POLICY:

No child enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start is ever left alone or unsupervised. All children shall have the full attention of the appropriate number of staff. Consistent, effective line-of-sight and sound supervision of all children is required to ensure the health and safety of each child. Staff will maintain active attention and awareness of children’s whereabouts at all times. Volunteers and visitors are under the full supervision of staff and are never left alone with children.


HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

1302.47 Safety Practices

(a) A program must establish, train staff on, and enforce a system of health & safety practices that ensure children are safe at all times. (2) indoor and outdoor play equipment used in the care of enrolled children must meet standards set by the CPSC. All equipment and materials must (iii) be designed to ensure appropriate supervision of children at all times and (iv) allow for the separation of infants and toddlers from preschoolers during play in center-based programs.

(5) All staff and consultants follow appropriate practices to keep children safe during all activities. (ii) Safe sleep practices for children under 18 months of age... (iii) appropriate indoor and outdoor supervision of children at all times (iv) Only releasing children to an authorized adult (v) Comply with all standards of conduct in 1302.90(c) and (v) Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractor volunteers while under their care.

Oregon Department of Education Certified Child Care Center Rules

OAR 414-300-0130(3) Staff/Child Ratios and Group Size: Children shall at all times have the full attention of the appropriate number of staff. Children shall be within sight and sound of a caregiver at all times. (7) Any time there are children in care, (a) there shall be a minimum of two staff persons on site.

OAR 414-300-0300 (6) The following safe sleep practices must be followed…Infants must be placed on their backs on a flat surface for sleeping; (f) …if an infant falls asleep in a place other than their crib, the caregiver must immediately move the infant to an appropriate sleep surface; (g) No child shall be routinely left in a crib except for sleep or rest; (h) There shall be no items in the crib except a pacifier (e.g. bottles, toys, pillows, stuffed animals, blankets, bumpers); (i) Swaddling or other clothing or covering that restricts the child's movement is prohibited; (j) Clothing or items that could pose a strangulation hazard (e.g. teething necklaces, pacifier attachments, clothing drawstrings) are prohibited; and (k) Children who are asleep in a car seat must be removed upon arrival to the center and placed in a crib.
PROCEDURES:

A. Responsibility for Supervising Children and Volunteers/Visitors

Center Staff: Center classroom staff, or those center staff filling in for classroom staff (e.g. a family advocate) are solely responsible for supervision of children according to these procedures. Contracted agency staff (e.g. child development specialists and mental health consultants) may be left alone with children. However, classroom staff maintain their responsibility for child supervision.

Volunteers/Visitors: Volunteers are never responsible for child supervision, and may never be left alone with children. Volunteers include community volunteers (e.g. foster grandparents, student interns, etc.), HS/EHS parents or community partners (e.g. a librarian coming to a center to read to children) and any other visitor (e.g. food delivery person).

Volunteer/Visitor Sign-In: All volunteers and visitors must sign in on the appropriate form (See Visitor Log Procedure, and Volunteer Handbook).

B. Required Staff to Child Ratios: The following minimum staff to child ratios must be adhered to at all times. Staff may not leave a classroom if the result would be that these minimum ratios would not be met.

Head Start: A minimum ratio of 1 staff per 10 pre-school children

Early Head Start:
- Group of 8: A minimum ratio of 1 staff to 4 infants/toddlers
- Group of 9: A minimum ratio of 1 staff to 4 toddlers with 3 staff in the classroom at all times.

C. Child Safety and Supervision Training: The Site Managers will review active supervision roles with center staff teams and are responsible for ensuring that all child supervision procedures are followed for their center. Center teams must complete child safety and supervision training and practice child safety and supervision procedures prior to the start of classes. Ongoing review and practice of child safety and supervision procedures is required every two months for all center teams and documented in the Child Safety Binder. Compliance with this training requirement is monitored by the Safety and Compliance Manager on site visits.

D. Classroom Rules: Classroom staff will teach and review classroom rules with children at their developmental level.

E. Arrival and Departure Procedure. Refer to this (separate) specific procedure for ensuring children’s safe arrival to and departure from the center.
F. Redundant Child Checks: These are completed to ensure that no child ever remains alone in any setting (e.g. classroom, bathroom, foyer, playground, bus etc.). Redundant checks will be conducted at a minimum:

- Every hour AND

- During all transitions when a child or group of children leave one area to go to another. Two examples of “transitions” are: taking children from the classroom to the playground and taking a child from the classroom to a bathroom located outside the classroom.

Note: For transition procedures taking children safely to and from a bus on a Head Start field trip, refer to the Arrival and Departure Procedure in section E above.

a. How to Conduct a Redundant Child Check:

A total of 2 checks are required to complete a redundant check. They are:

- 1st check: One staff member counts the children

- 2nd check: A second staff member counts the children. Both staff confirm verbally with each other that their individual counts are the same. If their counts are not the same, start the procedure over again.

  o Documentation on white board: Staff will update the whiteboard according to the white board procedure in the following section.

- As children move from one space toward another, one staff member (the caboose) carefully scans the entire area once the children have left to make sure no child has been left behind. This staff person confirms verbally with the rest of the staff team that the room/area they are transitioning from is clear of children. The redundant check begins again when children move into the next room/area. For example: a group of children moves from the classroom into hallway (scan of room is done and the recount is done and confirmed), and then the group of children moves to the playground while the last staff person (the caboose) scans the hallway. Once at the playground, the children are counted again and the count is confirmed.

G. White Board Documentation Procedure

i. White Board Posting:

A labeled white board must be posted in all classrooms and on the playground. For 0-5 centers, a white board is posted on both the HS and EHS playgrounds.
Only authorized classroom staff are allowed to update the white board. Volunteers/visitors/community partners/therapists are not authorized to update the white board.

ii. Documenting on the White Board: Any time a redundant check is completed, the total head count of children present is written on the white board with the date and time of day that the head count is conducted. The number of children in attendance must always match the number recorded on the white board.

If during a redundant child check, the second staff member’s child count does not match the first staff member’s child count, the redundant child check procedure is repeated. (See F. (a) above).

The white board must show at all times:

a. The correct number of children in attendance for the day documented at the top of the white board, AND

b. The correct number of children not in the classroom documented at the bottom of the white board (e.g. taken to the bathroom, removed for hearing/vision screening or speech therapy, taken by a DHS Caseworker, an infant removed by his/her mother for breast-feeding).

The white board is also updated when a child arrives late or leaves early.

The example below illustrates the number of children in attendance (18) and the number of children not present in the classroom (2). A glance at the white board informs that 16 children are currently present in the classroom, 1 child was removed from screening and 1 child was taken to the bathroom (located outside the classroom).
Once the child or group of children returns to the classroom, the classroom staff will conduct a redundant check as described in the section above and update white board.

H. Staff Communication: Classroom staff are required to verbally announce (using teacher talk) to their classroom staff team when they intend to take a child/group of children out of the classroom. The staff member must wait until they hear a verbal confirmation from their teaching team prior to taking the child/children from the classroom. (E.g. Staff person 1: “I am taking Bob and Bill to the bathroom.” Other classroom staff: “OK – I hear you are taking Bob and Bill to the bathroom.”)

I. Authorized Non-classroom Staff Taking Child From the Classroom:
Authorized non-classroom staff, community therapists, DHS case workers and other authorized agency professionals who need to remove a child from the classroom must:

- Communicate verbally with the classroom Teacher/Specialist that they intend to remove the child from the classroom, and wait until the classroom Teacher/Specialist verbally acknowledge that communication.

- Document on the Class Sign-in Sheet and Activity Log (on the back of the Sign Out & In For Screenings) the specific time that they remove the child and the time they return the child to the classroom.

- Verbally communicate to the classroom Teacher/Specialist that the child has been returned.

Classroom staff are solely responsible for documenting on the white board when the child leaves the classroom with authorized non-classroom staff and when they return the child to the classroom. Classroom staff follow the
redundant child count procedure to verify the number of children present in the classroom.

J. Zone Supervision

All classrooms and outdoor play yards must establish zone maps.

a. **General Zone Supervision:** Staff must supervise the outdoor and indoor play areas in such a way that children’s safety can be easily monitored and ensured. One or more staff are assigned a specific area – a zone – for which each are responsible for maintaining line-of-sight and sound supervision of each child within his/her assigned zone while that supervision strategy is being used.

b. **Napping and Safe Sleep Supervision** Zone supervision must ensure that line of sight and sound supervision is maintained during rest, nap, and relaxation times. Sleeping infants must be very closely supervised at all times. See [Rest Procedure](#) and [Safe Sleep for Infants Procedure](#).

c. **Establishing a Plan for Zone Supervision:** A plan for zone supervision must be established, and a zone map posted, at each center prior to services starting at the beginning of the year. The Site Manager is responsible and the Ed supervisor helps develop the plan. The Plan for Zone Supervision includes the identification of key zones in the indoor/outdoor classroom environment and the required placement of staff to ensure safe and effective supervision of children at all times. Education Supervisors, Site Managers will practice zone supervision at their respective centers.

d. **Updating the Plan for Zone Supervision:** The Plan for Zone Supervision must be reviewed and updated frequently to ensure that new staff are trained to the plan and adaptations are made due to special needs of individual children, ages of children enrolling during the year (particularly infants), or when changes are made to the physical classroom/outdoor environment (e.g. new equipment installed, changed play yard etc.).

e. **Damaged Equipment:** If damaged equipment prohibits appropriate supervision of children, the Site Manager is responsible for immediately developing an interim Plan for Zone Supervision. The Safety and Compliance Manager is a resource to assist with the development of the interim plan. Once the Maintenance team has made the repair, the original Plan for Zone Supervision will be implemented once again.

f. **Documenting the Plan for Zone Supervision Training:** The Plan for Zone Supervision Training is documented in the Center Team Meeting Binder and monitored by the Safety Compliance Manager during site visits. The Education department will also monitor the Plan for Zone Supervision and zone map as part of their Dates and Deadlines monitoring system.
K. Agency Standards of Conduct – Reporting Unsupervised Children:

a. Requirement To Report: Any staff person who becomes aware of a child who is unsupervised for any length of time must report this to their direct supervisor (Site Manager) immediately. Immediately is defined as right away or the soonest time the staff person can leave the classroom while maintaining required ratios for child safety and supervision. Failure to make an immediate report is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. Refer to Agency Standards of Conduct.

L. Other Supervision Guidelines:

- Ensure that all classroom staff follow individualized child guidance plans. Refer to Child Guidance Procedure.

- Ensure environments and equipment are accessible, safe, and age appropriate and allow for the separation of infants/toddlers from preschoolers.

- Head Start staff and children wear nametags at all times; Early Head staff will have their name tag on them (in smock) and infants and toddlers will wear name tags for the first two weeks of the program year; families and volunteers wear Visitor nametags.

- Centers in elementary schools follow procedures specific to the school pertaining to visitors.

- Follow any additional center-specific procedures for gates, locking doors and buzzers on doors.

M. Annual Child Supervision Training: All center employees participate in annual Child Supervision training. Human Resources tracks and monitors annual child supervision training to ensure that all staff receive it.