

# **Crossroads Head Start and Early Head Start**

## **Behavior PLAN**

**2022-2023**

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Head Start is based on the premise that all children share certain needs and that all children can benefit from a comprehensive developmental program to meet their needs. One of the primary goals of the Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low-income families. Social competence encompasses the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. The individual uniqueness of each child must be protected and nurtured as we strive toward this goal of social competence.

The purpose of this policy is to assist children, families, and staff with positive classroom behavior intervention techniques and create a supportive environment for every child, which is least restrictive and promotes their success.

**Head Start recognizes the relationship between the child's environment and a positive, successful learning experience. Activities to promote mental wellness and good early childhood practices are one and the same. They are exhibited in the five categories below.**

**1. Environment**

The physical environment is especially important for young children. It affects how they feel, how comfortable they are, how they relate to others, and how successfully they can accomplish their goals. Thoughtful arrangement of the indoor and outdoor environment will provide a supportive environment.

*To Produce Effective Results:*

- Define areas to accommodate groups of children.
- Use low furniture to define areas, allowing teachers to see into all areas and give children a sense of privacy.
- Arrange areas for different kinds of activities: dramatic play, art, blocks, table toys, books, sand and water, and large muscle activities.
- Have noisy areas separated from quiet areas.
- Display materials on low shelves where children can reach what they need.
- Provide quiet and soft spaces where children can relax.
- Use labels to show where each object belongs (examples can be found in the HIGH SCOPE Curriculum).
- Place pictures on the walls at children's eye level.
- Provide enough material for parallel and cooperative play.

**2. Program Structure: Schedule and Daily Routine**

Provide consistency in daily schedule and routines. Young children feel more secure and able to trust when they can predict the sequence of events and have some control over their day.

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*To Produce Effective Results:*

- Define periods of the day, from the opening of the center to the departure of the last child. Have a schedule for the class and stay with it. Let children know what to expect and what is expected. Schedule/Daily Routine should be posted in a manner that children are able to follow, at the child's level and in picture form.
- Balance active and quiet times during the day.
- Give many opportunities for children to be in small groups.
- Provide time for children to play outdoors at least once during the day.
- Allow enough time for transitions and routines such as clean-up, hand washing, preparation for lunch, etc.
- Structure time periods appropriate to the developmental abilities of children (e.g., preschoolers can be expected to sit and attend to one activity for no more than 5-10 minutes).
- Allow children to select their own activities. Allow play for an extended time to allow a project to be completed.

**3. Transitions**

Attention to transition time is essential for effective classroom management. When handled in a relaxed manner, transition time can provide opportunities for learning and reinforcing concepts/skills.

*To Produce Effective Results:*

- Give children sufficient warning before transitioning so they can complete what they were doing and prepare for the next activity.
- Explain what is coming next and what is expected. (e.g., "In five minutes, we'll be getting ready for lunch. This means everyone will need to wash their hands.") For transitional activities such as hand washing, tooth brushing, etc. have the children go in small groups.
- Involve children in meaningful transition activities such as washing paintbrushes or setting tables for a meal.

**4. Activities and Experiences**

Experiences are provided that meet children's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas – physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. Appropriate activities are designed for children with different levels of ability, development, and learning styles.

*To Produce Effective Results:*

- Assist children in acquiring concepts and skills through meaningful activities such as playing with blocks, measuring sand and water, sorting and classifying materials,

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drawing and painting, and observing changes around them.

- Give many opportunities for children to learn that reading and writing have meaning (availability of a rich assortment of books, allotted time for reading stories-either in groups or with individual children, use of visuals paired with words/language).
- Plan activities for children to develop small muscle skills (e.g., placing pegs in a board, cutting, painting, constructing with small blocks.)
- Engage children in activities that enable them to represent their ideas (e.g., using art materials, telling stories, participating in dramatic play).
- Observe and interact with children to facilitate children's use of materials; add new materials as interest level of the children grows and develops. Make creative suggestions to extend children's play.
- Provide materials that demonstrate cause and effect (water wheels in tables, funnels in sensory tables, bubbles, etc.).
- Ask questions to encourage children to think and express their ideas. Accept more than one right answer and encourage creative thinking. This should be done in a conversational format, not a continual questioning of the child. The idea being to encourage the children in communication/interaction with others.
- Engage children in cooperative work for a common goal (e.g., making a mural, planning an event, recreating a city in the block corner, studying a topic in depth, preparing a meal.)
- Balance teacher-directed and child-initiated activity.
- Change plans if you observe that the current activity is not working.
- Help children problem-solve and work things out for themselves. Provide them with ideas.

## 5. **Equipment and Materials**

Prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials. Rotate and replace a rich supply of materials often enough to maintain children's interest and to give them new challenges.

### *To Produce Effective Results:*

- Provide materials and equipment that is appropriate for the children's age/stage of development
- Make materials relevant to the cultural backgrounds and life experiences of the children.
- Make sure materials and equipment are in good repair with no sharp edges, peeling paint or splinters.
- Set out sufficient quantities of materials and multiple sets when possible.
- Vary materials in complexity (e.g., 5-7 piece puzzles as well as 10-12 piece puzzles).
- Use materials in each interest area that reflect the curriculum and the interests of the children (e.g., If the children have recently visited a construction site nearby; teachers

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might add hard hats and lunch pails to the house area, construction vehicles to the block area, and books on construction to the library corner). Display material with picture labels to show where each object or set of objects belong.

- Group together materials that are used together
- Provide materials that are nonsexist (e.g., men's dress-up clothes in the house corner; books and/or pictures showing women in leadership roles and men in nurturing roles).
- Provide a variety of textures for children to touch/experience-including soft, hard, rough, smooth, feathery, gooey, dry, etc.

**Head Start believes that young children benefit from simple and consistently reinforced rules. When clear limits are set and enforced consistently it facilitates the development of self-control and self-regulation in children. This occurs by verbally encouraging expected behavior, by redirecting children toward more acceptable choices and by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling. Teacher's expectations should match the developmental capabilities of young children.**

#### **Rules and Consistency**

- Establish clear rules and limits for behavior from the very first day and apply them calmly and consistently. Review rules daily, using gentle reminders during the various activities of the day.
- Children need consistent rules from all caregivers who interact with the child; reinforcing, reminding, and verbalizing the same message to the child whether at home or in the classroom.
- Provide consistent consequences for behaviors, both positive and negative consequences.
- Use logical consequences. Let children know the positive and negative consequences of their actions. Let them experience these.
- Respond to children's needs and questions quickly and positively. When children have help with problems and are immediately comforted, it greatly reduces the level of distress.
- Kneel down to talk to the child. Establish eye contact and use a soft but firm voice when speaking to young children.
- Demonstrate respect for children's ideas and feelings even if not in agreement.
- State what the desired response is, not just the behavior to stop. Be specific. Tell the child what you want them to do (i.e., "Use your feet to walk up the steps and your bottom to slide down", Instead of "Do it the right way")
- Reinforce cooperative behavior; encourage children to work together and to care for one another.
- After stating desired behavior, ignore negative behavior-if possible
- Encourage the ability to initiate, renegotiate and maintain friendships. Reinforce when the child interacts positively with other children by smiling and talking to the child. Acknowledge the child's need to interact and help them learn to do so appropriately.
- Follow through. Only say something if you know you can carry it out. Do what you say

you will do.

**Head Start believes that individualizing is a crucial component in the development of a behavior plan. This philosophy recognizes, values, and plans for differences: differences in the rate at which growth/development occurs, and the unique life experiences that children bring to the program.**

### **Individualizing**

- Observing children should be ongoing throughout the day, noting any insights gained about each child's abilities, interest, and needs.
- Recognize that each child is unique and has specific strengths and needs.
- When observing, take note of when, where, with whom, and how often problem behaviors occur. Be aware of what happens before and after undesirable behaviors. Look for specific triggers and plan a response.
- Allow the child to make as many choices as possible. Point out the choices they make.
- Pay attention to children who are less verbal as well as those who have a lot to say.
- Modify space, materials, and activities for children with disabilities.
- Reinforce and celebrate small steps to success. Individualize reinforcements. What works for one child may not work with another. Use positive reinforcement to eliminate undesirable behaviors before they occur.
- Anticipate what will happen next. Look for impending trouble in order to prevent problems.
- Interact with one child or a small group during the most active periods.
- Be aware of children who have sensory triggers, providing more or less sensory stimulation as needed (more or less light, noise, touch, or physical activity).
- Help children express their feelings. Give them words to use such as, "I'm hungry, hot, hurt, and mad".
- Play with the children. Involvement in their play facilitates learning.
- Establish signals with the child to let them know you will help him/her recognize unacceptable classroom behaviors (ex. teacher stops talking, or touches ear, etc.)
- Accept the child. Use a neutral tone of voice, showing respect for the person but correction of actions. "I feel sad that the toy is broken".
- The Head Start approach for children in conflict is not to separate the children, but to help the children work on their conflict resolution skills.
- When a child has an IEP or IFSP, the teachers/staff must have opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills required for prevention and intervention of challenging behaviors within the child's individualized plan. Teachers should discuss, as a team, how to individualize for each child and include this information in preparing lesson plans.

**Head Start recognizes that every person in a child's life shares the responsibility to mold, teach and love that child. We believe that parents are the most important people in the child's world, that parents are a child's first and most influential teacher(s).**

### **Responsibilities**

- Greet parents and children by name when they enter the center.
- Share something special about the child's day with each parent
- Show concern for parent's feelings when separation is difficult or the child has had a tough day.
- Help all adults learn the effects of positive discipline.
- Regularly update *Parent Centers* with resources.
- Post signs in each interest area conveying what children are learning and how parents can participate in extending their play.
- Encourage parents to participate in the program by sharing a skill, an interest or some aspect of their cultural heritage.
- Schedule regular parent meetings. Parent meetings may serve the purpose of facilitating discussions, learning from guest speakers, orienting parents about the curriculum, etc.
- Share information and progress on each child at conferences and/or quarterly home visits; document results in each child's folder.
- Communicate to applicable staff needed information for children with an individualized plan.
- Work as a team in the classroom, when one person gets tired and needs relief, they should signal other teachers or support staff for help. When help is needed, quickly ask other center staff members or Area Supervisors. Find volunteers whenever possible.
- Use humor. Enjoy the children and laugh along with them.

**Head Start recognizes that a child may engage in disruptive behaviors, even in a classroom that is well structured and designed to meet the needs of individual children. Early intervention is essential when disruptive behavior is observed.**

**Behavior interventions need to be implemented when challenging behavior may result in injury to self or others, cause damage to property, interfere with the learning process and/or socially isolate the child. (Doss & Reichle, 1991)**

### **Intervention STEPS for Challenging Behaviors**

*(Note: these steps should be utilized when positive behavioral techniques, such as those listed above, are consistently implemented for approximately 3 weeks following the child's initial enrollment and/or transition).*

#### **STEP 1. Identify the behavior**

- Teachers should answer these four questions. 1. Is the child's behavior physically aggressive or harmful to themselves or other children? 2. Is the behavior destructive to property? 3. Does

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the behavior consistently and increasingly interfere with the learning of new skills within the classroom? 4. Does the behavior socially isolate the child from peers?

- If the answer is YES to any of the above questions, the teacher will complete a *Crossroads HS/EHS Behavior Reflection Summary* (B-5) form. A copy will be faxed or emailed to the Mental Health/Disabilities Coordinator (MHDC) that day and the original form placed in the child folder behind the Mental Health tab.

**STEP 2.** Assess the behavior

- Teachers should be discussing behaviors with parents every time a Behavior Reflection Summary is written. Be sure to inquire about recent changes within home/family, including changes in the child's daily patterns/routines. Also be aware of any current physical health concerns the child may have. Provide parent(s) with handout, *Teaching Self-Discipline: Setting Limits for Young Children* (B-2); or *Biting in the Toddler Years* (B-1).
- Also, after the 3rd Behavior Reflection Summary the MHDC will discuss the behavior with the reporting teacher and will observe the child in the classroom. After observing, the MHDC may offer the teachers feedback and suggestions. If needed, the MHDC may request the Education Coordinator and/or the Area Supervisor observe the child/classroom as well.
- The MHDC will review the child's screening results, recommended referral(s), length of enrollment, family history and identified special needs (Refer to Disabilities and Mental Health Plans).

**STEP 3.** Address the behavior

- If challenging behavior continues following Steps 1 & 2; the identified staff will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a meeting after the 5th Behavior Reflection Summary. (Note: if staff cannot contact the parent after several attempts by phone and/or in-person, the Crossroads HS/EHS Parent Communication Letter (B-6) will be sent to the parent. The MHDC will complete the parent communication letter in consultation with classroom teacher).
- The parent meeting should include the parent(s), the classroom teacher(s), and the MHDC (if needed, other applicable staff, family members, caregivers and consultants may be included). In the event MHDC cannot attend the meeting, other identified staff will lead the meeting and a copy of the completed/signed form will be sent to the MHDC.
- The meeting should be held as soon as schedules allow and will be documented on the *Parent Meeting* form (MH-403). This form will summarize and document the concern(s) and the strategies discussed by those present. The Parent Meeting Form will be copied; the original



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placed in the Child Folder behind the Mental Health tab, and one copy given to the MHDC and one copy given to the parent. Appropriate consent and release forms/referral packet should be accessible at the meeting in the event that referral for additional services is needed. (Refer to Disabilities and Mental Health Plans).

**STEP 4.** Develop an Individual Behavior Plan (IBP). IBP's must be reviewed and updated each year.

- If the challenging behavior continues after following Steps 1-3 AND after allowing adequate time to implement the strategies/recommendations discussed in the parent meeting (approximately 3 weeks); the NEXT STEP is the development of an Individual Behavior Plan.
- The teacher will complete a Behavior Reflection Summary, plus contact MHDC by phone. Identified staff will contact parent to schedule a 2nd meeting.
- The MHDC will consult with the Assistant Program Director, Area Supervisor, Center Director and the Mental Health Consultant; discussing previous concerns/interventions and upcoming IBP team meeting. MHDC will gather all necessary information to have available for the meeting, which should include the Written Individual Behavior Plan Form (B-4), copies of previous Behavior Reflection Summaries, copies of any relevant information from consultants/service providers and a copy of these Intervention Steps.
- The behavior team meeting must include the parent(s). It should also incorporate the lead teacher, Center Director and the MHDC. Consultants, family advocate, area supervisor and other component staff may also be included in the behavior team.
- The Written *Individual Behavior Plan* (B-4) will list specific challenging behavior(s), accompanied by specific corresponding intervention/consequence(s). After discussion and agreement of the IBP all the team members present will sign the form and a copy will be given to each team member-especially the parent. The original is placed in the child's folder, inside the mental health tab.
- If aggression/physical harm is the issue; the corresponding intervention may be that the parent or guardian will be contacted to come and provide active parental supervision in the classroom due to the child's unsafe behaviors. In this instance, the teacher must inform the Center Director, MHDC or Area Supervisor before calling the parent. If the child is absent the following day, a home visit will be conducted.
- The behavior team should meet to follow-up approximately four weeks after implementing the IBP (the date/time agreed upon should be recorded on the team form (B-4) at the time of

the Behavior Team meeting. During the four weeks of implementing the IBP, teachers will follow the IBP and continue to complete Behavior Reflection Summaries as needed.

#### **STEP 5. “Trouble Shooting”**

Sometimes, after following all the steps, after referrals/treatment with professionals and even after increasing parental support, some children continue to exhibit challenging and aggressive behavior. When this is the case, head start endeavors to balance the individual needs with the safety of other children and the classroom environment.

### **§1302.17 Suspension and expulsion.**

#### **(a) Limitations on suspension.**

- (1) A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.**
- (2) A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.**
- (3) Before a program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, a program must 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.**
- (4) If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, a program must help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:**
  - (i) Continuing to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;**
  - (ii) Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed;**
  - (iii) Providing services that include home visits; and,**
  - (iv) Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.**

The use of suspension, in our program, is used exclusively for extraordinary and extreme circumstances. Children are only sent home if they have caused or intended to cause substantial injury to a child or staff member and/or have jeopardized their own safety. Rare situations requiring suspension will comply with the following criteria:

- If a temporary suspension is necessary, it is for one day only and the child is welcome to come back to the program the following day.

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- *The Intervention Steps for Challenging Behavior; Steps 1-4* have already been implemented, which includes a Written Individual Behavior Plan.
- If screening and observation indicates a need for referral to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA and the referral has not already been made, then the MHDC will facilitate the referral in the manner described in section 1302.33 (3)(i)(ii).
- The classroom staff will contact the MHDC, who will consult directly with the Mental Health Consultant, Area Supervisor and Assistant Program Director.
- A home visit will be conducted the day of the suspension to ensure the safety of the child.
- Following a suspension, a meeting with the parent(s) will be conducted. This meeting should occur no more than 2 days following the day of the suspension. The meeting will include the parent(s), classroom teacher(s), Center Director, MH Consultant, MHDC, Family Advocate and Area Supervisor. The IBP form (B-4) will be used for documentation. This is filed in the Child Folder and a copy provided for the parent, MHDC and MH Consultant.

**(b) Prohibition on expulsion.**

- (1) A program cannot expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior.**

Our program does not expel or unenroll any child from Head Start or Early Head Start due to their behavior.

- (2) When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, a program must explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. 705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child's teacher, and:**

**(i) If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), the program must consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or,**

**(ii) If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the program must collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.**

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When a child exhibits persistent and challenging behavior, the steps outlined in 1302.17 (a)(1)(2)(3) are followed to document and explore all steps taken to address behaviors. If the child has an IEP or IFSP, the MHDC will consult with their service provider or teacher to ensure the child receives needed support services and invite insight and knowledge from those professionals. The MHDC will also invite professionals associated with the IEP or IFSP to observe the child in our classroom and instruct our teachers in ways to address behaviors.

If the child does not have an IEP or IFSP, the MHDC will facilitate the referral in the manner described in section 1302.33 (3)(i)(ii).

- (3) If, after a program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a program, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued 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 must work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.**

At this point, the Program Director will be contacted to insure all possible solutions have been explored. Our program will work together with the parents to find appropriate alternative placements, which could include therapeutic child care, residential treatment or specialized child care. Transition and follow-up of the new placement will be documented in Child Plus.

## KEYS TO FORMS

**B-1**            **BITING IN THE TODDLER YEARS**

This handout is for parent(s) of the child who is exhibiting challenging behavior by biting/aggressive behavior. Teacher(s) will provide a copy of this handout to the parent(s).

**B-2**            **TEACHING SELF-DISCIPLINE: SETTING LIMITS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

Teachers will give this handout to parents after a child receives the 3<sup>rd</sup> Challenge Report.

**B-3**            **WHEN CHILDREN BITE: WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

Teachers will provide this handout, as needed, for the parent of the child who was bitten.

**B-4**            **WRITTEN INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR PLAN (IBP)**

This form is utilized by the MHDC to record notes and plans of action agreed upon by the team at the Behavior Team Meeting. The original of this completed form goes in the Mental Health section of the Child Folder and a copy is provided for the parent(s), the MHDC and, if needed, other team members.

**NOTE:** This is a Confidential Document.

**B-5**            **BEHAVIOR REFLECTION SUMMARY**

The classroom teachers will fully complete this form to record challenging behavior-as specified in the *Intervention Steps for Challenging Behavior (STEPS 1-5)*.

**NOTE:** This is a Confidential Document

**B-6**            **PARENT COMMUNICATION LETTER**

**For Use Only** as specified in the *Intervention Steps for Challenging Behavior (STEP 3)*. Form should be completed by the classroom teacher and then forwarded to MHDC; after consulting together-the letter will be signed by the MHDC, copied for coordinator's records and returned to teacher. The original will be sent to the parent and a copy placed in the child folder.

**B-7**            **INTERVENTION STEPS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS**

Handout used as a quick reference guide for teachers and is given to parent(s) at Behavior Team meetings to indicate the steps that have been performed.