

Southern New Hampshire Services  
Child Development Program  
Head Start/Early Head Start/Child Care

## **Caregiver Code of Conduct**

### **Introduction**

SNHS Head Start and Child Development programs provide safe and supportive environments for children and their families. The foundation of the program is built on establishing relationships based on mutual trust and open communication.

The *Core Values of Head Start* are essential to the services provided for children and families, including:

- We strive to build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual while at the same time, a sense of belonging to the group is reinforced.
- We respect the importance of all aspects of an individual's development, including social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.

This Caregiver Code of Conduct establishes basic guidelines for appropriate caregiver behavior. It suffers the same limitations inherent in any set of guidelines, insofar as it tends to focus on unacceptable behaviors or minimum standards. We recognize, however, that the focus of good caregiver behavior is on spontaneous, creative interactions with children, on positive actions and words.

### **For the Child**

- I will assure that children are supervised at all times and never left alone, knowing that children out of sight are at risk.
- I cannot allow a child to hurt him/herself, another person or materials in the room. A child's safety is my primary goal.
- I will strive to eliminate unsafe behavior by anticipating it ahead of time and closely supervising any potentially dangerous situations.
- I will not permit unknown adults to enter program areas nor to interact with children.
- I will only release a child to an authorized individual.
- I recognize the development of sexual awareness is a typical phenomenon. I will answer children's questions regarding human anatomy and sexual development in a serious and age-appropriate manner.
- I will supervise children's toileting activities, recognizing that bathroom doors shall remain open when I am in the bathroom with a child. (Centers with bathrooms adjacent to public areas may be exempt from this provision.)
- I will provide experiences that help children respect the rights and understand the feelings of other children.
- I will accept every child as a worthy human being.

### **For Guidance and Discipline**

As a caregiver, I seek to promote the development of self control in young children through positive guidance and actions. In striving to reach this goal,

- I will seek to prevent the need for discipline by establishing an orderly classroom environment and offering age appropriate activities through which children can succeed.
- I will use a variety of positive guidance methods as outlined in the SNHS Behavior Management Policy.
- I will help children establish limits for behavior. This means helping children find solutions to conflict situations.
- I will help children handle negative feelings through acceptable outlets.
- I will strive to never embarrass or humiliate a child.
- I will be aware of conversations taking place regarding child behavior with staff or family and will be sensitive to the needs of the child and family, maintaining confidentiality and planning time and space for meaningful conversations.
- I will protect a child from herself or others when necessary, using the least restrictive intervention.

Staff Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

**I will abide by the Head Start Program Standards of Conduct that:**

- Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children’s well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior;
- Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not:
  - Use corporal punishment;
  - Use isolation to discipline a child;
  - Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child’s mouth;
  - Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;
  - Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;
  - Use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;
  - Physically abuse a child;
  - Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child’s family; or,
  - Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.

**For the Parents**

- I will recognize the parent as the primary educator and influence in his or her child’s life. In striving to reach this goal,
- I will maintain professional relationships with participating families and be aware of the job-related issues of confidentiality, objectivity and conflicts of interest.
- I will seek to maintain open and ongoing communication with parents, through such means as daily conversations and parent conferences.
- I will encourage direct involvement and input of parent ideas into the program.
- I will maintain an open center in which parents feel comfortable visiting at any point during the day.

**For Myself, Family Development and the Early Childhood Profession**

- I will make every attempt to learn about current developments in the field of early childhood education through both formal and informal means, and will commit myself to improving my skills.
- I will always act with the knowledge that I am a role model for children, parents, and the profession.
- I will limit personal conversations with co-workers, visitors, or telephone callers to break times or after children have left the program for the day.
- I will dress in a manner which is clean, neat, safe and appropriate for caring for young children.
- I will respect and maintain client confidentiality at all times.
- I realize that it is my responsibility as a caregiver to recognize my individual limitations, both emotionally and physically. When limits are strained, I will ask for support and relief from other caregivers or supervisors.
- I understand that physical nurturance is an important element of communication and growth. I may initiate and return signs of affection to/from children, such as hugs. I may physically hold and carry children who seek and are comfortable with such attention. I must also respect children if they do not want to be hugged or held. True, healthy nurturance has no room for threat or force. Therefore, actions such as tickling or roughhousing are not appropriate.

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All classroom personnel are responsible for the children in their care and share equal responsibility for the care and supervision of children. As a **TEAM**, staff is accountable for what happens in the classroom and with the children that they are supervising.

I understand that the failure to abide by or report actions or concerns that are in conflict with this Caregiver Code of Conduct is grounds for termination of employment.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date