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MARLINTON ELEMENTARY

HEAD START

PARENT

HANDBOOK

Revised 6/23

# **WELCOME**

Dear Parents:

We would like to welcome you and your child to the North Central West Virginia Community Action Association Head Start (HS) Program. During the course of the year, your child will learn and experience many new and exciting things. We will assist you in receiving medical and dental examinations, speech, hearing, and vision screenings for your child. Parents will be provided opportunities and support so that they can identify their own strengths, needs, and interests to grow and find their own solutions through Family Partnership Agreements. The building of trusting and collaborative relationships between parents and staff allows each to share with and to learn from one another.

As a parent, you are a very important part of this program. We encourage you to participate in the program by participating in center meetings, participating on county, program, or state committees, or being a representative on Policy Council. Your ideas, skills, and suggestions are needed and wanted to make this a successful program.

We are excited about the upcoming year and look forward to working with you and your child.

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**Contact Information for Your School/Staff:**

**Name and Address of Center:**

**Marlinton Elementary School**

**906 5th Avenue**

**Marlinton, WV 24954**

**Phone Number**: **304-799-6551**

**Days and Hours of Attendance**: 7**:40 am to 3:00 pm Monday thru Thursday**

**Education Staff/Title: JoAutumn Goldizen - Teacher Susan Armstrong - Assistant Teacher**

**Family Resource Coordinator:** **Abby Cox-FRC**

**Children Services Supervisor**: **Nancy Keller- Head Start CS Supervisor 304-614-9114 cell phone**

**Table of Contents**

**Transportation**  **4**

**Active Supervision Policy 4**

**Weapons Policy**  **4**

**Order of Communication 5**

**Confidentiality Policy 5**

**Retention, Storing, and Purging of Child/Family Files 5**

**Domestic Violence Information** **6**

**Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy 6**

**Parent Rights 6**

**Health Services 7**

**Family Style Meal Service 8**

**Services to Children with Disabilities 9**

**Family and Community Engagement 10**

**Parent Curriculum 10**

**Parent Committee 10**

**Mental Health Services 11**

**Positive Behavior Support Policy 11**

**Children’s Participation Policy 12**

**Reporting Absences 12**

**Strategies to Promote Attendance 13**

**Suspension and Expulsion 14**

**Outdoor Activity 15**

**Bits and Pieces 15**

**Volunteerism 16**

**Volunteer Insurance Information 16**

**Code of Ethics 16**

**Advisory/Leadership Team Descriptor 17**



**Transportation**

NCWVCAA HS does provide transportation services to its program participants directly.

As a parent, it is your responsibility to please ensure that the family’s emergency contact information remains up to date at all times.

**Active Supervision**

The NCWVCAA Head Start Program has adopted strategies for staff to supervise children NCWVCAA Head Start has a Zero Tolerance for any type of lapse in supervision.

Families are an important part of Active Supervision too. Knowing the responsibilities, you have as a parent or guardian will ensure your child is safe and always accounted for.

**Family responsibility for Active Supervision:**

1. When participating in a school sponsored event, you will actively supervise your child as you accompany them.
2. Please ensure that your family’s emergency contact information remains up to date at all times. Please specify which emergency contacts have permission to pick your child up in the event of an emergency where the parent cannot safely transport from the facility or event.

**Weapons Policy**

To maintain the safety of those involved, the NCWVCAA Head Start Program adheres to the following policy regarding the use or possession of weapons:

1. No firearms, knives, or other dangerous or deadly weapons shall be permitted on program property.

*\*Program property is defined as property owned, utilized, supervised, rented, leased, or controlled by the program. This includes, but is not limited to, buildings, playgrounds, parking lots, school buses, or any property on which a Head Start supervised activity takes place.*

2.. This policy prohibiting firearms or other dangerous or deadly weapons on program property shall not apply to the following:

* + 1. law enforcement officers employed by a federal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency;
    2. any individual specifically authorized by the County Board of Education or principal of a school where program property is located to conduct programs for valid educational purposes; or
    3. any individual specifically authorized by the NCWVCAA Supervisor at NCWVCAA owned and/or leased sites where program property is located to conduct programs for valid educational purposes.

**Order Of Communication For Parents involving Head Start staff**

1. Parent will attempt to resolve concern with or have questions answered by persons directly involved.
2. If unable to resolve or if more information is desired, parent will communicate this concern to the Family Resource Coordinator (FRC).
3. If concern is not resolved, the FRC and parent will meet with the Children Services Supervisor and/or Program Manager.
4. If Children Services Supervisor and/or Program Manager are unable to resolve concern, the applicable Parent Committee Chairperson will be requested to present the matter to the Parent Committee for possible resolution.
5. If Parent Committee cannot resolve concern, the Family and Community Engagement Program Specialist will be requested to review the situation.
6. If necessary, the Family and Community Engagement Specialist will involve the Children Services Director and/or designee.
7. The Children Services Director and/or designee, if unable to resolve concern, may bring the matter before the Policy Council for determination.

*\* Allow five (5) working days before proceeding to next step.*

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**Confidentiality Policy**

As an enrolled family, you are assured that all employees will respect your privacy. Working together with you, staff members will obtain only the information that is necessary in order to provide your family with the most comprehensive services available.

Parents and/or guardians have the right to review their personal family files. Families are required to give staff a 24 hour notice before they review their personal family file. You are entitled to know how and what information may be shared and to whom the information will be released.

**Retention, Storing, And Purging Of Child/Family Files**

It is the policy of the program to ensure that all Child/Family files are safely maintained in locked cabinets for three (3) years after the child exits the program. At the end of each Program Year, Child/Family files more than four years old will be purged by shredding. Mental Health files are kept for six (6) years from the date the mental health file is opened and then will also be destroyed by shredding. Confidentiality is maintained on all information contained in files during storage and purging in accordance with the Program’s Confidentiality policy.

**Domestic Violence Resources**

It is the policy of HS/EHS to support child and adult victims of domestic violence. This is done primarily by staff making confidential referrals for adult and child victims for services by licensed domestic violence programs. Please contact your FRC to further discuss resources available.

**Suspected Child Abuse And Neglect Reporting Policy**

WV law mandates that all program staff report incidents of **suspected** child/sexual abuse or neglect to the Department of Health and Human Resources and, if applicable, to local law enforcement.

Child abuse and neglect is defined as harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare. Harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare can occur through **non-accidental** physical or mental or emotional injury; sexual abuse/exploitation; domestic violence; neglected treatment or maltreatment, including failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter. The law protects children under the age of eighteen.

If you suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, you may make a report by telephoning the West Virginia Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-352-6513.

**Corporal Punishment**

Head Start prohibits corporal punishment on its premises and during off-site sponsored activities while the child is participating. This regulation extends to any child in attendance to any program sponsored activities**. At any time Corporal Punishment is used during a program off-site activity or on the premises, staff as Mandated Reporters of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect, will make a report to Child Protective Services immediately. (WV State Code §49-6A-2; §49-6A-5; Office of Head Start Program Performance Starndards)**

**Parent Rights**

As per WV Child Care Licensing, parents have the right to report to the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Resources any complaints related to compliance with the provisions of the W.Va. Code § 49-2B-1 et seq. and the requirements of this rule.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits disclosure without consent if the disclosure is to school officials with legitimate education interests. Upon request, the School (Head Start) may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer.

The NCWVCAA Head Start Program has included the FERPA website below to serve as the annual notification requirement to parents -[studentprivacy.ed.gov](file:///C:\Users\NCWVCA17651\Downloads\studentprivacy.ed.gov)

A copy can also be avaialble upon request from your Head Start Staff.



**Health Services**

To provide quality health services and promote comprehensive and preventive health care for children, NCWVCAA HS follows the health requirements of the WV EPSDT HealthCheck Schedule, CDC Immunization Schedule, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's (AAPD) Dental Periodicity Schedule, and the Office of Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Your child’s health is very important to NCWVCAA Head Start and we always welcome the opportunity to partner with you regarding your child’s health and well-being. Although the Family Resource Coordinators (FRCs) are here to assist you in accessing appropriate health care for your child, it is the parent’s responsibility to make sure the child receives timely, age-appropriate health screenings and follow-up care. Please ensure that the required paperwork is returned to the FRC within the time frames listed below.

**Head Start Enrollees must provide the Family Resource Coordinator documentation of the following screenings within 45 days of the child’s first day of attendance:**

* Immunizations: Head Start enrollees must have all WV School Entry Required Vaccines in conjunction with the CDC Immunization Schedule.
* Physical Exam*-completed in the last 12 months*

\*All below screenings should be a component of the physician completed Physical Exam.

* Vision Screening
* Hearing Screening
* Growth Screening
* TB Risk Assessment
* Blood Lead Risk Assessment
* Blood Pressure Measurement

**Head Start Enrollees must provide the FRC documentation of the following screenings within 45 days of the child’s first day of attendance:**

* Dental Exam (completed by a dentist)- valid for 6 months

**Head Start Enrollees must provide the FRC documentation of the following screenings within 90 days of the child’s first day of attendance:**

* Blood Lead Screening: This screening is typically completed on children at 12 months and 24 months to screen for lead toxicity. Head Start needs verification of a past Blood Lead Screening for the child’s record. *If the child has never been tested for Blood Lead, the WVEPSDT HealthCheck Program and Office of Head Start recommend that children between the ages of 36 months and 72 months of age receive a current blood lead test.*

**Health Care and Treatment Policy**

Our staff are here to help you and your family with obtaining preventative health care and follow-up treatment. We can assist with scheduling, planning, and transportation to your appointments! However, it is necessary to have the parent/guardian accompany their child(ren) to these medical appointments.

**Health Attendance and Alert Procedures**

Please follow your schools policy.



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**Family Style Meal Service**

NCWVCAA Head Start Centers participate in Family Style Meal Service to promote a relaxed, educational, and positive experience, aiding the development of positive eating habits and attitudes.

**What Is Family Style Meal Service?**

Family style meal service is a style of dining in which childcare providers and the children that they care for participate in table setting, serving, eating, and cleaning up. During this learning experience mealtime conversation and appropriate eating habits are modeled and encouraged.

**The Child’s Role In Family Style Meal Services**

Children learn to pass food and serve themselves. They take responsibility for serving themselves and they decide how much and what they will eat. This lets them be in control, and therefore, they begin to develop self-esteem.

**Benefits Of Family Style Meal Service**

1. Children learn to share.
2. A leisurely meal provides an opportunity to socialize.
3. The development of good eating habits is encouraged.
4. Self-confidence is built with a sense of purpose.
5. Aids in the development of hand and eye coordination and motor skills.
6. Avoids the use of food as a reward or punishment, which can lead to poor eating behavior.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.



**Services To Children With Disabilities**

A child with a disability is one who may have a physical disability, a long-term medical condition or problem, impaired vision or hearing, severe language problems, emotional difficulty or a delay in learning. The staff works closely with community agencies to provide services that meet the special needs of these young children and their families. Once a child is identified as having a disability or educational need, and is enrolled in the program, the following events happen:

Parents and staff of children birth to three years of age meet with WV Birth to 3 to create their child’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be created for children ages 3 to 4 with the Board of Education. This plan is written with parental input and approval. The goals of the plan are implemented by the Teacher and Specialists from the Board of Education or WV Birth to 3. Health and family related goals will be written with the parents to enhance the services provided by the IEP/IFSP. These plans are reviewed and updated within respective federal timelines. Parents and/or team members may request to reconvene with the planning team as needed. Head Start Staff provides support and education to parents throughout this process.

**Attendance For Children With Disabilities**

The enrollment and frequency of attendance of a child with a disability shall be determined by the Multi-Disciplinary Team (i.e., parent, staff, and appropriate professionals) according to the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

**Family And Community Engagement**

This service area is the link between school and home. Your Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) will schedule Family Social Events throughout the year to have free, family fun and training. Our staff will provide opportunities to enhance your parenting skills, learn more about your child’s health and development, become an advocate for your child and take an active role in their educational career.

In addition to working with you as a parent, we also want to support you as an individual.

We will work with parents as they identify and meet their own goals, in hopes to nurture the development of their future. Your FRC will collaborate with you to develop an “Individualized Family Partnership Agreement” (FPA), in order to achieve the goals you set for yourself throughout the year.

**Parent Curriculum**

In supporting your role as the most important person in your child’s life, we want to offer you our Parent Curriculum, Triple P. Triple P is an international program that assists parents in working through some of the normal, everyday issues that parents encounter as we raise our children.

Text

Description automatically generatedTriple P and your Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) can help by providing a toolbox of ideas and strategies that can assist with:

* Setting rules and routines
* Encouraging appropriate behaviors
* Taking care of yourself as a parent
* Feeling confident that you’re doing the

right thing

Because all families are different, parents can choose to participate in a self-paced online training, individual meetings with their FRC, and/or group seminars to discuss common parenting concerns.

**Parent Committee**

The Parent Committee is formed at the county or center level each school year to make decisions on a number of important topics, such as: the election of officers for representation of the committee, plan and determine family social events throughout the year, and decision making on the expenditure of Parent Child Activity Monies, as allowed by the Federal Head Start guidelines.

**Mental Health Services**

Our program is committed to providing an environment where young children and families have the supports necessary to succeed. We promote positive mental health, emotional well-being, social competence, building on strengths and assets, and resilience through positive relationships built with our children and families.

These relationships help shape children’s emotional, social, and cognitive development that is the foundation for school-readiness and future academic success. The program, in partnership with families, fosters mental wellness by offering a system that provides for the early identification and prevention of social-emotional issues that may interfere with future development.

The system includes regular social-emotional screenings for all children by the teaching staff. The Mental Health Program Specialist also provides periodic classroom observation and consultations. A multi-disciplinary team approach that includes staff and parents, other Program Specialists, and community service providers is used on case-by-case basis. We offer community referrals to therapists for children and families. The Mental Health Program Specialist also offers behavioral management services in the classroom setting and home environment.



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**Positive Behavior Support Policy**

It is the policy of our program to create an environment that is supportive to the growth of children expressing their feelings and coping with stressors in a constructive way.

With your help, we utilize a positive behavior support system of family input and guidance, on-going classroom observation, and documentation to encourage progress. If needed, we provide resources to outside support services.

Early Childhood Positive Behavior Implementation and Support (ECPBIS) strategies are implemented to support the development of healthy social skills. When challenging behaviors occur, ECPBIS strategies are utilized to help understand the behaviors and replace with them with more acceptable behaviors. Consultation for behavior management is provided to assist staff and caregivers as behavioral concerns arise for individual children as well as group needs. ECPBIS strategies can also be utilized in the home environment.



**CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Help your child succeed by practicing good attendance. Arriving on time every day is important to your child’s success and learning. Developing a backup plan for getting your child to the center can be helpful if something unexpected comes up.

All classrooms will use the following Attendance and Absenteeism Policy and Procedures-Once a family has agreed to enroll their child in the Center-based Program, the child will participate in the scheduled activities on a regular basis, according to their site. Staff and parents must maintain cooperation and mutual respect for all concerned.

**PARENT RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the staff at least one hour prior to the start of school day the reason for the child’s absence by:

* Phone Call, Email, Text
* Communication with bus driver;
* Parent note for advance absence(s)
* Absence QR Code



\* Upon return to school, Staff may request additional documentation:

* If a child experiences any of the conditions that are outlined in the Health Attendance and Alert Procedures, the parent must submit a required Readmission Form (H015) signed by licensed health care provider or signed licensed health care provider statement prior to return to school, or
* written excuses for other issues not mentioned in the Health Attendance and Alert Procedures may be sent with child for file in the child’s record.

**Unexpected Absence**

If a child does not arrive at school within the first hour of class start time and the parent has not contacted the program to let staff know of the child’s status, the program will attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child’s well-being.

**Strategies To Promote Attendance**

The teaching team or the Family and Community Engagement (FCE) staff will communicate with your family about any excused patterns of absences or unexcused or unexplained absences.

1. FCE staff will compile, send, and discuss the Monthly Attendance Reminder to the parent beginning the first week of September for August and monthly thereafter that identifies possible attendance, child’s excused absences, child unexcused or unexplained absences, and tardiness.
2. Teaching Staff will discuss any attendance issues with parents during monthly contact, home visits and/or parent/teacher conferences.
3. Teaching staff and FCE staff will develop strategies with families to improve individual attendance among children identified as having an attendance concern:
4. FCE staff will conduct a home visit or make other direct contact with a child’s parent if a child has unexcused or multiple unexplained absences (two consecutive unexcused or unexplained absences).

If a child ceases to attend the program will make appropriate efforts to engage the family to resume attendance as listed above. If the child’s attendance is not resumed, in consultation with the teaching staff, FCE staff, respective Supervisor then the program will consider that slot vacant and notify parent accordingly.

**Attendance Of Homeless Children**

1. If a program determines a child has met the eligibility criteria for homelessness, the child will attend for up to 90 days or as long as allowed under state licensing requirements, without immunization and other records, to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. The program will work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible in order to comply with state licensing requirements.
2. If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program facility, the program will utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.

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**Suspension**

NCWVCAA HS/EHS will prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature and as a last resort where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications. Before the program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, the program in coordination with the collaborative partner (if applicable), will engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

**Expulsion**

NCWVCAA HS/EHS cannot expel or un-enroll a child because of his/her behavior; however, if all possible resources have been exhausted after consultation with parents, child’s teacher, and the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), collaborative partner (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines the child’s continued enrollment presents a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program will work with other programs to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

**Outdoor Activity**

Outdoor activity is an essential part of the NCWVCAA Head Start curriculum. Outdoor play is expected to occur when weather circumstances (above 40 degrees Fahrenheit) are permitting and there are no weather condition advisories indicating to remain indoors. Indoor gross motor activities must be included in the daily schedule when outdoor weather is not permissible. For more information on weather safety and outdoor play please visit <https://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/common/pdf/weatherwatch.pdf> to view the Child Care Weather Watch Chart.

**Bits And Pieces**

* Safety of the children comes first. For example, we cannot permit you to send medication to school unless a physician has completed an Authorization for Medication. Staff will assist you in the process of obtaining the authorization.
* We also ask that you do not send items from home to school with your child. All of your child’s educational needs will be addressed by teaching staff.
* Dress your child in play clothes so they are comfortable enough to play and enjoy activities such as painting or using glue. We don’t want the children to worry about getting their clothes soiled. Please send an extra seasonally appropriate change of clothing for your child to keep at the center. Child Care Licensing does not permit children to wear clothing items that have drawstrings that could pose a safety risk for the child.
* If you have problems concerning your child in the classroom, please contact the Teacher, Family Resource Coordinator, or the Supervisor.
* All parents helping with meals or snacks must have a current food handler’s card from the local health department. If you need help obtaining the card, talk with the staff. Plastic gloves and a hair net must be worn when serving food.
* Participation in the HS Program is not contingent upon the payment of any fees.



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**Non-Federal Share/In-Kind/Volunteerism**

As a program, we want and need volunteerism. We believe that for children to be successful in school, we need to incorporate not only the child, but their family, and their community, as well. Participating in our program benefits our children and helps us to continue to operate our programs.

Here are some ways you can help:

I. Volunteer in the process of making decisions about the operations of the program.

A. By becoming an active member of the Parent Committee and/or Policy Council.

B. By participating on the Education, Health, or Family and Community Engagement Advisories, Community Assessment Steering Committee, Self-Assessment teams, School Readiness Leadership Team, the Early Childhood Positive Behavior Implementation and Support (ECPBIS) Leadership Team, the completion of the Safety Survey process, Strategic Planning, and other special committees.

**\*Please see Leadership/Advisory Descriptor on page 19 for more information.**

II. Volunteer in the classroom.

A. By volunteering to work with the children, helping the staff prepare materials, and becoming involved in planning activities.

B. By assisting the class on field trips.

C. By reading or sharing your hobby/interest with the class.

D. By completing repair work on toys, equipment, facilities, or playground.

E. By donating supplies, clothing or food that is utilized by the program.

III. Work with your children at home in connection with the staff of the center.

A. By helping their child continue his/her learning experiences as an extension of the classroom by completing activities on the Individualized Parent/

B. Child Activity Calendars that are sent home monthly by classroom teachers.

**Volunteer Insurance Information**

Each Volunteer who has completed the volunteer registration process is eligible for insurance protection while participating in the Head Start Program as a volunteer.

The insurance policy certificates are held by NCWVCAA and are administered by the CIMA Companies, Inc. This policy is not a substitute for any insurance you may now carry, and only applies while you are performing your assignment as a volunteer in the program. Fraudulent claims in regard to this insurance coverage will be prosecuted.

For further information, please contact the Human Resource Department of NCWVCAA at (304) 363-2170.

**Code Of Ethics**

All staff and/or volunteers must maintain confidentiality, professionalism, and boundaries when participating in any program(s) sponsored by NCWVCAA, Inc. Staff and/or volunteers must respect the rights and views of colleagues and applicants, and be committed to providing the highest quality service while refraining from engaging and/or condoning any form of harassment and/or discrimination.

For more information, volunteers can request a copy of the NCWVCAA Employee

Guidelines from their Family and Community Engagement staff.

Advisories and Leadership Teams

**Advisory and Leadership Teams** – networks of community members, Head Start/Early Head Start parents, and NCWVCAA Staff that gather at least twice a year to discuss strategies, update policies and procedures, and make programmatic changes. Additional meetings are scheduled, as needed.

**Health Advisory** – Would you like to assist with making decisions about health services by addressing community health concerns, editing and approving Head Start/Early Head Start health policies, and more? A parent perspective is very important to have on the committee because parents are our most important partners for supporting the development and well-being of young children.

**Partnership Advisory** – We need you! Join the Partnership Advisory Team to discuss and review policies and procedures related to the Family and Community Partnership area, including Parent Engagement, Fatherhood Initiatives, and gathering program data.

**Education Advisory** – Do you want to do more than just volunteer in your child’s classroom or provide ideas to teaching staff? Join the Education Advisory Team and your contributions will be used in the progress of our program wide education decisions.

**School Readiness Leadership Team** – Would you like to learn more about your child’s developmental goals? The School Readiness Leadership Team utilizes child outcome data to prepare your child for the next educational setting. We invite you to be a part of our program’s success!

**Early Childhood Positive Behavior Implementation Support Leadership Team (ECPBIS)** – Would you like to learn more about the Positive Behavior Support System used in your child’s school or share strategies with other families or staff? We welcome you to join our team!

**Hiring Committee** – Would you like to assist with the hiring of Head Start/Early Head Start Staff? Hiring Committee meets on an as needed basis to conduct interviews for staff vacancies.

**Policy Council** – Are you interested in leadership opportunities? Consider being a Policy Council Member! Policy Council Members from all counties served by NCWVCAA Head Start/Early Head Start meet on a monthly basis to conduct the business of the HS/EHS programs, including approving monthly financial statements, enrollment reports, financial audits, the annual self-assessment, and community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates.

