



St. Vincent de Paul Head Start

Parent Handbook and Resource Guide

The Arlington Elementary School
(Modular Building)
3705 W. Rogers Avenue
410-542-1405

Pimlico Arts & Community Center
4330 - C Pimlico Road
410-466-1383

Pimlico Site (the former Pimlico Library)
5001 Park Heights Avenue
410-542-4242



Vision

St. Vincent de Paul Head Start is an *efficient*, productive, systematic family development program striving towards excellence for the purpose of empowering parents as the primary nurturer of their children.

Program Narrative

St. Vincent de Paul Head Start (formerly Coldspring Family Development Head Start) has provided quality services to children since 1976 in the Pimlico and Park Heights communities. The program is comprised of three sites serving 229 children and their families.

The Center's comprehensive program is designed to meet the needs of families as a whole, which reflects concerns, interest, strengths and needs. The center is responsible for enhancing the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of children and is also attentive to the child's culture and individuality. The center recognizes the parents as the child's primary teacher and facilitates a partnership with families for the promotion of each child's total development.

A variety of resources are available to parents. Some of the methods used to assist families in meeting their needs are community outreach, referrals, and family assessments. Other services are as follows:

- Emergency or crisis assistance in areas like food, housing, clothing and transportation
- Education and other appropriate interventions (mental health, substance abuse and neglect, domestic violence, etc.)
- Opportunities for continuing education, employment training and other employment services through formal and informal networks in the community

Curriculum & Philosophy

Education is a lifelong process; however, eighty percent of this process occurs in the first six years of life, placing a great responsibility into the hands of parents and early childhood teachers. They must work together to make sure that the children in their care develop into happy, healthy, and independent individuals.

St. Vincent de Paul Head Start was the first Baltimore City Head Start program to fully implement the *Creative Curriculum*, a developmentally based early childhood program which enables teachers to create an environment which supports and promotes children's self-esteem, learning, and growth. We believe that young children learn best when given numerous opportunities to play and explore a wide range of materials within the classroom's different learning centers. Some of these include blocks, housekeeping, art, library, computers, teacher initiated activities and more. Teachers take the time to talk with children and encourage them to converse with each other to develop communicative competency.

Play is seen as the vehicle through which children acquire knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live. They do this by interacting with objects and people. In the Creative Curriculum, this role as a facilitator or guide who prepares and creates an environment that invites children to observe, be active, make choices and experiment.

Early Childhood Development

Head Start's Early Childhood Development Program is designed to meet each child's individual needs. It also aims to meet the needs of the community served, along with its ethnic and cultural characteristics. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences to foster intellectual, social and emotional growth. Children participate in indoor and outdoor play and are introduced to the concepts of words and numbers. 'They are encouraged to express their feelings and to develop self-confidence and the ability to get along with others.

Our staff is trained in Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Education. They also receive additional training in working with children with disabilities. At least ten percent of children at Head Start have a disability. The centers team of consultants, who specialize in speech and language pathology, a special education, mental health, and disabilities, also meets their needs. Head Start works in conjunction with Baltimore City Public Schools and other agencies to provide additional services. It is important that you and the teachers establish a working relationship in order to discuss your child's strengths, interests and any concerns that you may have. If you would like to reach the Director or need other assistance, please contact the Administrative Offices at 5001 Park Heights Avenue or call (410) 542-4242.

Family Services Coordinator

There are many resources available in the community. Your Family Services Coordinator (FSC) is available to assist you with information about these resources by means of the Family Partnership Agreements or your request for referrals.

Family Services Coordinator is available to assist you in obtaining and maintaining your child's health assessments (physicals, dentals, immunizations and other health related issues).

Family Services Coordinators also facilitates numerous parent workshops and training, Parent Field Trips and Parent Committees etc.

The Family Services Coordinators goals are to provide quality services and promote parent involvement throughout the program year.

Volunteers

Head Start must maintain a number of volunteer hours per year. If we fail to meet that requirement, the *Office of Human Development Services* may elect to make reductions in services to you and your children. Volunteers are

mostly parents, but can also be students, retirees, or anyone who has time and is interested in the progress of Head Start. Volunteers assist Head Start in several ways: Aiding teachers in the classroom, escort on field trips, recruiting families, renovating/decorating the center, working on the center's newsletter, and assisting in meal planning, etc.

Parent Guidelines

Goals:

At Head Start we encourage parents to be highly involved with their child's learning and growing experiences. Parents are key to guiding children in the right direction mentally, physically, and emotionally. Starting at the program, you should begin to think about the many different ways you can help your child. This list of goals can hopefully help you lay the foundation for your child's development:

- Share experiences with your child without interruptions
- Watch closely for new abilities and skills that your child may acquire
- Ask your child, "What did you do today in Head Start?" and discuss events from school
- Set reasonable expectations for development
- Become comfortable in your child's learning environment
- Shine with your children as they share talents, skills and hobbies with the class
- Use teachers as your main resource to discuss issues or receive new ideas about games and projects for home
- Have fun playing with your child
- Develop parenting skills through workshops and parent/teacher conferences
- Feel good about being a parent

In addition, we believe that literacy is crucial to parenting a child. Head Start offers several activities that promote family literacy; they include our newsletter, opportunities for continuing education, the Reading is Fundamental Program (RIF), free books for children, parent/child reading sessions, and training/workshops for parents.

HEALTH

In order to provide the best possible safety measures, all staff is trained and familiar with medical and dental health emergencies, and follow the policies and procedures implemented by Head Staff.

Staff Training:

Our staff has been trained to do the following:

- Observe signs of illness
- Treat your child accordingly if it is a minor injury (scraped knee, paper cut, etc.)
- Contact you if your child becomes ill, shows changes in behavior, or has an accident
- Isolate your child if need be
- Not provide any medications whatsoever, unless you have a completed Medication Order Form (by your child's pediatrician), which includes asthma medication
- Contact health care provider for any communicable diseases

Health Policy

Before enrollment, your child must have a completed physical examination by a physician or clinic documented on the Child Health Record. Your child must have the following immunizations: Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Tetanus, Polio, MMR, HIB, Hepatitis B, Varicella and PCV7. In addition, your child must have a completed dental assessment or an appointment for one.

Parent/Guardian Health Responsibilities:

As a parent, you must be able to care for your child when they are ill. It is likely for a child to catch a cold when they are around other children for the first time. If they do get sick, see your physician ASAP. Always inform the center that your child is sick and state the illness. Each year take your child to get a physical exam and tell your FSC about all visits. You must follow up on any and all concerns/problems found by a doctor.

Sick Children

Children are considered sick if they have any of the following symptoms: sore throat, headache, earache, swollen neck glands, “fresh” runny nose, fever, unusual rash or sore, overly tired, flushed face, vomiting, diarrhea, or if they appear ill. They must also stay home if they are developing a cold or have had one for less than three days.

Medication

In order for medications to be administered, Head Start must receive a Medication Order Form with the physician’s instructions and written consent from a parent/guardian. This document will be kept on file.

Special Diets

Menus can be adjusted by request for the following reasons: cultural preferences, special dietary needs, nutrition related health problems. If not a cultural preference, the health care provider must confirm the need in writing. Contact the director about special needs ASAP.

Outside food may not be served at Celebrations (Holidays and Birthdays) due to Health Department regulations.

Notification in the event of an emergency:

In the event of an accident or illness, the teaching staff will notify a parent via telephone. If they cannot be reached, they will contact a designated person from the emergency form. Please be aware that if one or more children are involved in an incident, we cannot give out the names of the other students due to confidentiality rules. A documented report of every incident is kept in the child’s file.

Child Abuse:

By Federal and State Law, it is mandatory that all suspected child abuse/neglect be reported. Staff will follow the centers' Child Abuse/Neglect reporting training plan. Parents will be notified only if the situation calls for it, and each situation is different.

Classroom Protocol

St. Vincent de Paul Head Start Center is committed to developmentally appropriate practices for the children we serve. Interactions with children should always be carried out in a calm and respectful manner. Moreover, the classroom is the most important place for learning to take place, and the environment at Head Start is one of nourishment and encouragement. There are several key factors in helping a child grow intellectually and socially in the classroom.

Children learn by example. Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more respectable activity, and setting clear limits. The teachers' expectations should match and respect children's developing capabilities.

Children are provided many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems. Teachers facilitate the development of these positive social skills at all times.

Children are praised for their accomplishments and helped to feel increasingly competent and in control of themselves.

Children's schedules and classrooms will be arranged so that their needs are met in a timely manner. There will be a variety of activities and enough materials and equipment so that they will not need to be in conflict.

Children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques that include the following:

- ▶ valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- ▶ redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity
- ▶ listening when children talk about feelings or frustrations
- ▶ guiding children to resolve conflicts using modeling skills that help children solve their own problems while reminding children of rules and their rationale

When a child's behavior becomes disruptive to the point where he/she is endangering the safety and/or welfare of him/herself or others, time-out will be applied.

Time out is not the only strategy used with children. It is primarily used for acts of physical aggression (biting, kicking, etc). The purpose of time-out will be explained to the child in a positive way with the child given an opportunity to discuss what happened and for the child to think of appropriate ways to solve the problem. Time-out takes the child away from friends and activities for a short time (3-5 minutes) maximum, providing the opportunity for the child to calm down and start over.

Program Policies

WHAT PARENTS AND STAFF MAY NOT DO!

- No physical or corporal punishment or threats of such punishment
- No verbal abuse (belittling, degrading or ridiculing)
- No isolation away from sight or hearing range of staff
- Children may not be deprived of outdoor play as punishment
- Children may not be deprived of food as punishment
- Staff /Parents may not laugh at a child's behavior, nor discuss it among themselves in the presence of the child

Arrival and Pick-up

All children should arrive and leave their classes ON TIME. If you are picking your child up early, notify the center in advance.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable and casual clothing, suitable for art activities and outside play. Tennis shoes or shoes with rubber soles are preferred over open toe shoes, which are not as safe. Also dress weather appropriate. Be sure to label all of your child's clothing with a permanent marker (including hats, coats, and gloves), as we cannot be responsible otherwise.

Change of Clothing

Each child must have a change of clothing at the Head Start Program at all times. Underwear, undershirt, top, bottom, and socks are the needed items. If a change is necessary, please bring a new set the following day. Failure to do so could result in your child's refusal into class.

Restrooms

Parents and adults have designated restrooms. Please refrain from using the children's bathrooms.

Parking

Pimlico - Do not park on the side of Full Gospel Church as vehicles are subject to being towed.

The Arlington- Avoid driving onto the back lot. The Baltimore City Police Dept. will fine anyone who does.

The Arts Center – Parking is available at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Smoking, Illegal Drugs and Alcohol are not permitted at any center. The police will be notified immediately if someone is found with any of these. If there is need for substance abuse help, contact your FSC or any staff you with whom you feel comfortable.

Inclement Weather

We follow Baltimore City Public School closings.

Please tune into 1090AM WBAL radio or call them at (410) 467-3000.

Attendance Policy

It is very important that your child attends regularly. It is impossible for your child to reach his/her highest potential if attendance is irregular. There are a few basic rules regarding proper attendance.

- 1) All children are required to be in their classroom on time for their session.
- 2) Call the center whenever your child will be out, has a clinic/doctor's appointment, or is absent due to illness.
- 3) You must send a note upon the child's return.
- 4) If your child is out with a contagious illness, a doctor's note is required

upon return. It is required that you report a contagious illness to your child's teacher and FSC.

Family Support System for Irregular Attendance

If a child is having an attendance issue; the following actions are taken to assist the parent in bringing the child to school on time. If the child is absent for one day without notification, the teacher or assistant will call to ascertain the reason for absence. If no contact is made on the second day, a letter will be sent by the FSC. A failure to respond will result in a home visitation by the FSC to discuss a plan of action. If all the above fail, and/or the FSC cannot successfully make contact with a parent, or the child continues attending irregularly, they will be withdrawn from the program.

Lateness Policy

Any child arriving after 8:15 am is considered late. If a child is late, a parent must fill out a late arrival form, indicating the reason for being late. The parent will also be responsible to prepare the child for the current classroom activity. Such preparations include washing hands, name finding, signing in, and putting things in cubbies or lockers. If a child is having difficulty with separation, the parent is to remain until the child feels comfortable.

If a child is late three days per month, a parent, teacher, and FSC conference will be scheduled. Failure to appear at the meeting will prevent the child from attending class. If a second warning notice occurs after a conference, the FSC and teacher will decide if the child should remain for the day or go home. Upon a third warning notice, your child may be removed from the program, placed on the waiting list, or put on another program, like the half a day program.

Children with scheduled morning medical appointments will be allowed to return to school if their parent arrives with them by 12 noon with a dated doctor form. For afternoon appointments, a child may attend school and leave early. You may return the child to school after the appointment if necessary. Any child who has a medical appointment will be marked present for that day.

Late Departures

Your child must be picked up NO LATER THAN the end of class. Late departures are considered negligence and will result in a parent conference and/or contact to Child Protective Services. If a parent is going to be late in

the case of an emergency, they must contact the center in order to work out the late pick-up. When a parent is late, it is very upsetting to the child and others at the center.

Emergencies

If in the event of an emergency, or if you know in advance, an unfamiliar person to the staff will be picking your child up, please notify the teachers on arrival or send in a note. All escorts not on the proper forms will need a picture I.D. or your child will not be released. Also, if your home address, telephone number, or the persons on your emergency contact list changes, please notify your FSC or child's teacher with the new information ASAP.

Resource Guide

Emergency Numbers

Baltimore City Housing Authority (410) 396-4046
Browns Memorial Church (Food) (410) 542-5700
Child Protective Services (410) 361-2235
First Call for Help (410) 685-0525
The Franciscan Ctr. (Clothing) (410) 467-5340
Gas & Electric Emergencies (BGE) (410) 685-0123
Mayors Office (410) 396-4900
Police Department, NW District (410) 396-2466
Poison Control 1-800-492-2414
St. Ambrose Outreach Center (Food) (410) 225-0870
Water & Sewage Emergencies (410) 396-5352

Local Colleges

Bowie State University (410) 880-4100
Catonsville Community College (410) 445-6050
Coppin State University (410) 951-3600
Essex Community College (410) 682-6000
Goucher College (410) 337-6100
The Johns Hopkins University (410) 516-8000
Loyola College (410) 617-2000
Morgan State University (443) 885-3333

Sojourner-Douglass College (410) 276-0306
Towson State University (410) 704-2113

Local Colleges Continued/Adult Education

Baltimore City Community College (410) 462-8300
The College of Notre Dame (410) 435-0100
Maryland Institute College of Art (410) 669-9200
University of Baltimore (410) 837-4777
Univ. of Maryland at Baltimore (410) 706-3100
University of MD-Baltimore County (410) 455-2291
Von Lee International School of Aesthetics, Inc (410) 653-1966

Adult Education Continued/Employment Services

Mayor's Office of Employment Development (410) 396-6392
St. Ambrose Outreach Center (410) 225-0870
The Urban League (410) 523-8150

Libraries/Recreation

The Baltimore Zoo (410) 396-7102
Dept. of Parks & Recreation (410) 396-7931
Enoch Pratt-Main Branch (410) 396-5430
Eubie Blake Cultural Center (410) 225-3130
Forest Park Library (410) 396-0942
Fort McHenry Park (410) 962-4290
The Great Blacks in Wax Museum (410) 563-3404
The Maryland Science Center (410) 685-5225
The National Aquarium in Baltimore (410) 576-3800
Port Discovery (410) 727-8120
Reisterstown Library (410) 396-0948
Walbrook Library (410) 396-0935

Health Services

Baltimore City Health Department (410) 396-4398
CDC National HIV & AIDS Hotline (410) 945-AIDS
Childhood Lead Prevention Program (410) 396 - 3100
Greenspring Pediatrics (410) 601-9300
Men's Health Center (410) 396-6367
Mercy Hospital (410) 332-9000
Park West Medical Center (410) 542-7800
Planned Parenthood (410) 576-1400
Sinai Hospital (410) 601-9000
Total Health Care (410) 383-8300

Crisis Intervention, Counseling & Support Services

Alcoholics Anonymous Hotline 1-800-711-6375
Big Brothers/Big Sisters (410) 243-4000
The Family Tree Headquarters (410) 889-2300
House of Ruth 24HR (410) 889-7884
MD Suicide Anonymous 24HR 1-800-422-0009
Northwest Baltimore Youth Services, Inc (410) 578-8100
Park Heights Family Support Center (410) 578-0244
Recovery in Community (410) 362-1400
Sinai Hospital-Dept. of Psychiatry (410) 601-5458

Miscellaneous

Baltimore City (General Information) (410) 396-3100
The Baltimore Sun Newspaper 1-888-539-1280
Board of Elections (410) 396-5550
Comptroller of the Treasury (410) 767-1995
Income Tax Information (410) 1-800-829-3676
Lawyer Referral (410) 539-3112
Legal Aid Bureau (410) 539-5340
MTA & Metro (410) 539-5000
Post Office (Main Office) 1-800-275-8777
Vital Records (410) 318-6119