



**HEAD START**  
of NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

# Volunteer Handbook

Head Start enables children

developing their full potential.



and their families to realize

the opportunities for

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Agency Mission Statement	3
Agency Overview	3
Head Start Performance Standards	3
Agency History	3
Target Population	4
Agency Structure	4
Organizational Structure	5
Chain of Command	5
Complaint Procedures	5
Agency Funding	6
Services	6
Definition of a Volunteer	6
Definition of a Regular Volunteer	6
Volunteer Requirements	6
Volunteer Training	7
Volunteer Code of Conduct	7
Volunteer Standards of Conduct	8
Volunteer Bill of Rights	8
Volunteer Job Descriptions	9
Guidance and Discipline Policy	9
Reporting Child Abuse /Neglect	10
Emergency & First Aid Procedures	10
Calendars	10
Communications	11
Relatives of Staff as Volunteers	11
Head Start Parents & Relatives as Volunteers	11
Service at the Discretion of NWAHS	11
Insurance	11
Political Activity	12
Personal Appearance/Hygiene	12
Confidentiality	13
Short Term Exclusion Policy	13
Smoking	14
Meal Periods	15

## **Introduction**

This handbook was developed for use by volunteers within Northwest Arkansas Head Start Human Services, Inc. (NWAHSHS). Our intent is to provide guidance relating to the policies and procedures established by the agency. NWAHSHS staff value volunteers as a key instrument in implementing the Head Start Performance Standards, and we appreciate your time and contributions. We invite and encourage your input, and welcome suggestions for additional content at any time.

## **Agency Mission Statement**

NWAHSHS enables children and their families to realize the opportunities for developing their full potential.

## **Agency Overview**

The Head Start program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs, and children of low-income families, in particular, can benefit from a comprehensive developmental program to meet those needs. The Head Start philosophy maintains that a child can benefit most from a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program to foster development and remedy problems with a broad range of services. Also, a child's entire family, as well as the community must be involved maximizing the strengths and unique experiences of each child. The family, which is perceived as the principal influence on the child's development, must be a direct participant in the program. Local communities are allowed latitude in developing creative program designs so long as the basic goals, objectives and standards of a comprehensive program are adhered to. The overall goal of the Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low-income families. Social competence means the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both present environment and later responsibilities in school and life.

## **Head Start Performance Standards**

The Performance Standards are rules NWAHSHS must go by to keep in compliance with Head Start laws. A copy of the Performance Standards are kept at each Head Start location and volunteers are encouraged to review them.

## **Agency History**

In 1966 the Economic Opportunity Agency of Benton County, Inc. a private, non-profit Community Action Agency established by and operating under the authority of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, applied for funding to provide Head Start services to low-income families in Benton County. At the same time the Economic Opportunity Agency of Carroll and Madison Counties applied for funding to provide Head Start services to their communities. The Head Start program was funded for the summer of 1967. Funds were then approved for an ongoing Head Start program to serve 219 children in the fall of 1967. In 1970 the Benton, Carroll and Madison County Community Action Agencies were combined into one agency and the name changed to the Office of

Human Concern. Head Start remained under the umbrella of the Office of Human Concern until 1982. In 1982 the Head Start program separated from the Office of Human Concern and became a limited purpose agency. As a limited purpose agency NWAHSHS is limited to providing only child related services. Currently, NWAHSHS is funded to serve 504 children in Benton, Carroll, and Madison counties. Within the three county areas there are 10 local program sites, Bentonville, Berryville, Decatur, Gentry, Green Forest, Huntsville, Pea Ridge, Rogers-Hallie Martin, Rogers-Arkansas Street and Siloam Springs. Madison County also provides a home-based program to accommodate the needs of rural families.

### **Target Population**

Head Start is primarily for children from low-income families. At least 90% of the children enrolled must meet federal income guidelines, which are updated annually. NWAHSHS provides services to eligible children 3 years old to 5 years old in Benton, Carroll and Madison Counties. The child must be at least 3 years old by September 15th of the year he/she is enrolled. The agency's over-income slots are reserved for children with documented disabilities.

### **Agency Structure**

NWAHSHS is a private non-profit agency. The purpose of the agency is to administer a grant awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with Federal regulations. A Board of Directors and Policy Council govern the agency.

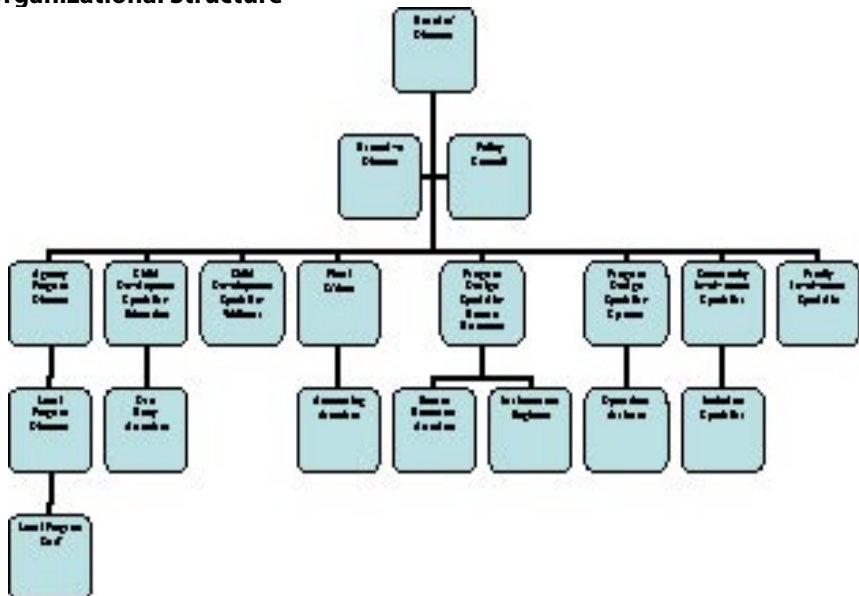
The Head Start Policy Council is composed of twenty-four (24) members, twenty-one (21) are parents of currently enrolled Head Start children, and three (3) community representatives who have demonstrated an interest in services provided to low-income children and families. The Policy Council has general responsibility for establishing a method of hearing and resolving complaints about the Head Start program, operating responsibility for conducting program evaluation, and approval/disapproval responsibilities before major decisions are finalized or action is taken. The Board of Directors is composed of ten (10) voting members and (2) non-voting members have the legal responsibility for the administration of the program.

Under the overall supervision of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director has full responsibility for planning, directing and administering the Head Start Program. The Executive Director directly supervises the Management Team and Agency Program Directors. Local Program Directors are responsible for supervision of the staff in their local program and their respective Family Service Workers. The local program staff include Classroom Teachers, Home Visitors and Teacher Aides whose primary duties consist of nurturing and teaching preschool children through organized

activities that stimulate each child’s physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth. In the kitchen, Cooks are responsible for providing nutritious meals following United States Department of Agriculture guidelines.

The Family Service Workers (FSW’s) are responsible for working with the families of enrolled children. They will make a minimum of one home visit to each family. When a family has a specific need the FSW is responsible for making a referral and providing follow-up. The goal of NWAHSHS is to help the parents become self-sufficient and independent.

**Organizational Structure**



**Chain of Command**

Volunteers should make every effort to handle issues that arise with their immediate supervisor. If the issue concerns the supervisor, or is not able to be resolved, please refer to the organizational chart for the next person in charge. You may contact the central office at 479-636-7317 for the name of the person in each role.

**Complaint Procedures**

It is the policy of NWAHSHS that any complaints follow the agency community complaint procedure. A copy of this form HSA-57 can be obtained from the central office by calling (479) 636-7317 or accessed on the agency website at [www.nwaheadstart.org](http://www.nwaheadstart.org). This procedure has been established to insure that all problems are documented, and every effort is made toward an acceptable resolution.

## **Agency Funding**

Head Start is a federally funded program that requires a 20% community match (in-kind). The in-kind or non-federal share is raised through volunteer services, donation of equipment and supplies, and donated space. The nutrition program for the children is primarily paid for through the federally funded (USDA), state operated Child Care Food Program. The Benton County and Gentry United Ways provide additional funds for all the Benton County sites.

## **Services**

Head Start is a comprehensive developmental program designed to meet the needs of children from low-income families. Many of those needs can and are met through the component areas. Those components include: Education and Disabilities Services, Family Services, Health and Nutritional Services, Community Partnerships, and Literacy. All services provided for the child and the families are of equal importance depending on the need of the child or family.

## **Definition of a Volunteer**

According to Head Start performance standard (1304.3 (20)) "Volunteer" means an unpaid person who is trained to assist in implementing ongoing program activities on a regular basis under the supervision of a staff person in areas such as health, education, transportation, nutrition, and management.

## **Definition of a "Regular Volunteer"**

For the purpose of volunteer policies within NWAHS, a "regular volunteer" is described as any individual who volunteers more than one episode per month, regardless of the length of time. In accordance with Arkansas State Licensing Requirement 303 this does not include individuals who provide health services or program enrichment activities on a limited basis. Each facility needs only to maintain a register of such persons that includes name, organization, address, telephone number, date and time in the center.

## **Volunteer Requirements**

### *Age:*

In accordance with Arkansas State Licensing Requirement 303, all volunteers shall be 18 years old or older unless the volunteer is under the direct supervision of the person in charge and has been approved on an individual basis by the Child Care Licensing Unit.

### *Health:*

In accordance with Arkansas State Licensing Requirement 303, regular volunteers will be required to provide evidence of having completed a tuberculin skin test, or provide a current physician's statement that they are free of communicable diseases. Either option can be accessed through the provider of choice and at the expense of the volunteer.

*Background:*

Regular volunteers will be required to complete a Central Registry check. Volunteers are responsible for completing the paperwork, and NWAHSHS will incur the cost.

*Orientation:*

All regular volunteers will be required to attend an orientation. During this orientation, the person in charge will review key points of information, and the volunteer will be required to acknowledge this training by signing NWAHSHS form HS10-15.

*Tracking:*

All regular volunteers will be required to track their time/contributions on NWAHSHS forms HSF-3 and their time/mileage HSF-4. This is crucial to our agency, and will also be used for recognition purposes.

*Code of Conduct/Standards of Conduct:*

All regular volunteers will be required to adhere to the volunteer code of conduct and standards of conduct on the following pages. Acknowledgement of these standards will be documented by signing NWAHSHS form HS10-7.

## **Volunteer Training**

Volunteers are not required to have any special education, training, or skills. If a volunteer has any special talents, we will encourage them to utilize them in any way possible. In accordance with performance standard 1306.23, volunteers will be given the opportunity and encouraged to attend staff trainings and workshops.

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

*Prohibition Against Acceptance of Gifts or Gratuities*

Any volunteer of this program is prohibited from accepting gifts of money, goods, services, or gratuities which are of any significant material value, from any person who received benefits or services from the organization, who may be doing direct contracting with any of the activities or functions of the organization, or who is otherwise in a position to benefit directly or indirectly, from any action or decision by a volunteer of this program.

*Prohibition Against Partisan Political Activity and Civil Disturbances*

Volunteering in this program may not be offered as consideration or regard for the support or defeat of any political party, contending faction or group, or candidate for public office.

Volunteers are subject to the provisions of Section 12 of the Hatch Act, which prohibits active participation in partisan political management or campaigns. In cases of alleged violation of the provisions, the program shall not initiate action, but shall utilize the normal channels for complaints, i.e., the procedures established and administered by the U.S. Civil Service Commission, and shall act only upon the recommendation of that Commission.

Any volunteer with a question pertaining to partisan political activity should contact the Program Design Specialist-Human Resources.

No volunteer of this program, in the performance of his/her duties, may plan, initiate, participate in, or in any way aid or assist in the conduct of any unlawful demonstration, riot, or civil disturbance.

#### *Prohibition Against Engaging in Harassment*

Volunteers are subject to the Agency's Harassment Policy, which prohibits harassment based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, sexual orientation or sex.

#### *Prohibition Against Disclosure of Internal Business Affairs*

Volunteers are not to discuss information designated as confidential (Confidentiality Procedures) with anyone outside the organization and discussed within the organization on a "need to know" basis.

#### *Prohibition Against Physical Threats*

Any volunteer of this organization is prohibited from threatening or intimidating management, supervisors or fellow workers.

### **Volunteer Standards of Conduct**

Volunteers will:

1. Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability;
2. Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members;
3. Not leave a child alone or unsupervised while under their care.
4. Use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation.
5. Not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs.
6. Not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or anything of significant monetary value from contractors of potential contractors.

### **Volunteer Bill of Rights**

Every Volunteer has:

- The right to be treated as a co-worker
- The right to a suitable assignment
- The right to know as much about the organization as possible
- The right to training for the job
- The right to continuing job education
- The right to sound guidance and direction
- The right to a place of work
- The right to promotion and a variety of experiences
- The right to be heard
- The right to be recognized

## **Volunteer Job Descriptions**

NWAHSHS maintains a list of available volunteer job descriptions. All volunteers are encouraged to investigate opportunities within the agency at any time, and we invite your ideas for new work opportunities.

## **Guidance and Discipline Policy**

Our positive guidance policy is to begin with an environment, which reinforces positive behavior in children. If a child behaves inappropriately, we will use a number of methods to encourage positive behavior. It is the responsibility of the adult that is supervising the children to help prevent discipline problems by:

- Accepting each child's worth and importance and understand each child's behavior is a reflection of their life experiences to date.
- Anticipating and intervening before disruptive behavior occurs.
- Providing a learning environment that is interesting, challenging, and at the developmental level of the child.
- Being consistent, following daily schedule every day and have an orderly flow through routines so that a child is neither hurried nor required to spend much time waiting in line.

Having rules that children help develop and make sure children understand the rules. Be firm, fair and consistent. When inappropriate behavior occurs in the Center, these steps will be taken:

- Teacher will talk to the child and try to help them find appropriate ways to correct the behavior or solve the problem causing the behavior. For example: "Use your words to tell how you feel. Hitting is not okay" or "We need to share. How about I set the timer for 5 minutes and you take turns when you hear the ring?"
- If talking is unsuccessful, the adult will re-direct the child by giving them other acceptable choices. For example: "Since we've talked and can't solve the problem, you can go to another center to play."
- If the previous steps have not changed the behavior, the child will be placed in a "time-out" chair where they are instructed to sit, relax, and calm themselves for one minute per year of age (3 year olds sit "quietly for 3 minutes). Time Out rules are:
- An adult will supervise the child at all times.
- Adult explains to the child the reason they are being placed in "time-out."

The maximum time spent in time-out coincides with their age, but does not begin until the child is calm. If the child refuses to go to time-out, or their behavior is very disruptive to other children, the child may be carried away from the group (out of the classroom) and held by an adult until his/her behavior is appropriate. The adult that uses any of the discipline steps is responsible for entering the information on the child's Behavior Observation Notes. It is the responsibility of the teacher (any adult responsible for the supervision of children) to ensure that:

Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, toilet training or isolation for illness. Physical punishment shall not be administered to children. The following activities are forms of punishment, not discipline, and are not to be used for children. These include, but are not limited to; restraints, harsh treatment, washing mouth out with soap, taping or obstructing child's mouth, placing unpleasant or painful tasting substances in mouth, on lips, etc., and verbal or abusive language, isolation without supervision, placing child in dark area inflicting physical pain; e.g., hitting, pinching, pulling hair, slapping, swatting, spanking, kicking, twisting arm, etc.

### **Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect**

It is the responsibility of everyone at Head Start to help keep children safe. Sometimes you may suspect that a child has been sexually or physically abused, or neglected. Sometimes children will tell teachers, other staff members and other adults that they have been abused.

Arkansas law 12-12-507 (b)-(c) and 12-12-518 (b) (1) requires that any individual working in a licensed childcare facility that suspects a child has been abused or neglected **MUST REPORT** to the proper authorities. NWAHSHS staff and regular volunteers are required to obey that law by reporting suspected incidences of abuse or neglect. All reports are kept confidential.

The Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year to take your call. The phone number is 1-800-482-5964.

### **Emergency and First Aid Procedures**

Each site has a plan for emergency procedures and a plan for emergency situations that require first aid. Your supervisor will provide you with clear rules about universal precautions and first aid treatment. Maps of exit routes or natural disaster areas are posted at each program site and emergency equipment is stored in a central location. Your supervisor will identify this information for you, but it the responsibility of volunteers to familiarize themselves with these routes. Regular volunteers will be given the opportunity to receive CPR and First Aid training with NWAHSHS staff; however, volunteers should not practice first aid treatment unless program staff are not able. Regular Volunteers will be required to fill out NWAHSHS form HSA-1 which contains important information to assist staff if volunteers are involved in an emergency or an accident. This card will be kept in a confidential location.

### **Calendars**

Each center will post a calendar showing upcoming events, in-service trainings, vacations, etc. Staff will inform volunteers of any changes.

Volunteers should review the calendar each time they arrive at their sites. Home Base Educators will provide volunteers in their programs with calendars at least monthly and will also inform them of any changes.

### **Communications**

Volunteers should receive the same information that staff receives. Supervisors will direct volunteers to the area where they can review these communications on a regular basis.

### **Relatives of Staff as Volunteers**

If family members of staff are utilized as volunteers, they will not work or be placed under direct supervision of or in the same component as the staff person to whom they are related without prior approval of the Community Involvement Specialist. If at any time this approval results in a conflict or any problem with the relationship between the volunteer and NWAHSHS, the Community Involvement Specialist may revoke the approval.

### **Head Start Parents and Relatives as Volunteers**

Head Start parent volunteers will be utilized where such services do not obstruct or conflict with the provision of services to the parent or to others. Relatives of parents may also serve as volunteers but will not be placed directly under the supervision of the parent or in the same component of the volunteer program as that of the parent volunteer without prior approval of the Community Involvement Specialist. If at any time this approval results in conflict or any problem with the relationship between the volunteer and NWAHSHS, the Community Involvement Specialist may revoke approval.

### **Service at the Discretion of NWAHSHS**

The Head Start program will appreciate and utilize all volunteers with the understanding that such services are at the sole discretion of NWAHSHS. Volunteers agree that the Head Start program may at any time, for any reason, terminate the volunteer's relationship with NWAHSHS. The volunteer may at any time, for any reason, decide to sever their relationship with NWAHSHS. Notice of this decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor.

### **Insurance**

NWAHSHS volunteers have the same coverage as employees with regard to liability insurance. However, if volunteers feel they should have more insurance, they should consult with their personal insurance agents. Any further coverage will be the responsibility of the volunteers.

## **Political Activity**

All regular volunteers are expected to adhere to NWAHSHS personnel policy #695 with regards to Political activity. No NWAHSHS volunteers shall solicit any money, influence, service or other thing of value or otherwise aid or promote any political committee or the nomination or election of any person to public office while on the job during working hours. No agency volunteer or private person shall solicit any assessments, contributions or services for any political party from any person during working hours. Staff members participating in political activities must do so as individuals and may not represent NWAHSHS.

## **Personal Appearance/Hygiene**

All regular volunteers are expected to adhere to NWAHSHS personnel policy #645 with regards to Personal Appearance/Hygiene. Appearance is a large part of the image or impression people carry away after a visit to our Agency. For that reason, we try hard to present an attractive outward appearance of the Agency with well-maintained office buildings and grounds. Once inside, a visitor's impression should be equally good. For this reason, employees are asked to support our efforts toward conveying an impression of neatness, competence and professionalism while on the job. The Agency expects all employees to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and grooming and to present a neat, businesslike appearance at all times during working hours.

## **Personal Appearance Guidelines**

Clothing of all employees should be clean, unwrinkled, in good repair, and suitable to the work being performed.

1. Low cut and backless dresses; low-neck blouses, cutout clothing and halter-tops are not acceptable.
2. Short tops must have something underneath so that the waist is covered.
3. Short shorts and mini skirts (shorts/skirts shorter than three inches above the knee) are not acceptable.
4. Spandex and/or lycra biking shorts or the like there of are not permissible.
5. Shoes must be worn at all times.
6. Only closed toe shoes with rubber soles are permitted when working in the centers when children are present.
7. No jeans or shorts should be worn to company workshops unless otherwise specified.
8. Kitchen workers and/or cooks must keep their hair that is longer than their collar tied back at all times.
9. Kitchen workers and/or cooks must wear a hair net or designated chef/kitchen hat at all times.
10. Jewelry should be moderate and not interfere with work. When in contact with children, staff may not wear bracelets, dangling or hoop earrings or necklaces.

11. Body/nose rings that are visible may not be worn by any employee while working. This includes tongues, eyebrows, noses, etc.
12. Fingernails must be clean and trimmed to a uniform length not to exceed ¼ of an inch. Polish should be repaired or all polish removed.
13. Kitchen workers and/or cooks should not wear fingernail polish of any sort. This is to include clear polish.

Kitchen workers and/or cooks may only wear their wedding rings to work.

### **Confidentiality**

All regular volunteers are expected to adhere to NWAHSHS personnel policy #615 with regards to confidentiality. In connection with your volunteer commitment you may make use of certain confidential and/or proprietary information of the Agency. The terms “Proprietary” or “Confidential Information” mean any information that could provide an advantage or benefit to a competitor of the Agency or harm to the Agency if disclosed, including any data or information not reasonably known outside the Agency, whether prepared or developed by or for the Agency or otherwise developed or received by the Agency under such circumstances that warrant classification as Proprietary Information. Proprietary Information specifically includes, but is not limited to, client information, personnel records, accounting procedures, compensation information, promotions, price lists, profit information, cost information, financial information, manner of operations, policies and procedures, plans, processes, projections, and any data and information providing the basis therefore, and business method, internal memoranda, management reports compiled or maintained by the Agency in any form.

Specifically, child records, family records and employee records are Confidential Information.

Volunteers may not use Proprietary or Confidential Information except in connection with the performance of volunteer duties. Moreover, discussions regarding confidential information/matters with non-Agency personnel is prohibited. This obligation of confidentiality is not extinguished by termination of volunteer duties.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and may, depending upon the severity of the breach of confidentiality, result in legal action against the active or past volunteer.

### **Short Term Exclusion Policy**

All regular volunteers are expected to adhere to NWAHSHS personnel policy #735 with regards to Short Term Exclusion Guidelines: The short-term exclusion policy has been implemented as a guide to help keep local program staff, volunteers and children healthy and safe. Symptoms to look for that may exclude a volunteer from center attendance are, but are not limited to:

1. Diarrhea- more than three loose stools in a 24-hour period.
2. Severe coughing.
3. Discharge from the eyes (pink eye), nose (continuous greenish mucous or clear watery mucous), or ears (continuous discharge).
4. Unusual spots, rashes, or infected areas of the skin (ring worm, chicken pox, scabies, impetigo), not obviously associated with heat or allergic reaction to medication.
5. Sore throat, if associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck.
6. Vomiting- if two or more occasions within the past 24-hour period.
7. Severe itching of body or scalp (head lice, scabies, rash, fleas).
8. Fever- body temperature of 100 degrees or more in past 24 hours.
9. Severe bronchitis.
10. Abscess teeth or continual dental pain.

If a volunteer shows signs of one of these illnesses throughout the day, they should be asked to leave NWAHSHS and seek medical attention if necessary. Any volunteer who has been injured may be excluded on a short-term basis, depending on the injury and the seriousness of the injury. A physician's statement of care may be required before the volunteer will be permitted to NWAHSHS, for the following injuries, but not limited to:

1. Head Injury
2. Back injury
3. Broken bones
4. Exposed stitches that may only be covered with a band aid

If any volunteer is hospitalized for any reason, he/she may be required to obtain a physicians statement of care before being allowed to return to work.

Any food service volunteer who has any of the following symptoms or has been diagnosed with an Infectious Disease will be restricted from food handling until they are symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours or until they have clearance from a physician:

1. Vomiting
2. Diarrhea
3. Jaundice
4. Fever
5. Open skin lesions that cannot be completely covered

### **Smoking**

All regular volunteers are expected to adhere to NWAHSHS personnel policy #730 with regards to smoking. No smoking is permitted at any time on Agency premises (including the building, the parking lot, sidewalks adjoining the property, etc.), in Agency vehicles, on Agency paid time, or at any time the volunteer is representing the Agency.

Because there is considerable evidence that environmental tobacco smoke is harmful to children and adults and because Head Start has the mission

of promoting the health and development of the children and families it serves. Head Start Bureau final program instruction effective 5/1/95 requires all Head Start programs to provide a smoke-free environment for children and adults who participate in the program.

Smoking shall not be permitted as follows:

1. No person/persons shall be permitted to smoke within any indoor facility owned, leased or contracted with NWAHSHS.
2. No person/persons shall be permitted to smoke on the outside grounds of a facility owned, leased or contracted with NWAHSHS.
3. Head Start Staff/Parents shall refrain from smoking at socialization activities or Home Visits when Head Start activities are taking place.
4. No person/persons shall be permitted to smoke in vehicles while being used to transport Head Start children.
5. NWAHSHS Specialists and Local Program Directors are responsible for posting "No Smoking" signs at entrance of facility and for posting Agency Non-Smoking Policy on staff and parent bulletin boards.
6. Local Program Director is responsible for reviewing the Agency Non-Smoking Policy in the "New Staff Orientation."
7. Executive Director is responsible for enforcing a Smoke-Free Environment.
8. Head Start Staff are responsible for promoting and maintaining a Smoke-Free Environment.
9. Local Program Director is responsible for reviewing the Agency Non-Smoking Policy with Parent/Guardians at Parent Orientation.
10. Family Involvement Specialist is responsible for providing Parent Education through newsletter articles, pamphlets, etc.

## **Meal Periods**

All regular volunteers are expected to adhere to NWAHSHS personnel policy #630 with regards to meal periods. Head Start Performance Standards states that staff (paid or unpaid) must ensure that nutritional services in the center-based settings contribute to the development and socialization of the enrolled child. All children, classroom staff, including volunteers, must eat together family style and share the same menu to the extent possible.

Adults are to eat with the children at every meal, including snack. There is to be an adult at each table. If necessary, push two tables together to make one. Adults are to eat what the children eat, with no exceptions. Cooking staff does not have to eat with the children everyday but should eat in the classroom periodically. If an adult does not like a food item, he/she is to take a small helping and have a positive attitude about trying the food. If an adult cannot eat something on the menu, a signed statement from a doctor/religious clergy is required just as it for a child at the center. If an adult wants to eat or drink something on a break that he/she is not going

to offer the children (e.g., coke, tea, coffee, or candy), he/she shall not eat or drink it in front of the children. It must be consumed in a break area or outside the building. This practice is a licensing regulation (700 Nutrition #5).

Children are to be encouraged to taste all foods, but never forced. The right of a child to refuse a food is to be respected. Food must never be used as a punishment or reward. A child will never be deprived of a meal or snack for any reason. This practice is a licensing requirement (500 Behavior Guidance #5L). Children need to participate in meal service. They can make centerpieces, wipe tables, set tables, help prepare and serve food, wipe up spills and clean up. Children will serve themselves and the adult sitting at the table it so ensure that adequate portion sizes are being placed on each child's plate. Cooks are responsible for placing the appropriate sized serving utensils with each food item in the bowl and for ensuring that fork, knife and spoon are included with breakfast and lunch meals.

Mealtime should be a relaxed atmosphere. Make conversation with the children and do not rush to finish. Allow slow eaters at least 30 minutes to finish. Basic table manners are to be practiced at every meal. Children who have finished and scraped their plates may be excused from the table. This practice complies with Head Start Regulation 1304.23(c)(3).

Everyone, adults as well as children, need to wash their hands before eating. If food is dropped on the floor, throw it away. If silverware is dropped on the floor, get a clean replacement. This practice is a licensing regulation (700 Nutrition #4 & 1102 Hand Washing #4).

### **Agency Locations**

Bentonville Center  
802 N.W. "A" Street  
Bentonville, AR 72712  
479-273-2496

Green Forest Center  
204 Thorn St.  
Green Forest, AR 72638  
870-438-6770

Rogers-Hallie Martin  
109 West Industrial Drive  
Rogers, AR 72756  
479-631-2684

Berryville Center  
366 B Hwy 21 North  
Berryville, AR 72616  
870-423-3366

Huntsville Center  
500 E. Main  
Huntsville, AR 72740  
479-738-1298

Rogers-Arkansas Street  
1305 N. Arkansas Street  
Rogers, AR 72756  
479-636-4506

Decatur Center  
363 East Joe Avenue  
Decatur, AR 72722  
479-253-9780

Huntsville Home Based  
500 E. Main  
Huntsville, AR 72740  
479-738-1297

Siloam Springs Center  
1017 East Tulsa  
Siloam Springs, AR 72761  
479-524-4283

Gentry Center  
208 South Giles  
Gentry, AR 72734  
479-736-2406

Pea Ridge Center  
411 Black Street  
Pea Ridge, AR 72751  
479-451-1321

Administrative Office  
210 N. 13th Street Suite C  
Rogers, AR 72756  
479-636-7317