basic safety habits.

Head Start Curriculum

Chugachmiut uses the Creative Curriculum as the overall education program. It is designed to meet the individual and group needs of children. The curriculum guides staff in providing activities that prepare the children for kindergarten. The Creative Curriculum provides the following:

- Child assessment using the My Teaching Strategies (MTS) Developmental Continuum
- Resources for parents and children to use at home
- Provides many literacy activities for school and home

Regular Attendance Helps Your Child Learn to Work and Play with Others

Head Start is an Attendance-Based Program—all children MUST attend at least 85% of the time. Additionally, parents are required to call for all absences within one hour of scheduled arrival time when school is in session or call to reschedule virtual services. Same requirements for Home-Based services as well.

If we do not know why your child is absent, we must contact you within 1 hour. If unable to reach you, we may visit your house to conduct a welfare check. Please notify your classroom staff or home visitor if your child is going to be absent or miss a home visit. Also call or send an excuse for each day that your child cannot attend class and explain the reasons for the absence. Please keep us informed of illnesses or emergencies that will prevent your child from attending school. Please keep in mind that consistent attendance is essential to your child's success, and when your child misses school or home visits, he/she is missing out on valuable experiences and services. Please make a commitment to send your child to school every day.

If regular attendance cannot be established, another child on the waiting list must be given the opportunity to enroll in the program. Families will be given every opportunity to establish regular attendance and will be withdrawn from the program only when they are unwilling or unable to participate.

After 2 unexplained absences, we will conduct a home visit and/or an **attendance improvement plan** will be put in place.

After four or more consecutive unexcused absences, your child may lose their slot, and the Head Start staff will have to fill your child's slot with a child on the waitlist to maintain our full enrollment.

What You Can Do to Help Your Child Attend Regularly:

- ✓ Make sure your child is asleep at the same time each night ... 8:00 pm is recommended.
- ✓ Lay out clothes
- ✓ Set an alarm each morning for about the same time.
- ✓ Do not let your child stay home unless they are truly sick.
- ✓ If your child seems nervous about going to school, talk to your teacher. Together, we can figure out how to make your child feel more comfortable.
- ✓ Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Make arrangements in advance so if you need to, you can call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.

Our Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE)

Parent and family engagement in Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a road map for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families. The PFCE Framework was developed in partnership with programs, families, experts, and the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. It is a research-based approach to program change that shows how an agency can work together as a whole—across systems and service areas—to promote parent and family engagement and children’s learning and development. **Family Partnerships** are formed to help families work toward goals they have set as part of the “Family Partnership Agreement” process. Our Staff help families think about their well-being, their strengths, and their needs. They help families create goals that deal with the challenges families face. Staff can also provide referrals to other agencies.

Families as Life-Long Educators

Remember that you are your children’s best teacher. When children see you learning a new skill, they learn “how to learn” right along with you. Children who see their parents reading and learning are much more likely to become lifelong readers and learners themselves.

When you’re thinking about your kids, don’t forget yourself! You can still get that GED, apply for college, or a job!
We have information about adult education classes and other training programs. We want to know about your needs so we can plan better services to meet those needs.

Many Head Start parents are interested in seeking GEDs or enrolling in other classes. Even if you have a GED or high school diploma, the Adult Basic Education program may have learning opportunities for you, including computer training or other areas of interest.

To Encourage Learning with your child ... Every day ...

- Value their strengths
- Encourage creative play at home
- Feel confident as a parent
- Know what to do when your child misbehaves
- Establish and keep family routines
- Keep family conflicts to a minimum
- Encourage the father to support his children’s learning
- Know how to deal with the stress of being a parent
- Spend at least fifteen minutes each day looking at books or magazines together.

Limit TV & Electronic Games ... Spark that Imagination with Books!

Our program recognizes parents who display outstanding parenting skills, participation in the program, and even participation in the life of their communities. Parents who are making progress toward their family goals as part of the Family Partnership Agreement process and by attending parent meetings and Policy Council meetings shall be recognized and awarded accordingly.

We have fun and informative parent meetings once a month, which can be conducted virtually during these trying times of the COVID19 pandemic. Parent training usually includes parenting, child development, health education, nutrition, and first aid. The topics parents select are emphasized. Some parents enjoy helping plan the program through advisory committees and informal meetings with staff. Lunch and Learn activities will be coming back this school year. The Lunch and Learns provide great training, food (unless it's virtual), and a chance to spend time with other parents. Please attend and get to know your child's teacher and connect with other parents.

Research shows children's social, physical, and intellectual development benefits greatly from the involvement of both parents in their upbringing. Having a father who is both physically available and emotionally connected increases the likelihood of a child's healthy development.

Policy Council

Our Policy Council consists of parents and one community representative. Our program cannot run without a Policy Council. Our Head Start Director needs the guidance and approval from the Policy Council on decisions that impact our program, our staff and our children! As members of the Policy Council, parents have an opportunity to help Chugachmiut management and the Board of Directors make many important decisions. Policy Council members can:

- Assist and approve grants and hiring process.
- Learn how to conduct a meeting. (Roberts Rules of Order)
- Share important information with other Head Start parents at Parent Committee Meetings.

Policy Council meetings will be held regularly throughout the year at a time and date set by the Council. Each program option has a Policy Council representative, and an alternate when available.

The Chugachmiut Board of Directors appoints one non-parent Community Representative who will serve as the Board Liaison. If the Liaison cannot attend the Policy Council meeting, they will receive a copy of the minutes and share the pertinent information with the Chugachmiut Board of Directors. The Policy Council functions as one body and decisions are made cooperatively with each of the Policy Council members. Alternates are encouraged to attend meetings. If you would like to be considered for the Policy Council, please indicate your interest at your Center Committee meeting. Costs of attending the Policy Council meetings can be reimbursable if prearranged with the Head Start Director in advance.

Health Services Advisory Committee

The Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) meets two times a year to discuss health, nutrition, environmental and behavioral health issues. Parents, Staff, Health providers and Central Office Staff make up the HSAC. If you are interested in being on the committee, please let your child's teacher know. Parents are welcome to attend meetings, dates of meetings will be announced in monthly newsletters.

Employment Opportunities for Parents

Chugachmiut is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All activities of the program will be conducted without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or any other legally protected status. Equal access to employment and all program activities are available to qualified persons. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation should notify the Anchorage office or Lead Teacher. Parents are encouraged to apply for substitute and regular employment positions. Parents may be employed as an occasional substitute and still serve on the Policy Council.

Child Health

Chugachmiut Head Start believes that early intervention improves a child's capacity to learn and develop.

Head Start staff may assist in:

- Preventative health care
- Early intervention - height, weight, hearing, & vision screenings
- Child nutrition & oral health
- Communicable disease awareness
- Home safety and injury prevention

Medication Administration

Prescription medication, including injected medications (an inhaler or epi-pen), may be given at the Head Start center by the parent or a medical professional. If children require an inhaler or epi-pen, it is mandated that these items are kept at the Head Start site at all times, and Head Start staff may administer lifesaving epi pens or inhalers. All other medications must be administered by the parent. Please see Head Start Staff for a Medication Administration form. All medications must be delivered to Chugachmiut staff by the parent/guardian, children cannot deliver medication.

Medication rules:

1. Medicines must be in their original container.
2. Medicines must be prescribed by a physician.
3. Medicines must have the following information attached to the container: Child's name, Expiration date, Dosage, and Time schedule for administering medication. Head Start staff will record the date and time that the parent administers medication given at Head Start on the Medication Administration form. Medications must be picked up at the center by the parent/guardian when the prescribed dosage is complete.

Chugachmiut staff will not administer over the counter medication without a prescription (cough syrup, cough drops, vapor patches, children's pain reliever, etc.). Parents may come to the center and give these medications to their child.

Topical medications are nonprescription items applied externally. Examples of such products are: insect repellents, sunscreen, and lip balm. A topical medication form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian.

Child Illness/Communicable Diseases

Chugachmiut asks for your cooperation to help assure that children have a happy and healthy school experience. It is important to ensure children feel well when leaving for school in the morning. During this time of the Covid pandemic, when we close our center due to Covid19, all services will be delivered via distance delivery, or virtual, unless otherwise communicated.

When school is in session, if a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child. If Chugachmiut is unable to contact the parent, the emergency person listed on the Emergency Contact List will be notified.

Chugachmiut Head Start Policies and Federal Head Start guidelines prohibit children with communicable illness from attending. Chugachmiut Head Start Staff complete a daily morning health check to ensure children are well. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if any of the following conditions exists:

- ❖ Sore throat
- ❖ Deep hacking cough or severe congestion
- ❖ Earache
- ❖ Severe pain or discomfort of joints, ears or abdomen
- ❖ Acute diarrhea (two times the child's normal frequency of bowel movements in the past 24 hours)
- ❖ Severe drainage from wound, nose, eyes or ears
- ❖ Oral or auxiliary temperature of 101.5 degrees or higher
- ❖ Yellow skin or eyes
- ❖ Two or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hours
- ❖ Red eyes and discharge

- ❖ Infected or untreated skin patches or lesions
- ❖ Difficult or rapid breathing
- ❖ Severe itching of the body or scalp
- ❖ Skin rashes, excluding diaper rash, which lasts more than one day
- ❖ Swollen joints
- ❖ Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- ❖ Stiff neck
- ❖ Blood or pus from ear, skin, urine, or stool
- ❖ Unusual behavior for the child such as not playing, confusion, persistent crying, etc.
- ❖ Loss of appetite such as refusing solids or favorite foods
- ❖ Symptoms which indicate any of the following diseases: chicken pox, lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, strep throat
- ❖ Reportable communicable diseases

If a communicable disease develops in a class (head lice or impetigo) a letter will be sent to all parents to alert them with information on the communicable disease and how to proceed in the childcare setting

Returning to Head Start after Illness/Communicable Disease

Parents must provide a written statement from the medical provider stating the child is no longer contagious. A child may not return to Head Start after illness if any of the following are observed:

- Fever or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Symptoms of communicable illness (severe rash, evidence of lice)
- Child still exhibits signs of being sick (green nose discharge, fever)
- Parents must bring a written medical provider's clearance for children to return to Head Start after an excluding illness.

Any child who has an injury at the center will receive appropriate first aid. A Child Incident Report will be completed, and a copy forwarded to the parent. Chugachmiut will attempt to notify the parent by telephone of any head injury or other injury requiring more than tender loving care (TLC) or a Band-Aid.

Covid19 Exposure/Potential Exposure/ and Quarantine

Our program follows Office of Head Start Policy and Regulations as well as local Tribal protocols and requirements, and any federal or state mandates. Parents will receive notification of any changes to program services as situations arise.

Families and staff must follow quarantine protocols. When children travel or are exposed to anyone being positive for Covid19, they must follow the stay-at-home order for their community, and may not attend Head Start until the local quarantine protocol is complete. If our program must close for quarantining, parents will be informed as soon as possible. Also, if we must close due to inability to comply with child staff ratios due to staff quarantine, as much notice as possible will be provided.

Parents are welcome to call or message Head Start with any questions or suggestions, and we thank parents for their help and patience.

Emergency Treatment

It is very important that parents remember to keep their child's Emergency Contact List up to date. In case of an emergency, staff will attempt to contact the parents immediately. If the emergency situation requires medical attention, staff will take the child to the local clinic. A staff member will remain with the child until the parent or emergency contact person arrives. Emergency Cards are updated annually.

Disaster and Emergency Procedures

Each center has disaster response procedures that include medical emergency, fire/evacuation drill, tsunami, dental emergency, and other threats to safety. Please take a moment to review these plans and become familiar with them.

Items on site include: Emergency suitcase, First Aid kit, and Blood borne pathogen kit.

Meals at Head Start and the Child and Adult Care Food Program

When Head Start is in classroom session, we will serve breakfast, lunch, and snack Monday – Thursday and every other Friday during our school year. Meals will be pre-plated to prevent cross contamination during Covid19, and children are encouraged to taste new foods. There are also nutrition activities (children “cook” something together) on the Chugachmiut Head Start cycle menu. While we are delivering distance/virtual services, meal boxes will be delivered weekly, or as the planes can deliver food to distribute.

Chugachmiut Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP is, funded and administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Alaska’s program is administered by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Through CACFP, children receive healthy, nutritious meals and/or snack that meet children’s developmental nutritional needs and CACFP requirements. Through participation with CACFP, we receive partial reimbursement for meals served. The Chugachmiut Head Start Program is trained and has agreed to follow CACFP and USDA requirements.

Outside foods, considered foods from home or the store, may not be brought into the classroom by staff or parents unless special arrangements are made and cleared with the Anchorage office to assure compliance with food safety and funding source requirements.

Birthdays and Holidays

Chugachmiut Head Start staff emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity and respect for all families. Birthdays and holiday celebrations may take place at Head Start; however, the following guidelines apply:

- Parents/Guardians will contact the Lead Teacher one week in advance of the holiday party, birthday celebration or event.
- Parents /Guardians may provide a developmentally appropriate activity approved by the Lead Teacher. Activities may be singing a song, reading a book or teaching a lesson.
- If families would like to provide a food related activity, the food items must be approved and prepared by the Head Start Cook and will be included in the regular Head Start meal service. Please note cakes, cookies, cupcakes, and candy are not permitted. A healthy snack can be arranged such as low sugar muffins or a fruit plate.
- Cultural food must meet State of Alaska guidelines to be served at the Center.
- Families may bring in special paper plates, napkins, and cups for the celebration, if desired.

Developmental Screenings

Chugachmiut Head Start ensures that all children entering the program receive developmental screening. Parental permission and the child’s developmental history are obtained on the program application before the screening. The screening procedure will be sensitive to the child’s cultural and linguistic background. This developmentally appropriate process may identify children who need to be referred for more formal assessments (multi-disciplinary evaluations).

Screenings are conducted within 45 days of the child’s entry in the program. Areas evaluated are: Motor (muscle movement), Cognitive, Speech & Language, Self-Help, and Social/Emotional Development. Screening results are shared with parents. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child during this process and ask questions.

Child Assessment

Chugachmiut Head Start Teaching Staff will complete 3 learning assessments each year (Fall, Winter & Spring) for each child. These assessments are not tests, but rather an assessment that will help us to develop a plan to meet the individual educational needs of each child, and to monitor their progress. Observations are utilized to develop Child Progress and Planning reports to share during home visits. Please contact the Lead Teacher for information.

Disabilities Services

Chugachmiut Head Start works in cooperation with community professionals to provide services and support to children diagnosed with developmental delays or disabilities. All Head Start services are made available to children regardless of their individual needs.

Chugachmiut staff conducts a child development screening during the first forty-five (45) days following enrollment. The screening tool, the DIAL 4, has a Parent Questionnaire, to identify each child's strengths and needs to assist teaching staff. The questionnaire, coupled with parent and staff observations, allows determination whether or not a referral for more in-depth evaluation should be considered. If staff and parents agree, a referral is beneficial, we will assist the parent in making contact with the appropriate agency. Chugachmiut staff will offer support throughout the evaluation process and will work together with parents and service providers to meet each child's needs. For infants and toddlers, the Ages and Stages tool is used.

Learning Centers

Chugachmiut Head Start believes children acquire skills they need for Kindergarten through numerous activities. Through individual and group instruction, children learn concepts for reading, writing, counting & problem solving. Teachers assist children in learning through conversation, questions and participating in the learning centers below.

BLOCK AREA	CREATIVITY (ART AREA)	LIBRARY AND LISTENING
MATH AND SCIENCE	DRAMATIC PLAY	GROSS MOTOR AND OUTDOOR PLAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sand and Water Play ▪ Observing ▪ Coordination ▪ Math ▪ Science ▪ Cooperative Play ▪ Language ▪ Fine Motor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role Playing ▪ Sense of Self ▪ Planning and Organization ▪ Community Awareness ▪ Vocabulary ▪ Gender Identity ▪ Creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Body Coordination ▪ Creative Expression ▪ Rules ▪ Listening ▪ Cooperative Play ▪ Social Skills
PUZZLES, GAMES, AND TABLE TOYS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cognitive ▪ Fine Motor ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Rules/Social Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Math ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Emergent Reading ▪ Emergent Writing 	

There is also time for children to choose activities and explore on their own. This gives them the opportunity to practice what they have learned. Mastering new skills gives children the confidence and self-esteem to continue learning new skills.

Daily Classroom Schedule

The following schedule is an example of what happens daily in Head Start:

Sample Class Schedule
Children Arrive/Greetings
Circle Time
Meal Time
Free choice
Outside Play/Physical activity
Indoor Classroom Activities
Clean-Up
Circle/Story Time
Meal Time
Transition for Departure
Departure

Remember to dress children in comfortable play clothes and shoes that are appropriate for the weather. It is advisable to keep an extra set of clothes for each child at the center. Please remember to label or put initials on all coats, boots, snow pants, hats and gloves. If your child is still learning to use the toilet, please send at least two sets of clothing when school is in session. If you would like help getting clothes for your child, please let your child's teacher know and we can help.

Kindergarten Transitioning

Staff work with children and parents to prepare for kindergarten. Parents are encouraged to continue their involvement in their child's education after Head Start. Each child has a portfolio containing work samples showing progress while in the Head Start program. The portfolio is shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences and is given to parents when children leave the program. Kindergarten transition activities will be organized in the spring.

Plants and Animals in the Classroom

Small animals may be a part of the science or discovery areas. Animals may not be brought into the school unless they are scheduled as part of a planned classroom activity. Please check with your child's teacher to see if there are any allergies. Poisonous plants are not allowed in the classroom and all plants and animals must be pre-approved.

Electronics

Electronics and television is not a part of the Head Start curriculum. It is not used in the daily activities for children; however, a short video may be used to support a concept or lesson. New to this year, the new Sugt'stun language game that is developed by the Heritage Program, children will be using an Ipad to play the game and learn Sugt'stun. When distance services are being used during the Covid pandemic, video conferencing will be used for social distancing.

Outdoor Play and Cold Weather

Appropriate winter outdoor clothing includes snowsuits, winter coats and snow pants, mittens or gloves, hats, boots, & socks. For other seasons, depending on the weather, appropriate outdoor clothing is required; such items may include jackets, sweaters, hats, and rain gear including boots. Staff may cancel outdoor play due to inclement weather. If parents would like help with getting winter gear for their child, please contact the Teacher.

Personal Belongings

Chugachmiut Head Start is not responsible for lost or damaged items brought to school. Do not allow your child to bring toys or other personal items from home (except for scheduled show and tell days). Please label all personal belongings with your child's name as many items look similar.

Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences

The purpose of home visits is to enhance the parental role in the growth and development of their child and to assist in making the home as the child's primary learning environment. Partnership between Head Start staff and families is important for the success of the program.

Home visits are opportunities for:

- Learning more about parent-child interactions
- Communicating with parents about their child's everyday routines and child's progress
- Providing information and materials on developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children
- Enhancing parents understanding of their children's social and emotional development
- Following up on required health screenings and referrals
- Providing health education materials
- Educating parents on healthy eating habits for children
- Encouraging parents to take an active role in all aspects of the Head Start program

Behavior Guidance and Management

To assure the Head Start experience is positive and pleasant for children, physical punishment is not allowed. Name calling or the use of threats is not allowed at centers, field trips, or any other Head Start activity. These guidelines apply to staff, parents, siblings, community volunteers, substitutes, and or other visitors. Chugachmiut follows these principles in dealing with guidance and discipline:

- Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors
- Redirection of inappropriate behaviors
- Consistency and follow through
- Time-Out is now called Take a Break.

Children need to feel safe at all times. If a child's behavior is creating a potential hazard to himself, other children or staff, trained Head Start personnel may help a child take a break.

Restraint is only used to prevent a child from hurting themselves or others. When necessary, a meeting will be held with the parent and center staff to develop a strategy to work with the child in class and at home.

Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health Consultants are scheduled to observe in Head Start classrooms twice during the school year. The Behavioral Health Consultant will make general observations, and individual classroom observations with advance permission of the parent or guardian. The individual observation will assist parents and staff to make positive decisions for the child. If a child's behavior continually interferes with the learning process, the teacher, parent, and Behavioral Health Consultant will work together to support the referral process and develop a plan for intervention. If intervention strategies fail, an alternate plan may be recommended.

Focus areas of the observations include:

- Respect for individual and cultural differences
- Ability to form relationships
- Positive self-esteem
- Social responsibility
- Positive coping skills

- Social skills
- Non-gender bias
- Ability to express feelings appropriately

Center Closure

Parents will be notified if the Center needs to close for safety or other reasons. Please make sure your contact information is up to date.

Field Trips

Parents/guardians are required to sign a Field Trip Permission Form for field trips. You will be informed of each scheduled activity. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in their child's field trips.

Bringing children to school

Children are not permitted to enter the building without a parent to sign them in for safety purposes. When bringing your child to school please:

- Escort the child to the classroom
- Sign the Daily Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheet, noting the time of arrival if electronic sign in is down
- Make contact with the Teacher

Picking up children from the center

Children may not arrive early or stay late after Head Start hours. When picking up your child, please:

- Sign the Daily Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheet, noting the time of departure if the Ipad is down
- Make contact with the teacher – parents are responsible to let the teacher know before removing children from the program.

Children may not walk to Head Start by themselves or leave without a parent or authorized contact.

Children Not Picked Up

If a child has not been picked up by the end of school day, staff will attempt to contact the parents. If parents are unavailable, staff will contact the individuals listed on the Emergency Contact list. If the parents or emergency contact cannot be contacted within 30 minutes, Chugachmiut staff will call the local authorities to determine where to take the child. All persons picking up children from the center must be listed on the contact list.

Confidentiality

Chugachmiut respects your right to privacy. Parents/Guardians must sign an Authorization for Mutual Exchange of Information form prior to the release of any information. Staff and volunteers are informed of the Confidentiality Policy and reminded to keep all information regarding families confidential. Head Start staff leaving Chugachmiut Head Start will be reminded of the confidentiality still binding them. All documents, forms, and files regarding families in the program will be kept secure.

The following are exceptions when written consent is not required:

- When the information is requested by a government agency for law-enforcement activity;
- When there is an appropriate court order, such as a subpoena;
- In emergency situations to protect the health or safety of an individual;
- In a program review or review audits conducted by Federal Head Start reviewers or State agencies.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Chugachmiut Head Start is required to follow the Alaska State Child Abuse and Neglect reporting laws and regulations. Chugachmiut is required to report any suspected abuse to the Office of Children's Services. All reports are confidential.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT?

State Law defines child abuse or neglect to include the following actions by those responsible for a child's welfare:

- **Physical injury** that harms or threatens a child's health or welfare;
- **Failure to care for a child, including neglect of the necessary physical** (food, shelter, clothing, and medical attention), emotional, mental and social needs;
- **Sexual abuse**, including molestation or incest;
- **Sexual exploitation**, including permitting or encouraging prostitution;
- **Mental injury** -An injury to the emotional well-being, or intellectual or psychological capacity of a child, as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function in a developmentally appropriate manner; or
- **Maltreatment** - A child has suffered substantial harm as a result of child abuse or neglect due to an act or omission not necessarily committed by the child's parent, custodian or guardian.

WHO ARE MANDATED REPORTERS?

If staff suspect a child has suffered harm as a result of abuse or neglect, they must immediately (but no later than 24 hours), report information to the nearest office of the State's Office of Children's Services (OCS). Below is a list of mandated reporters, however, the law encourages any person to report instances of known or suspected abuse and neglect

- School teachers and school administrative staff members (public and private schools)
- Practitioners of the healing arts, including chiropractors, mental health counselors, dentists, dental hygienists, health aides, nurses, optometrists, osteopaths, physical therapists, physicians, psychiatrists, religious healing practitioners and surgeons
- Social workers
- Peace officers and officers of the state Department of Corrections
- Administrative officers of institutions, including public and private hospitals or other facilities for medical diagnosis, treatment, or care
- Child Care providers, including foster parents, day care providers, and paid staff
- Paid employees of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs
- Paid employees of an organization that provides counseling or treatment to individuals seeking to control their use of drugs or alcohol.

Parent Rights and Responsibilities

My Head Start/Early Head Start Rights:

- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be welcomed in the classroom at any time
- To be Informed regularly about child's progress in Head Start
- To receive feedback on screening conducted by program and staff
- I can make suggestions and voice opinions regarding the program
- I can volunteer in the classroom (on field trips, as a teacher aid, read a book, share your talent, etc.)
- I can participate in Head Start training and meetings
- I can receive education and information on topics of your choice
- I can receive information about community resources, health, education, and the improvement of family life
- I can participate in the governance of the Head Start program as a voting member of the Parent Center Committee

My Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Responsibilities:

- I will ensure regular attendance, and call or message within one hour of school start if my child will not be attending.
- I will help my child by participating in program activities as I am able.
- I will participate in Home Visit & Parent/Teacher conferences that are scheduled 4 times yearly.
- I can help plan children's Head Start experience by providing ideas for lesson plans.
- I will ensure my child's health and developmental screenings and health follow-ups are complete.
- I will contact my child's teacher, staff, or the Head Start Anchorage office if I have problems or need help with any concerns.

Frequently Used Head Start Words: Abbreviations and Their Meanings

Assessment – the process of determining the stage of development of a child. We are required to do major, written assessments of each child three times each year. The results of the assessment are used to develop an individualized program for educating your child and getting him or her ready for school. We use several different assessments, but the central assessment (see "Galileo" below) looks at 11 different domains or areas of learning. Assessment results are shared with parents during conferences and home visits.

CDA (Child Development Associate) - an entry level credential that usually requires six college classes in early childhood and on the job training. An evaluator reviews work samples and interviews and tests the CDA applicant.

CLASS - a "Classroom Assessment Scoring System" that works to create and sustain a positive classroom learning environment in which teachers engage students in active learning so they become motivated and challenged to succeed..

Family Partnership Agreement – a process by which the Family Partnership Assistant helps a parent assess his or her strengths and needs so they can set goals for the family or for individuals in the family.

My Teaching Strategies - the trade name for the main, on-line developmental assessment that we use to track how our children are doing, both individually and by groups. The on-going assessment looks at 11 different domains, including approaches to learning, creative arts, early math, language, literacy, logic and reasoning, nature and science, physical development and health, social and emotional development, social studies, and English language development.

Health Advisory Committee – a required advisory committee made up of Head Start parents, Head Start staff, and community representatives who work in health-related fields. The committee members review the health, nutrition, mental health, and disabilities policies and procedures and make recommendations for Head Start.

Performance Standards – Head Start regulations given by the federal government that our agency must follow.

Policy Council – a committee of Head Start parents and community representatives from each of the Head Start centers. This elected committee is responsible for carrying out many important functions for Head Start, including approval of personnel decisions, program plans, and requests for budget and program improvement.

School Readiness Goals – Goals that are set so children meet widely held expectations of learning for their age groups. See pages 8 & 9

Screening - a short testing tool used to quickly determine if a child might need further evaluation in areas such as a developmental learning, speech and language, hearing and vision. Results may also be used to help measure program effectiveness.

Transition – the process of successfully moving a child and his or her parents or guardians into the Head Start program from home or another agency or school.

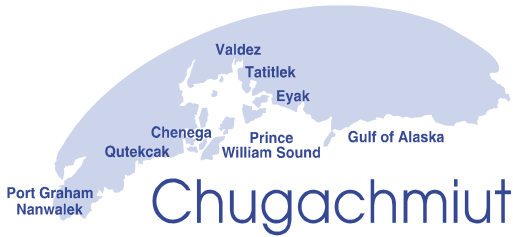
WIC (Women, Infant, Children) - a food supplement program for young children and pregnant women that provides a voucher for specific foods such as formula, fresh fruit, juice, fortified cereals, and cheese. Contact the local health department to apply.

Contact Us

Thank you for partnering with us to assure our children have a wonderful Head Start in life! If we can be of service or if you would like to offer suggestions or share a concern, please contact us. You may directly contact your teacher and you may also call the Anchorage Admin Office at 1-800-478-4155. Email: Headstart@chugachmiut.org

You may also follow the Chugachmiut Head Start Facebook page for admin updates.

Anchorage Staff	
Position	email
Head Start Director Kristin Ramstad	kristinr@chugachmiut.org
Education and Disabilities Coordinator Heather Arreola	heathera@chugachmiut.org
Family and Health Services Coordinator Frani Guttin	franig@chugachmiut.org



Child Attendance Policy

Policy

All families are encouraged to maintain regular attendance in Head Start activities. Head Start staff will support families in identifying barriers to regular attendance and will initiate supports as appropriate. If families are not able or willing to participate, another child will be given the opportunity to attend the program.

Areas of Responsibility

1. Lead Teachers are responsible for investigating and documenting the causes of absenteeism if the average daily attendance falls below 85%.
2. The Lead Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the Daily Sign In/Out forms are completed at the time of arrival and departure, accurately and completely.
3. The Lead Teacher is responsible to follow up on attendance issues and for documenting these activities.
4. The Anchorage Office staff are responsible for entering data into electronic data management systems.

Procedures

Absences

1. Parents are to call or send a note to account for each day that their child cannot attend class and to explain the reasons for the absence. Attendance will be recorded daily in the classroom on the weekly attendance sheet and entered into Childplus each month.

Analysis of the causes of absenteeism

1. If the monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the Lead Teacher must analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis must include a study of the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. This analysis will be included in the Teacher's monthly report.

Attendance plans and alternative services

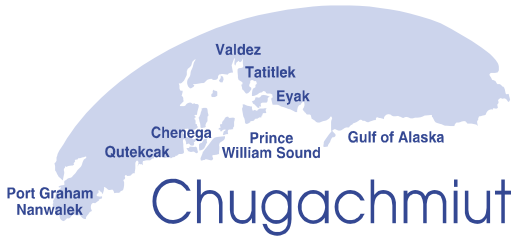
1. All child absences will be recorded on the Record of Child Absences and on the Weekly Attendance Form.
2. If a child has three or more unplanned consecutive absences, the Lead Teacher will conduct a telephone call or a home visit. The results of this contact will be logged on the Record of Child Absences form which is sent to the Anchorage office each month.
3. The attendance plan will be designed to help the family to establish regular attendance or, if necessary, to plan for alternative services. The attendance plan will be developed by the Lead Teacher and if possible, the family.

The Plan will:

1. Identify the reasons for the absences, and;
 2. Include a specific plan and date for establishing regular attendance or alternative services such as teacher home visits or “homework bags” containing appropriate books and activities depending on circumstance.
 3. If alternative services are established the expected attendance can be adjusted to accommodate the plan.
4. Alternative services will be designed to ensure that all children enrolled in Head Start receive services and continue to make progress on their educational goals. Alternative services will be provided by the Teacher, or other assigned staff and will typically occur during a home visit and in accordance with the policies on Individualizing and Home Visits. Teachers may use online assessment parent activity libraries as well as classroom supplies and other learning materials to provide home based activities that address all domains of learning in the H.S. Early Learning Framework with a focus on the skills that the child is ready to learn.
 5. If 60 days or less remain in the current program year, staff are encouraged to accommodate any special needs for attending that the family may have, but the program may choose not to fill any program vacancies through the end of year.
 6. Staff must document all contacts (e.g., telephone calls, letters) with the child’s family and any special family support activities which are provided as part of the attendance plan.

Withdrawal from the program

If regular attendance cannot be established either by classroom participation or by participation in alternative services, another child on the waiting list must be given the opportunity to enroll in the program. Families will be given every opportunity to establish regular attendance, and will be withdrawn from the program only when they are unwilling or unable to participate.



Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

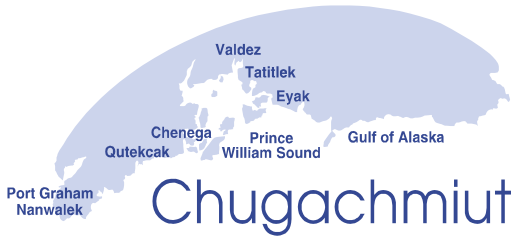
Child Abuse and Neglect procedures are established to protect both the safety of children and the wellness of families. All staff will be given training on established procedures, which are in compliance with state and tribal law.

Head Start staff is required as mandated reporters to report any suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the Office of Children Services (OCS) following Chugachmiut Child Abuse and Neglect reporting guidelines.

Head Start staff will be informed of their responsibility as mandated reporters, and will receive annual training on identifying and reporting suspected instances of child abuse and neglect. Although the first priority is to ensure the safety of children, every effort will be made to provide support and referrals to families while ensuring the anonymity of the reporter.

Head Start will maintain collaborative relationships with the community agencies responsible for family preservation and child protective services and will participate in activities that promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

I have received training on identifying and reporting suspected instances of Child Abuse and Neglect, and agree to follow Chugachmiut Head Start's reporting procedures.



Confidentiality Policy

In order to ensure that privacy rights are respected, all information pertaining to Head start families and staff will be handled in a confidential manner. Staff and parents will be informed of confidentiality procedures and expected to follow them.

Staff will follow written procedures for ensuring that records pertaining to children, families, and staff are kept strictly confidential.

1. Records will be kept in a filing cabinet that will be locked when staff is not present.
2. Records concerning children and families will be released to other agencies only with the written consent of a parent or guardian.

Information concerning children and families will be shared by Head Start staff members, regular volunteers, and parents in a confidential manner and only as necessary for the administration of the program.

1. Head Start staff, regular volunteers, and Parent Center Committee officers will review and sign a Confidentiality Policy form annually.
2. Staff, volunteers, and committee officers will share information concerning children and families with other agencies or individuals only with the written consent of a parent or guardian.

Confidentiality procedures do not apply to information concerning suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff will follow reporting procedures as mandated reporters.