

Bennington County Head Start

Parent Handbook

and

2017 – 2018

School Calendar



Strengthening Families since 1965

Bennington County Head Start is an affirmative action agency that does not discriminate in its selection policies with regard to race, color, cultural heritage, religion, disability, sex, age, national origin, marital status, political beliefs or sexual orientation.



Bennington County Head Start Listings

***Mailing Address for Centers:** P.O. Box 588, Bennington, VT 05201

Head Start Centers:

Hours for Centers: 7:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Early Care: 7:30 a.m.—8:30 a.m.

Pre K—8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Extended care: 3:00 p.m.—4:30 p.m.

*North Bennington Campus

Park Street Center/West Street Center

2 Park Street

North Bennington, VT 05257

Telephone # 442-3686

Fax # 447-3423 (Park) 442-0227 (West)

*Pownal Center

8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Telephone # 823-5410

Fax # 823-4031

97 Schoolhouse Road

Pownal, VT 05261

River Road Center

59 River Road

North Bennington, VT 05257

Telephone # *(to be determined)*

Fax # *(to be determined)*

Manchester Elementary

Telephone # 362-0361

Fax # 362-0325

Stephen Lundy Building

Route 7A

Manchester Center, VT 05255

Forever Friends 6:30—3:30 p.m.

Owner & Manager: Michelle Prouty

Telephone # 447-8843

Fax # 72-7952

1735 East Road

Bennington, VT 05201

Shaftsbury Early Childhood Center (SECC)

7:30 a.m. —4:00 p.m.

Jackie Myers & Michelle Prouty

Telephone # 681-7539

P.O. Box 326

Shaftsbury, VT 05262



UCS—Telephone for After-Hour Emergencies
Bennington # 442-5491 ~ ~ Northshire # 362-3950

A PROGRAM OF UNITED CHILDREN'S SERVICES, INC.



Community Numbers

Police, Fire, Ambulance (Emergency) – 911

Bennington Police – 442-1030

State Police — 442-5421

Hospital (SVMC) – 442-6361

Poison Control – 1-800-222-1222

Human Service Informational & Referral Hotline – 211

WIC – 447-3531

United Counseling Services – 442-5491

DCF/Economic Services - 1-800-479-6151

DCF/Child Protective Services – 1-800-649-5285

BROC – 447-7515

Bennington County Child Care Assoc. (BCCCA) – 447-6936

Green Mountain Express– 447-0477

Legal Aid – 1-800-639-8857

Bennington County Court House – 447-2700

Family Court – 447-2729

VT Department of State Licensing— 1-800-649-264 Voc.

Rehab—447-2780

Subsidy @ BCCCA

Ashley - 447-6937

Rose - 442-0059

_____ Child's Doctor

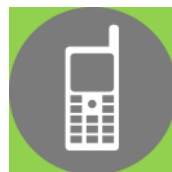
_____ Child's Dentist

_____ Dentist

Vermont 211 is the number you dial to find out about hundreds of important community resources, such as emergency food and shelter, disability services, counseling, senior services, healthcare, child care, drug and alcohol programs, legal assistance, transportation needs, educational and volunteer opportunities, and much more.

Telephone Extension List

**North Bennington Campus
Park & West Street Centers
442-3686; 447-3304; 442-9536
Fax: 447-3423**



141 ATTENDANCE LINE

- 134** Betsy Rathbun-Gunn, Director
- 121** Lisa Biddle, Administrative Coordinator/Transportation Supervisor
- 124** Lynne Teker, Education/Disabilities Manager,
Park Street Center Manager
- 133** Rebecca Bishop, Operations Manager, West Street Center Manager
- 135** Beth Wallace, Family & Community Partnership Manager
- 129** Grace Winslow, Health Manager
- 128** Melanie Charpentier, Health & Food Services Coordinator
- 127** Jo-Anne Main, Transportation Coordinator/Bus Driver
& Office Assistant
- 137** Lindsey Woodie, Administrative Clerk, West Street Center
- TBD** Mary Monick, Family Support Worker, Park Street Center
- TBD** Christine Joslin Family Support Worker, West Street Center
- 132** Donna Bourgeois, Head Cook West Street Center
- 126** Mary Gates, Cook, Park Street Center

Classrooms

- 122** South Room, Park Street Center
- 125** East Room, Park Street Center
- 123** Pre-K 1, West Street Center
- 130** Pre-K 2, West Street Center
- 131** Pre-K 3, West Street Center

River Road Center

Tonya Havens, Teacher/Center Manager
Kaleigh Biddle, Teacher Assistant
Shannon Skowron, Teacher Assistant
Jessica Wilbur, Family Support Worker
Phone # _____ (*to be determined*)
Fax # _____ (*to be determined*)

Pownal Center

Stacie Staab, Teacher
Crystal Clifford, Teacher Assistant
Toni Kuzawski, Teacher Assistant
Corinne Lyons, Family Support Worker
Phone # 823-5410; 823-7744
Fax # 823-4031

MEMS / Northshire UCS

Elementary School: 362-0361
Hours: 8 am—2:30 pm
Manchester UCS: , Jennifer Galusha, Coordinator

Forever Friends Playschool

Michelle Prouty
Phone: 802-447-8843
Fax: 802-672-7952
Email: vtaries@comcast.net

Shaftsbury Early Childhood Center (SECC)

Jackie Myers & Michelle Prouty
Phone : 802-681-7539
Email: jtmyers72@gmail.com
Email: vtaries@comcast.net

Suzanne Moffit, Partner Family Support Worker

Bennington County Head Start

Bennington County Head Start (BCHS) has been serving families in Bennington County since 1965. We offer a comprehensive program that strives to meet the needs of the whole family. Children attend full day
BCHS must adhere to Federal Standards and the Vermont State Child Care Licensing Regulations, which are posted at each center and can be found online at: <http://www.state.vt.us/srs/childcare/license.htm> Copies are also available by calling 1-800-649-2624. Any teacher or manager can assist you with questions or concerns as well.

How to Obtain a Birth Certificate:

The Bennington Town Clerk, located at 205 South Street, will have a birth certificate on file if:

1. **The child was born in Bennington, or**
2. **The parents resided in Bennington at the time of the birth, but the birth took place elsewhere in Vermont. **The cost for each certified copy is \$10.00.** Just come by the office with name and date of birth and you'll be able to get the birth certificate immediately. **IF YOUR CHILD WAS NOT BORN IN BENNINGTON AND YOU DID NOT RESIDE IN BENNINGTON** - Contact the Town Clerk in the town and state in which you resided when your child was born to get a copy of the birth certificate.**

Parent Fees & Policy at all Head Start Centers:

If your child is enrolled in the full day/full year program, please be aware and knowledgeable of the payment and late fee policy.

Payment Policy: It is essential that child care fees be paid promptly at the beginning of each week. Payment is due on Monday for the week to follow; never for child care already received. Checks or money orders should be made out to **United Children's Services.** Credit cards and auto-pay options also available. Please contact Rebecca Bishop, Operations Manager, if you expect that your payment will be late or you need assistance, 442-3686 ext. 133.

If fees become more than 5 days past due and you have not spoken with the Operations Manager, child care services will discontinue immediately. Payment is due regardless of actual

attendance. If your child does not attend, the program is reserving their slot and program expenses are the same.

Late Fee Policy: If for any reason (accidents, hospitalizations, sickness) you anticipate being late to pick up your child from child care, you need to call and let your child's teacher know how late you will be. Our program has a "3 strike policy" so if your child is picked up past their own scheduled pick up time you will first have a verbal warning that there will be a **\$5.00 per 15 minute charge per child**; the 2nd time it happens you will receive a written letter advising of the policy and a reminder that the 3rd incident will result in the implementation of the late fee. The late fee must be paid by the end of the month in order to insure uninterrupted child care. Please be considerate of the teachers and their families and be sure that your child is picked up on time.

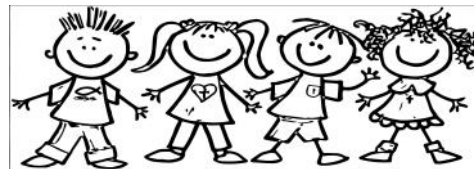
Child Care Subsidies and Assistance:

Please call Bennington County Child Care Association (BCCCA) at 802-447-6936 for assistance. ***It is your responsibility to keep your certificate current.***

Whenever you receive paperwork from BCCCA, please fill out and return it immediately so the staff has time to process it before your certificate expires. The Head Start Operations Manager at 442-3686 ext. 133. or your Family Support Worker are also available to answer any questions about subsidy and paperwork

Snow Day Policy for Head Start Centers:

We follow the Southwestern Vermont Supervisory Union (SVSU) when calling snow days or delays. When SVSU is closed, we are closed. When SVSU is delayed, we are delayed. **You are responsible for being aware of snow days. School closings and delays are announced on local radio stations, and television channel's 6, 10, and 13, and will also be posted to our Facebook page.**



General Guidelines:

* Parents are asked to be aware of and respect the center's hours of operation. Staff will not be available to supervise your child during non-school hours because they have many other responsibilities. **If you arrive early with your child, please be prepared to stay with him/her until your child's hours begin. Also, PARENTS MUST BRING THEIR CHILD INTO THE BUILDING AND TO THEIR CLASSROOM.**

* Anyone who picks up children must be on the emergency contact form. Please avoid calling in with someone new to pick up as we cannot verify voices on the phone. You must send a signed note indicating who will pick up and what time. This person will be required to have a valid ID to show before your child can be released, and they must be at least 17 years old. If there is an emergency and you must call Head Start, the alternate person will still need to have ID to pick up your child.

* **DO NOT** leave other children outside in a vehicle while you bring the enrolled child in the classroom. Children "picked up" need to be buckled into their own car seat per Vermont State Law. **Both instances are against the law, and reportable to police. Vehicles must be turned off; idling is illegal.**

* Please be sure that children have an extra set of clothing, labeled with your child's name, at the center. Items can be kept in the child's cubby for emergencies or to keep your child comfortable.

* Please make sure that children have appropriate clothing for outdoor play (hats, boots, mittens, snow pants, winter coat, sweat shirt, and a change of shoes or slippers) because outdoor play is a daily part of the child's classroom play, 10° - 90°.

* Check your child's **Friday Folder**, as we put important reminders and information in them weekly. You are expected to read all letters and flyers sent home and return requested items.

* No personal toys or food are to be brought into school or on the bus unless it is a toy share day and/or set up with your child's teacher in advance



September 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 <i>Labor Day</i> CLOSED	5	6 1st Day of School Head Start/Pre School ← ← ← 12:00 p.m. Dismissal → → →	7	8	9 Fight for Air Climb @ Monument
10	11 1st Day Early Head Start	12 Pownal Screenings 9:30–11:30 a.m. Policy Council Meeting 4:30 p.m.	13 Breakfast or Snack w/ Buddies @ All Centers	14 Pre-K 1 Screenings 9:30–11:30 p.m.	15	16
17	18	19 Pre-K 2 Screenings 9:30–11:30 a.m.	20 Dr. Porter @ SECC, FF, & Pownal 8:30 a.m. ***Soccer Clinic @ Willow Park for 3–5 year olds 4:30–5:30 p.m.	21 Pre-K 3 Screenings 9:30–11:30 p.m.	22 <i>Fall Begins</i>	23 Soccer Clinic @ Willow Park for 3–5 year olds 9–10 a.m.
24	25 Forever Friends Screenings 9:30–11:30 a.m.	26 East Room Screenings 9:30–11:30 a.m.	27 Soccer Clinic @ Willow Park for 3–5 year olds 4:30–5:30 p.m.	28 River EHS Screenings 9:30–11:30 p.m.	29	30 Soccer Clinic @ Willow Park for 3–5 year olds 9–10 a.m.

POLICIES

Enrollment/Classroom Assignment: Children are assigned to classrooms and teachers in accordance with the needs of the children, the strengths of the teachers, available space, and other relevant factors.

- * Children with special needs enrolled in the program are placed among the classrooms and sites based on individual needs and space availability.
- * Children with special needs requiring a lot of individual attention should not, if at all possible, comprise more than one third of class enrollment.
- * Before assignment of children to classes, a component team discusses children's needs for special services. Consideration must be given to the total make-up of the class determining placement after the initial IEP meeting
- * At any time BCHS staff will work with parents and special education staff to evaluate and reassign a child's classroom placement if necessary, and with the approval of the Director.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENTEEISM

Parents are expected to call the attendance line at (442-3686, ext. 141) directly by 8:30 a.m. if their child will not be attending that day or if the child will be arriving after 9:30 a.m.

Attendance is directly related to school success. Good attendance habits developed in preschool can build the foundation for good attendance and school attendance for your child's lifetime, and ensures that the students can achieve their potential.

If your child will be absent or arriving any later than 9:30 a.m., please call the attendance line at 442-3686, ext. 141 by 8:30 a.m. and provide the reason for the absence or tardiness, including disease diagnosis or symptoms if your child is sick. If we do not hear from you, your child will be marked "absent" and you will receive a call later in the day. Absences due to illness, religious holidays or doctor's appointments are the only absences considered "excused".

Please let program staff know if you need help with your child's attendance. Head Start is mandated to maintain at least 85% monthly attendance. Extended absences and lack of program participation after assistance has been offered will result in an attendance plan. If conditions of the plan are not met, a letter will be sent stating that since you have chosen not to participate in the program we can only assume that you have decided to make other arrangements for your child and your space will be offered to another child.

In addition, we must adhere to the SVSU Pre-K attendance policy, so children who have unexcused absences will receive a personal contact from a staff person and a written letter outlining attendance practices. Parents of students who continue to have unexcused absences will be invited to attend a meeting with Head Start staff to mitigate barriers to school attendance. After this meeting children who continue to have more absences may be discontinued from the Pre-K component until a meeting is held with Head Start and SVSU to remove barriers to student attendance.

Confidentiality Policy: All contacts and records in United Children's Services and BCHS are kept in strict confidence governed by Federal Confidentiality Regulations. No acknowledgement or releases of information are given without expressed written permission from parents.

Behavior Management: Children in this program are to be treated in a safe, positive and reassuring manner. Staff encourages appropriate behaviors through positive recognition. When staff address children, it is done in a calm manner and on the child's level with positive approaches to help children feel safe. A child's parent(s), and our management team may be consulted if problem behaviors persist or escalate.

- * Teachers and parents are encouraged to work together.
- * Teachers and parents are encouraged to use positive discipline to develop appropriate social skills.
- * Rules and limits should be made clear and consistent for children.

- * Teachers are encouraged to involve children in developing clear and consistent rules and procedures.
- * Redirecting is encouraged. All discipline is non-judgmental.
- * Children may be removed to an appropriate area for some time to give themselves a chance to settle down.
- * A teacher may remove a child from a room for short periods of time if they feel it has become necessary for safety. An adult, preferably the adult involved, will remain with the child at all times.
- * A child may move to a different classroom to better meet their developmental needs. Parents will always be involved in the process.

At no time does a teacher or staff member use extreme punishment.

Staff is prohibited from:

- * Use of corporal punishment, including spanking.
- * Subjecting a child to severe or cruel punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- * Using food as a form of punishment or reward.
- * Punishing a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- * Physical restraint will only be used in extreme situations for a child's safety and only by staff trained in appropriate methods. The parent will be notified immediately.

Abuse and Neglect Policy: According to Vermont regulations found in the revised statute regarding the reporting and investigating of child abuse and neglect, Head Start staff are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and neglect. Bennington County Head Start complies with Vermont law which states, "Any day care worker who has reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected, including medical neglect, shall report or cause a report to be made to the appropriate district protection agency within 24 hours." A copy of the full written law is available to parents upon request.



October 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Explorer's Club 4:30 p.m.	5	6	7
8	9 <i>Columbus Day</i> CLOSED	10 Policy Council Meeting 4:30 p.m. N. Bennington	11 Explorer's Club 4:30 p.m.	12	13 CLOSED Head Start VAEYC Conference in Killington, VT	14
15	16	17	18 Breakfast or Snack w/ Buddies @ All Centers Explorer's Club 4:30 p.m.	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Explorer's Club 4:30 p.m.	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Emergency Policy: Posted at each BCHS Center is specific procedures in case of fire or in the need of other evacuations or medical emergencies. Emergency drills are scheduled regularly throughout the year. Each classroom is equipped with a First-Aid kit. All parent emergency phone numbers are kept in the attendance clipboard. All Bennington County Head Start staff have received First Aid and CPR training.

Holiday Policy: Head Start staff and families strive to include all children and families; to treat individuals equally; and to realize, respect and allow for other people's differences and beliefs. We do not celebrate holidays, nor do we allow costumes, presents, cards, or food in the classrooms for special occasions.

Smoke Free Policy: Due to Federal regulations, all Bennington Head Start properties are smoke-free. Staff members who do home visits will not smoke in children's homes and will ask parents to refrain from smoking in the room where the child and home visitor are working for the duration of the visit. Parents are not permitted to smoke on any Head Start property, including in their own vehicle, or at any Head Start events off-site.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy:

Prevention of alcohol and substance abuse is an important element of family wellness. Prevention includes good communication between parent and child, promoting positive self-esteem, and developing healthy problem solving and decision-making skills within your family. If you feel there's a need to seek outside help, the Family and Community Partnership Manager or your FSW will provide support and help direct you to the appropriate community resources.

DUI Policy: This policy is put into place to protect our Head Start children. In the event that a child's parent, guardian or emergency contact comes to the Head Start Center to pick up their child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, we will not release the child. We will:

- Offer a ride to the person and the child.
- Offer to call someone to come pick them up.
- Call the police if the person refuses the offered ride and insists on taking the child. The responsible staff member will make it clear to this person that a telephone call will be made informing the police of the condition of the driver and their license plate number.

Transportation: Bus transportation is **NOT** a federal requirement and transportation is only available at our North Bennington and River Street Centers for families that fit the required criteria for transportation. Please note that busing service is **NOT** guaranteed and may change as transportation needs change.. All children need to be brought to and picked up from the bus by a responsible adult at least 17 years of age and at the assigned times. All children need to be dressed and ready and at the bus stop when the bus arrives. ***The driver cannot wait***; this not only holds up traffic but also makes them late in getting to the next stop, and then late for school. *Federal mandate limits bus run to 60 minutes total.*

The bus driver will not allow a child to get off the bus with anyone other than the parent unless the adult's name is on a release signed by the parent. If no one is home when the bus arrives at the end of the day, your child may be brought back to the Head Start Center where available staff will call your emergency contacts. A LATE FEE CHARGE OF \$5.00 per 15 minutes will be applied. It can be very traumatic for a young child when you are not there to meet them and have not made prior arrangements.

Children are buckled into a federally approved harness by the monitor and expected to behave properly during the bus ride. No food, drinks or toys are allowed on the bus.



Parents are not allowed to get on the bus to assist as we have a bus monitor so traffic is not delayed and all children can be transported within the federally mandated timeframe allowed.

In the event a child acts unsafely on the bus, Head Start will first offer a verbal warning to both the parent and child. The second warning will consist of a letter sent to the parent and a meeting will be scheduled. The third warning will consist of a meeting with the parent and appropriate staff to develop a plan for your child.

*** Important Note:** All Head Start staff, including those on the bus, adhere to all HIPPA and FERPA regulations and must sign off on confidentiality annually. There will be occasions when information will be sent via bus staff home and vice versa and this is covered under the signed "release of information" at your registration appointment for your child.

Safety Education: Bennington County Head Start will ensure that School Bus and Pedestrian Safety training is provided for parents and children, as well as activities throughout the year to remind children of safety procedures. This policy applies to the driver, teachers, monitors and parents.

During registration, training will be provided to parents that will emphasize the importance of escorting their children to the vehicle stop and will reinforce the training provided to children about school bus and pedestrian safety.

Parents who have any bus questions or concerns should call Jo-Anne Main at 442-3686 ext. 127 or Lisa Biddle at ext. 121.

Complaint Procedure Policy: It is the policy of Bennington County Head Start to deliver services in a professional and high quality manner and that services be of sufficient quantity to meet the needs of those receiving services. If you have a complaint including, but not limited to any of the following:

- Denial of services; Dissatisfaction with any aspect of services; Amount of services; Timeliness of services; Dissatisfaction with staff, OR Accessibility of services.

Forms for this purpose are available at each Head Start Center or call 442-3686, ext. 121 or UCS at 442-5491.

Public Pre-K Partnership Programs:

Act 166 established publicly funded pre-k in 2015 for 3, 4 and 5 year olds recognizing that a child's growth and development occur best in integrated environments and are best provided in locations that are convenient to families and minimize transitions for children. Bennington County Head Start partners with SVSU because SVSU believes the provision of early care and pre-k education through high quality private providers is one of the most crucial elements to support the strengths and stability of the system serving young children.

Bennington County Head Start has partnerships with all of the school districts in Bennington County. The benefits of being a public pre-k center include having licensed early childhood teachers on staff, professional development and materials offered by the SVSU, transition activities for children as they move into kindergarten, and shared information.



November 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Cooking Club 4:30–6 p.m.	2	3	4
5 Daylight Savings Ends	6	7 Election Day Policy Council Elections	8	9	10 CLOSED For Staff in-service & Meetings	11 <i>Veteran's Day</i>
12	13	14 Policy Council Meeting & <u>Mandatory</u> Trainings w/newly elected members 4:30 p.m. N. Bennington	15 Book Club 4:30–6:30 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 CLOSED	23 <i>Thanksgiving</i> CLOSED Thanksgiving Break	24	25
26	27	28	29 Breakfast or Snack w/ Buddies @ All Centers Book Club 4:30–6:30 p.m.	30		

Education Program

Philosophy and Goals: Our goal is to support children in gaining skills to prepare them for school. We work with families to build on the child's strengths and interests. We believe children learn about themselves and the world through their play with other children and their relationships with close adults. We value that each child is different and we work to provide opportunities for your child to learn and develop at his or her own speed.

We believe in the family and will do all we can to help strengthen and support that unit. We support and assist the family in recognizing and achieving its own goals. The goal of the education component is to promote the Head Start characteristics that most influence how well a child learns in school. They are: self-control, confidence, curiosity, the ability to communicate and cooperation. Head Start supports parents in their role as primary teachers of their children, based on the understanding that a healthy relationship between parents and children is one of the most important factors in promoting learning. Head Start helps parents recognize the learning opportunities in their own homes and communities and to appreciate the value of play.

Children learn by being active participants who explore, experiment and inquire. Play offers children the opportunity to master their environment. When playing, children are in command, using their imaginations, bodies, power of choice, and problem solving skills. In environments where children are allowed to ask questions and discover at their own pace, they will become excited and curious learners.

Head Start is committed to providing all children with a safe, nurturing, engaging, enjoyable and secure learning environment, in order to help them gain the awareness, skills and confidence necessary to succeed in the present environment and to deal with later responsibilities in school and in life.

Creative Curriculum: Head Start provides an individualized developmental curriculum for every child. The curriculum is based on child development principles about how children grow, think and learn. Children learn by doing—experiencing with all of their senses; playing and exploring in a variety of settings; experimenting and problem-solving on their own; and feeling successful in learning.

The program provides for learning experiences that promote the growth of the whole child. It provides for activities and interactions based on the age and developmental stage of each child. There is a wide range of equipment and materials for children of all ages. Some of the experiences include sensory - sand and water tables, block building, dramatic play, doll corner and puppets, puzzles, pegs, and matching /sorting games, play-dough, painting, cutting and drawing materials, large motor activities, books and musical experiences, science and math experiences, emergent literacy and numeracy. Creative curriculum aligns with Vermont Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. (HSELOF)

The HSELOF includes:



- * Approaches to Learning
- * Social and Emotional development
- * Languages and Communication
- * Literacy
- * Mathematics Development
- * Scientific Reasoning
- * Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

Screenings: The education component at Head start focuses on assisting parents and teachers in finding the best way your child learns by utilizing his/her strengths and assessing where he/she needs additional support. All children are required to have a developmental screening within the first 45 days of his/her start date. In the Bennington area an initial developmental screening is completed using the Ages and Stages questionnaire (ASQ-3) completed by the parents. If there are concerns the next screening will be the DIAL-4 given by the SVSU Early Education team. Parents are required to attend this screening to provide their input and to have immediate feedback once the screening is completed. In the Northshire programs, our screening tool is the ESI-R and the ASQ-SE.

The developmental screenings give us information on what the child can do in each area of development – speech and language skills, fine and gross motor, cognitive reasoning, social-emotional and self-help skills.

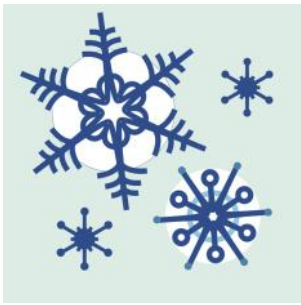
Disabilities Services: The BCHS program is required to make available, at a minimum, ten percent (10%) of its enrollment opportunities to children with special needs. Head Start services children in integrated, developmentally appropriate programs, and works closely with their parents and local and state education agencies to provide accommodations and individualization according to the child's special needs. We work in partnership with families as they participate in team meetings to develop and update their child's program according to his/her Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Kindergarten Transition: The goal of the Head Start kindergarten transition process is to work together with the family, Head Start teachers and elementary school staff to provide information and resources to make the transition from Head Start to kindergarten a positive experience for both the parents and children.

This goal will be accomplished by notifying parents of Kindercamp and summer kindergarten transition programs; arranging visits to the Head Start classroom by the kindergarten teachers; and providing families with books about going to kindergarten. We have a partnership with the Shaftsbury Elementary School and the children who are Shaftsbury residents visit the school one morning a week from January through April and attend the "specials", such as gym, art, music and library. The North Bennington Village School has several Kindergarten Transition visits in the spring introducing children to kindergarten classroom and music and art teachers. We also partner with the Bennington School District and hope to participate in transition programs with Molly Stark, Benn El and Monument as planned by the Bennington School District.

Home Visits/Parent Teacher Conferences:

Two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the course of the program year. These are **required** meetings to review child's progress and set educational goals.



December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Cooking Club 4:30–6 p.m.	7	8	9
10	11	12 Policy Council <u>Mandatory</u> Training 4:30 p.m. North Bennington	13	14 12:00 p.m. Parent/Teacher	15 Dismissal Conferences	16
17	18	19	20 Breakfast or Snack w/ Buddies @ All Centers	21 Winter Begins	22	23
24	25 ← ← ←	26 ← ← ← ←	27 CLOSED Holiday Break	28 → → → →	29 → → →	30
31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>						

Family Support & Community Partnership

The primary role of family services in Head Start is to provide support as parents work to strengthen their family units and improve the quality of their daily lives. This social services component of Head Start serves as a link between the family, the program and the community.

Each family will have a Family Support Worker (FSW) assigned to them during their school experience to guide them in setting and reaching their own goals. Your FSW will work with family members to research and refer them to those community resources that can better assist them.

Family Support Workers:

The primary role of the Family Support Worker (FSW) is to ensure that families have opportunities to build on their strengths and to set goals to meet the needs identified in the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). The FPA defines a family's strengths, needs and goals as identified by the family. The FSW will meet with families a minimum of three times during the school year.

Parent Engagement is Family Engagement!:

At Bennington County Head Start, we value the contribution that parents and guardians make in the lives of children as parents and caregivers. **When we enroll your child, we enroll you too!**

Creating and maintaining a quality Head Start program calls for many people to work together, sharing talents, knowledge, and energy so that your child and family will receive the greatest benefit. As with any school program, the more knowledge and energy you as parents can invest in the program, the better it will be.

Scientific research tells us that parent engagement in a child's life is a key factor in his or her academic success. We have seen how important a parent's influence is in the life of a child. That is why parent engagement is one of the foundations of our program and why parents are invited to help make decisions about the Head Start experiences their child will have for the next few years.

Head Start provides a variety of leadership opportunities for parents. In addition to home visits, socializations, and classroom or center activities, parents can participate in center committee meetings and activities, program governance through Policy Council, program evaluations and assessments, Health Advisory and other committees. Parent education and training opportunities are planned in response to parents' interests.

Male Engagement:

We encourage men to be equally engaged in their children's education and development. We believe that men want to, and do, make a difference when they feel they have contributed to their child's well being!

Volunteering:

We believe that parents are a child's first and most important educator. The relationship the parent and child form with one another shapes the course of the child's learning and growing years. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their services in any way that is comfortable for them.

Volunteering in the program with the children and other staff members gives parents an opportunity to share interests, skills and his or her commitment to Head Start.

Volunteering is necessary for the program to run effectively, and it can be a rewarding experience. Any parent can volunteer up to three times without specific training or completing a State Child Development Division background check form.



For the continued safety of our children in Head Start, ***parents who do plan to volunteer throughout the school year are required to go through an application and approval process and should start this process as soon as possible.***

Volunteering allows parents to make new friends, get to know your child's teacher, and to learn new techniques for working with children. Head Start also considers volunteer work to be an "in-kind" donation to the program. Volunteers fill out a form documenting the hours that they volunteered and the tasks they completed. Documenting your volunteer work lets the program demonstrate community support to its funding source.

Some Ideas for Volunteer Activities:

- * Center Committee members plan and participate in special events at your child's center.
- * Male Involvement –attend special events that help increase the presence of dads or other positive male role models.
- * Leadership Opportunities – as an officer of your local Center Committee or as a Policy Council member.
- * Parent Activities and Meetings – meet on a monthly basis for fun and group support.
- * Advocacy – attend IEP meetings, write letters, talk with other parents to enlist their support; join other groups sharing similar interests and concerns.
- * Newsletters - write or submit an article to share.
- * Phone Tree – help get information to other parents.
- * Your Child's Classroom – do an activity with the children or just help out in your child's classroom. Classroom cooking projects are done with children monthly.

MENTAL HEALTH

Bennington County Head Start embraces a vision of wellness. We seek to:

- Strengthen relationships among children, families, staff and mental health professionals and the community.
- Promote awareness of the benefits of mental wellness.
- Promote awareness of mental health resources in the community.
- Provide information about these resources to our families.

To meet these goals, we provide:

- Referrals to local mental health agencies.
- Access to our Mental Health Consultant, Dr. Bob Hemmer.
- Consultation with staff and families.
- Discussion, workshops and trainings for staff and families.

Dr. Bob Hemmer, a licensed psychologist specializing in adolescent psychology, is on-site Monday and Tuesday mornings to work with children and classrooms. He is available to meet with staff and families each Tuesday afternoon. If you would like an appointment with Dr. Bob, please see your child's teacher or FSW.

The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): is a nationally normed assessment. Based on the belief that the primary value of assessment is to guide effective services for children, the DECA was developed over a two-year period (1996-98) as part of a comprehensive program to foster the healthy social and emotional development of children. Completed by parents, family caregivers or early childhood professionals (preschool teachers and child care providers), the DECA evaluates the frequency of 27 positive behaviors (strengths) exhibited by preschoolers. The DECA also contains a 10-item behavioral concerns screener.

The three primary purposes of the DECA are:

1. to identify children who are low on the protective factors so that targeted classroom and home-based strategies can be implemented leading to the strengthening of these abilities;
2. to generate classroom profiles indicating the relative strengths of all children so that classroom design and instructional strategies can build upon these strengths to facilitate the healthy social and emotional growth of all children;
3. to screen for children who may be exhibiting behavioral concerns so that these can be addressed before they become entrenched and possibly develop into behavioral disorders. The DECA may be used as both an assessment and a screener.

Bennington County Head Start uses the DECA to monitor children's strengths and needs and to inform individualized goal-setting.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE:

Policy Council: The Head Start philosophy and regulations support the participation of parents through shared governance in decisions about their local Head Start program. Policy Council is an active group made up of parents, the director, the United Children's Services (UCH) Board President, and community members who oversee the organization and make decisions regarding policies, program assessments, and finances of our program.

Policy Council meetings are scheduled once each month, typically the second Tuesday of each month. The meetings are open to all parents, but only elected representatives (or, in their absence, elected alternates) may vote on policies or important decisions. Each program elects members on Election Day in November and all programs/sites can have parents serve on Policy Council. Transportation is provided if needed. **CHILD CARE IS PROVIDED DURING ALL MEETINGS, and a meal is available as well for all in attendance including children in child care.**

For more information contact the Director, Betsy Rathbun-Gunn at 442-3686 ext. 134 or Lisa Biddle, Administrative Coordinator, at ext. 121

Center Committees: Head Start strives to provide services and education activities that best support our families needs. The center committees are a great way to let your voices be heard. The content and concerns discussed at the meeting are up to you! Ask your family support worker or other center staff for details specific to your center.

Annual/Family Favorite Events: Other fun events that families enjoy include our annual winter bash and our annual fishing clinic at Dailey's Pond. We hold this in the spring when fishing season opens, and this clinic is designed to help children understand the basics about fishing, as well as information about water safety.

Additionally, we offer a soccer clinic in the fall which typically begins a few weeks after school starts up. Parents are needed as coaches, to help keep kids on the correct playing field, and assist where needed.

Be sure to check out details for all of our events in our weekly Friday folders or monthly newsletters.



Health/Nutrition

The focus of the health component is on making sure children are healthy enough to be ready to learn through preventative health care and early identification of health problems.

Head Start requires screenings to determine how well a child can see and hear within 45 days of enrollment. Head Start also requires that we ensure that children are receiving appropriate preventative healthcare, so we request information from healthcare providers about doctor and dentist visits. To ensure that we provide families with the best services possible, it is important that we have parents' active cooperation in making, and keeping, medical and dental appointments. Please tell us when your child goes to these appointments so that we can keep records up to date. If you need help with transportation please let us know.

If anyone in your family does not have, or loses, health insurance please let us know.

Medical: Within 45 days after enrollment every child **MUST** have an up-to-date physical on file or the child may have to be excluded until he/she has a physical exam. This is a Childcare Licensing requirement. If a child is missing any immunizations or blood tests both parents and healthcare providers are informed to eliminate confusion and to open the door to a discussion with the child's doctor.

Required Immunizations: Up-to-date immunizations are important to keep children safe from childhood diseases, and are required by Vermont licensing; or to be on a catch-up plan within 60 days of enrollment; or to have official vaccination waivers for religious or medical reasons. For a complete list of required immunizations, please contact the Health Manager. The Office of Head Start also *requires* 2 Hepatitis A and an annual influenza vaccination. This is especially important to protect the youngest Head Start children who are not able to be vaccinated, and for whom 'flu can be an extremely serious disease.

Screening for Anemia and Lead: Children should be tested for anemia at one year old, and for lead at one and two years old. Head Start requires these test results.

Some of the effects of lead poisoning include learning disabilities, impaired hearing, short attention span, hyperactivity and behavior problems. Anemia can cause children to be physically and mentally lethargic or sleepy, or to have symptoms also similar to ADHD. A simple finger-prick blood test during a physical or a WIC visit is a safe way to check for high lead levels or anemia. If either high lead or anemia is found, steps can be taken to eliminate further exposure and health effects. Parents will be offered dietary counseling or written information about lead poisoning or anemia if there is a concern.

Dental: Prevention is the key to good dental health. It is important to take proper care of baby teeth so grown-up teeth will come in healthy and strong. This includes eating a diet low in added sugar. Children should begin routine visits to the dentist when teeth first come in, around the age of one! Head Start requires that each child have a dental exam and cleaning, as well as any follow-up work that is needed. Our tooth tutor provides instruction and information, screens children to identify decay, and offers fluoride varnish application to the outside of teeth. This is not a substitute for a dental exam done by the child's dentist. We can assist with making and getting to dental appointments if needed.

Vision and Hearing: Vision and hearing screenings may be done during the child's physical. If not, Head Start staff or volunteer professionals will do the screenings on set dates. It is important that your child be at school on screening days. No screenings will be conducted by Head Start without the parent's permission. Parents are informed of screening dates and written results are sent home. If hearing screening failures appear to be due to fluid in the ears, the parent and physician will both be notified of the results so that appropriate follow-up can be done.

Nutrition: Good nutrition plays an important part in a child's healthy development. Head Start offers a healthy low fat, low sugar, low salt breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack each day. Parent input is sought for menu planning every 3-4 months at meal planning meetings and via surveys sent home before these meetings. Menus are posted at each center.

Our goal is to provide meals and snacks that are wholesome; high in fiber, vitamins and minerals, and low in sugar, fat and salt.

Please be sure the Health Manager is notified of any food allergies or special dietary needs. Special diets for children with food allergies, or on a special diet for medical reasons, must have approval from the child's physician. Religious preferences can be accommodated without a doctor's approval. If your child is vegetarian we will make the substitutions necessary but will also ask for the physician's input to ensure that he/she is providing dietary guidance as well.

In addition to supplying nourishing food in a family-style setting, mealtimes are an opportunity for children to develop eating, social, and language skills. Adults encourage children to talk about topics of interest to them and to participate in mealtime activities like setting the table.

Infants are fed on demand, either breast milk or formula. Please feel free to bring pumped breast milk to the center for your child. For children up to 18 months new foods are introduced as parents indicate that they have had a first exposure.

Preschool-age children are encouraged to serve themselves independently in order to learn control of muscles used to pour and use utensils. Meals are planned to introduce children to new foods, as well as old favorites. By seeing staff and other children eating many of the different foods offered, most children will eventually try, and may learn to like, a variety of foods.

Information about healthy foods and preparing well-balanced meals is offered to Head Start parents. To ensure that children learn about making healthy food choices, classrooms also provide monthly hands-on nutrition activities.

Learning about healthy foods is combined with learning about healthy activity



Health/Nutrition Continued



Gross motor time indoors and outdoors whenever possible is an important part of maintaining health and building children's sense of self esteem for their bodies. Children should have extra clothing

available from home to change into in case they get wet, and should arrive in clothing appropriate for the weather. Please send children in sneakers whenever possible. Boots are too heavy for indoors, and sandals or "good" shoes can be the reason for playground accidents and field trip distress.

Growth Assessments: Physical growth is an important part of children's total development. To help assess your child's growth and development, Head Start checks height and weight twice a year and graphs each child's growth. A nutrition consultant reviews the growth charts and makes recommendations.

Medications and Health Plans: If your child might need a special health plan for any medical problem that requires Head Start staff to intervene, including the need for medication, special meals, medical equipment, or emergency plans, please let the Health Manager know as soon as possible.

We must have written documentation from the child's parent/guardian, AND the doctor, to administer any medicine. Getting doctor approval can take several days, so whenever possible please bring a doctor's order when you deliver the medicine to Head Start.

Please call the Health Manager (Grace) at 442-3686 ext. 129 to complete an Individualized Health Plan.

We cannot administer medicine that is expired, nor in a way, or for a reason, that contradicts the doctor's order.

Medication should go from one adult's hand to another adult's hand, not in a child's backpack.

Please check expiration dates before bringing the medicine to us. We cannot administer expired medications.

Medicine cannot be sent back and forth between Home and school, except in circumstances that must be approved by the Health Manager in advance.

All meds must be in the original container, with the child's name written on the original packaging or current pharmacy label.

Sick Child Policy: Children who come to school ill are referred to a manager or designee.

In the event that the child's parent(s) cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be called. For this reason Head Start **requires that every child have three current, effective emergency contacts.** Emergency contacts should be people who are able to come to Head Start to pick up your child in case he or she must leave for health reasons.

If the parent or emergency contact is reached, but has no means of transportation, Head Start will transport the child to home or to the doctor on request if prior permission is obtained.

If the parent and emergency contacts are not reached, the Health Manager or other designated staff will seek the advice of the child's doctor and keep them at Head Start until the parent or emergency contact is reached.

Communicable Disease: Head Start staff makes every effort to avoid the spread of communicable disease within the centers. Head Start teaches the best possible way to stop the spread of minor communicable diseases: proper hand-washing. Parents are strongly encouraged to reinforce this message at home with 20 seconds of scrubbing soapy hands when dirty, after toilet use, before meals, and after wiping noses or sneezing/coughing into hands. We will notify parents of significant outbreaks of serious contagious diseases. If your child exhibits any of the following, please keep him/her home:

* Repeated vomiting or uncontrolled liquid diarrhea in the past 24 hours.

* Colored or thick drainage from ears, eyes, nose.

* Any **fever with rash or behavior change**

* Oozing or unexplained rashes or sores, especially on the face.

* Sore throat/ear ache/severe productive cough.

* Severe head or stomach pain.

Head Lice – Children are only sent home if the child has a new outbreak of MANY live lice. Symptoms include itching of head, especially around the ears and nape of the neck.

If child is found with live lice or nits at school, the parent will be notified and child may be sent home if there are many live lice, or may be allowed to stay until the end of the day as long as the child's hair is tied back, cut short, and/or covered with a hat. It is very important that parents communicate directly with staff any time their child has head lice. Treatment must be done by parents including using a lice-killing shampoo that a doctor would prescribe, picking nits, and cleaning the child's personal items and the house. Assistance can be provided in extreme circumstances on request. If the child is repeatedly found to have live lice and this affects the child's attendance at Head Start, a plan to address the lice problem effectively is required.

Once the child is treated for live lice the parent must bring the child in to school to be re-screened prior to the child returning to the classroom. If the child is sent home with live lice, the (bus) driver will be instructed **not to pick up** the child until the Health Manager or designee clears him or her.



Pedestrian/School Bus Safety

Car Seats/Seat Belts

Anyone transporting children enrolled in Bennington County Head Start during Head Start hours will be responsible for making sure children are in federally approved car seats or seat belts, as required by Vermont State law. All drivers are to wear seat belts to comply with the Vermont law to role model for children.

Vermont Child Restraint Law

As of January 1, 2004, all children up to 8 years old **MUST** ride in an approved child restraint. All children ages 8 up to 16 **MUST** ride in an approved safety belt or restraint system. Infants under 1 year old and weighing less than 20 pounds **MUST** ride *REAR* facing. Infant seats **MUST NOT** be installed in front of an active airbag. All seats must meet federal motor vehicle safety standards. The fines are \$25.00 for the first offense; \$50.00 for a second offense and \$100.00 for the third offense



10 Things Parents Should Know About School Bus Safety

1. Teach your children to be extra cautious in the School Bus Danger Zone – about five giant steps (10 feet) around the bus in every direction.
2. Remind your children to always watch for traffic when getting on or off a bus, and to move immediately from the Danger Zone to a safer area after exiting.
3. Instruct your children that if they can't see the bus driver, the bus driver can't see them. If they drop anything near the bus, they should ask the driver before they stop to pick it up.
4. Be aware, it is illegal in every state to pass a school bus stopped to load/unload students. Follow school bus laws when driving.

5. Learn the “flashing signal light system” that school bus drivers use to alert motorists if they are going to stop to load/unload students.

* Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children.

Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.

* Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists **MUST** stop their cars.

6. Begin moving only when the red flashing lights are turned off, the stop arm is withdrawn and the bus begins to move.

7. Never pass a bus on the right side, where children board and exit.

8. Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood. Watch for children playing and gathering near bus stops.

9. Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.

10. **Remember** ~ Expect the unexpected when driving near a bus, bus stop, or school zone. Slow down and watch for children!

SMART STEPS TO SAFE PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrian-related injury is one of the leading causes of death and injury for children up to age 14. Yet many of these tragedies can be prevented. Are your children walking safely? Review these guidelines from Child Safety Solutions to find out.

* Younger children should be accompanied by a grown-up. Older children should walk with a buddy.

* Use sidewalks. If there is no sidewalk, children should walk on the far left, facing traffic.

* Help children watch for hazards such as cracks or uneven sidewalks. If the weather is wet or icy, they need to take shorter steps and walk more carefully.

* Children should **ALWAYS** stop at the curb and never run into the street.

* Teach children to use crosswalks and only cross streets at corners.

* Children should cross streets with a grown-up until they are at least age 10.

* Remind children to look left, right, and left again before entering or crossing a path, sidewalk, street or driveway. They should continue looking as they cross.

* Children should make eye contact with each driver before they pass in front of him or her.

* Never cross the street from between parked cars.

AROUND THE SCHOOL BUS



* Get to the bus stop at least 10 minutes early. Have children wait 4 giant steps back from the curb.

* Children need to stand back until the driver opens the door. They need to use the handrail as they board the bus, with no pushing.

* Make sure everything is “tucked in” before children get on or off the bus so nothing can get caught.

* When children get off, they need to immediately walk 10 steps away from the bus.

* If children have to cross the street, teach them to be sure they can see the driver's face. They need to cross in front of the bus, at least 10 steps away from the bus. **Never cross the street in back of the bus.**

* If something falls near or under the bus, children should tell the bus driver and wait to pick it up.

Bennington County Head Start



Mission Statement



Bennington County Head Start (BCHS) is a comprehensive community based program that provides pre-school children and their families opportunities that fosters personal growth and well-being.

BCHS recognizes that parents/caregivers are the primary educators of their children and encourage full engagement in the program.

BCHS provides services that include child and family support through education, health and social services, resource and referrals.

BCHC staff is caring, knowledgeable and professional. Staff is respectful and recognizes the inherent dignity of each family and each person's uniqueness and individuality.

BCHS serves families in a trusting, and welcoming environment and works with families to provide life-long learning opportunities.

2017 / 2018 At A Glance

September 2017

- 4 Closed, Labor Day
- 6 1st Day of School—1/2 Day
- 7 & 8 12:00 p.m. Dismissal
- 9 Flight for Air Climb @ Monument
- 12 Pownal Screenings 9:30—11:30 a.m.
- 14 PK-1 Screenings 9:30—11:30 A.M.
- 19 PK -2 Screenings 9:30—11:30 p.m.
- 20 Dr. Porter Screenings @ SECC, FF and Pownal 8:30 a.m.
- 21 PK-3 Screenings 9:30—11:30 a.m.
- 20, 23, 27, 30 Soccer Clinic @ Willow Park (for 3—5 year olds)
- 25 Forever Friends Screenings 9:30—11:30 a.m.
- 26 East Room Screenings 9:30—11:30 a.m.
River Road Screenings 9:30—11:30 a.m.
- 28 EHS Screenings @ River Road 9:30—11:30 a.m.

October 2017

- 9 Closed for Columbus Day
- 13 Closed, Head Start VAEYC Conference in Killington

November 2017

- 10 Closed, Staff In-service & meetings
- 11 Veterans Day
- 15 & 29 Parent/Child Book Club 4:30 p.m.
- 22—24 Closed for Thanksgiving Break

December 2017

- 14—15 1/2 Days Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 25—29 Closed, Holiday Break



January 2018

- 1 Closed, New Year's Day
- 15 Closed, MLK Day
- 26 Closed, Staff In-service & Meetings

February 2018

- 7 Closed, Staff In-service & Meetings
- 19 Closed, President's Day
- 20-22 Camp Week for Registered Families

March 2018

- 2 March Madness Health Fair
- 21 Closed, Staff In-service & Meetings
- 29—30 1/2 Days Education Home Visits

April 2018

- 16—20 Camp Week for Registered Families

May 2018

- 4 1/2 Day, Staff Meeting
- 28 Closed, Memorial Day

June 2018

- 7-8 1/2 Days Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 20 End of the Year Bash @ Willow Park
- 21 Rain Date for End of the Year Bash
- 21 Last Day of School
- 26 1st Day Summer Program 12:00 p.m. Dismissal

July 2018

- 4 Closed, 4th of July



August 2018

- 23 Last Day of Summer Program

Reminder

If your child is going to be absent or late:
Parents are expected to call the attendance line at (442-3686, ext. 141) directly by 8:30 a.m. if their child will not be attending that day or if the child will be arriving after 9:30 a.m.