



HEADSTART

Family Handbook Supplement

BROOKLINE SPROUTS

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You can view this handbook,
common forms, school
year calendar & much more
on our Resource page -
BrooklineSprouts.com/resources

For our Family Handbook and more, please
visit BrooklineSprouts.com/Resources
for more information!



Late Pickups

Late pickup fees are never covered by Head Start or ELRC.

A late pickup is any time outside of your contracted time. Your contracted time is determined upon enrollment, and may be later than 2:45pm if your child stays for extended care. If you need to change your child's schedule, this must be done with the Administration and with 2 weeks notice. If your child is here for Head Start hours only, you may have required volunteer hours assigned to support the classroom that must be completed in order for your child to return to class in lieu of fees.

If we cannot get in contact with anyone on a child's emergency contact sheet for pickup, and it is more than 30 minutes after your contracted pickup time, we may contact CYF in order to transfer care, as outlined in our policies signed upon enrollment.

In-Service Days vs Closures

While we are a child care center that strives to be open as many days as possible each year, there are several days that the Head Start room is closed for staff training, paperwork, parent-teacher conferences, etc. Please review the Head Start Calendar carefully to ensure that you are aware when your child's room is closed.

If you wish for your child to attend on an in-service day, it may be covered by ELRC funding. Otherwise, you would be subject to current private pay tuition rates. Slots may be limited on in-service days, if available at all, in our other preschool room(s). All slots would be filled on a first come, first served basis with regard to tuition payment and request for care. Holiday closures are center-wide, and the Sprouts office will be closed.

Requests for care on in-service days must be made, in writing (including email to the Director and Brightwheel messages) to Sprouts. Requests less than 2 weeks in advance will be denied.

Introduction

At Brookline Sprouts Preschool and Extended Care, we pride ourselves in frequent and thorough communication between the center and families. In order to help our Head Start families understand expectations and policies, we have made this supplement handbook. These policies are **in addition to those** in our Family Handbook. Please understand, our Head Start Room runs with the cooperation of us, a state-licensed Child Care Center, Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (COTRAIC), and 2 other funding sources (ELRC and USDA). There are many rules that we must follow with no exceptions. This also means that there are many things that we must not only do, but **document that we are doing them**. Your cooperation for procedures, signing paperwork, etc. is crucial to maintaining our status and standards for all of these organizations, as well as funding from all of them.

Please take the time to review this handbook. It will help you to understand required paperwork, policies, routines, and expectations so that your child can have the best school year possible.

Head Start Funding

In order for our Head Start program to remain fully funded, we require all families to apply for Child Care Works subsidy via the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC). This program is run through the state of Pennsylvania. This should be done at the same time as applying for the Head Start room. **This program is separate from Brookline Sprouts, as well as Head Start (COTRAIC).** Please contact the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) for more information and to apply. Their phone number is (412)-350-3577. If you receive any other state benefits already, you can contact your caseworker as well. "In the ELRC system, we are Brookline Sprouts at Tree of Life Open Bible Church, Provider ID #8114070565-1. **If ELRC states that you do not qualify, you must turn in a letter of denial to Brookline Sprouts. If you do not qualify for ELRC funding, or you lose your funding mid-year, you may have to transfer to a different Head Start site or pay extended care/wrap-around care fees.**

ELRC will require additional paperwork and documentation from you throughout the year in order to maintain your status. Please remember that, while we partner with ELRC, they are an organization completely separate from Brookline Sprouts with their own rules, policies, procedures, and requirements. Be sure to communicate regularly with your family specialist about any questions or concerns you may have related to Child Care Works and ELRC.

In addition to keeping the Head Start Portion of the day fully funded, ELRC creates opportunities for your child to attend our center for extended care, as well as inservice days for only the cost of your copay. If you need care outside of Head Start hours, please talk to the administration about these options.

the same consequences as excessive absenteeism. Special arrangements can be made for scheduled appointments, etc. with proper notification for children to attend for a partial day. We would prefer two weeks advance notice when possible or as soon as you know. The preferred way to communicate this is Brightwheel messages. More information about late drop offs can be found in our Family Handbook.

Early Drop and Extended Care

As mentioned before, Head Start hours are 8:15AM-2:45PM. **Your contracted times are determined upon enrollment, and may be outside of Head Start hours.** Without proper notice, staff are not prepared for your child to be here. Furthermore, these times require additional tuition costs. This may be covered by ELRC, or you may pay out of pocket for this option. All extended care and early drop must be arranged with the administration. **Just because the center opens and closes outside of Head Start times does not mean that we have staffing to receive your child early or keep them later.** You may be asked to wait with your child outside if you arrive early and staff are not able to accept them due to ratios and getting the room ready for the day. Or, if they do accept your child, you may be subject to charges later on your account.



Attendance

Absences

Your child is expected to attend every day that the Head Start room is open. Per Head Start Guidelines, “after 10 or more unexcused absences in a school year, the provider (Brookline Sprouts) must take appropriate steps to address attendance, up to and including dismissal of the child from the program.” **We are asking that you please utilize Brightwheel by sending a message to let us know that your child will be absent as soon as possible, including the reason why.** If your child is absent and you do not send a message, you will be required to present an excuse upon return. This may be a doctor’s excuse, or simply a note written by a parent/guardian. We will have absentee forms available at pick up and drop off that you may use. This is very important, not only to help avoid any complications with your child’s enrollment, but also so we can fulfill our responsibility to partner organizations.

Excessive absenteeism can result in funding stops from both Head Start and ELRC. When this occurs, you will have to pay the current private pay rates for tuition every time your child is absent. Your child may also be dismissed from the program. Keep in contact with your ELRC family specialist about any absences and how close you are to the maximum allowed annually. Any documentation for doctor’s visits and extended illness must be given directly to them in addition to Brookline Sprouts.

Late Drop Offs and Early Dismissals

As stated in our section about absences, **your child is expected to attend every day that the Head Start room is open. Head Start hours are 8:15AM-2:45PM.** If you drop off your child late, they are missing instruction, and also potentially meals/snacks. It disrupts the day for the whole class when children arrive in the middle of activities. Furthermore, frequent drop offs later than 9am or early dismissals may result in

Drop Off and Pickup

In addition to procedures related to hand off of your child (which can be found in our Family Handbook), there is frequent paperwork that will need to be signed. Most of this paperwork does not need to be completed by the parent or guardian, but sometimes that is required. The staff member should be able to help you through what you are signing and who may sign.

You (or an approved adult) must come all the way to the door with your child at pick up and drop off. For example, you cannot send children to the door while you stay in the car for drop off, nor can you send someone under the age of 18 or unapproved pickups to the door for pick up without you. This is necessary for not only any communication being shared, but the safety of the children and state regulations for child care centers. **Please allow for a few minutes of time with staff at pick up and drop off each day in your routine to talk or sign papers.**



Paperwork and Signatures

As mentioned in other areas of this Handbook and the Family Handbook, **documentation for many organizations is important in order to show that quality care is happening and we are following required policies and regulations.** There are many pieces of paperwork specific to the Head Start room that need frequent signatures. There are also times that you may need to sign off on a particular subject multiple places in order to maintain standards for all partnering organizations. Please remember - we have many rules that we must follow, without exception, related to documentation. **Please turn in any requested paperwork as soon as possible, and provide signatures promptly. Missing or incomplete paperwork past deadlines may require your child to stay home until it is resolved.** If you are having difficulties obtaining paperwork, please communicate with administration. While all paperwork is ultimately your responsibility, we can try help when authorized to do so and help you get it resolved as quickly as possible.

For example, you will need to provide a Health Report, dental records, Brookline Sprouts Enrollment Paperwork, and Meal Program Paperwork in addition to whatever was turned in with your Head start application. There will also be “getting to know you” paperwork, family goals, multiple parent-teacher conferences, and sign offs related to pick up and drop off each week (In-Kind Sheets). We ask that you treat all staff with respect and patience related to any and all requests for paperwork and signatures. Please feel free to ask questions or bring forward concerns about any forms or documentation, and we will be happy to discuss it with you. **Meeting documentation requirements are necessary for our continued licensing and partnerships with our funding sources, and your cooperation is crucial for the success of our program.**

In-Kind Sheets and Volunteering

The Federal Government, who provides much of the funding for Head Start, expects parents/guardians and community volunteers to contribute to the success of the program. **One way this happens is during drop off and pick up of the children. You are helping to “pay” for your child’s enrollment with your time instead of money, or in-kind time.** There are required minimums for in-kind hours for every Head Start class, so this is very important to help maintain expectations required of us as a center. Simply dropping off and picking up provide us 30 minutes of in-kind time each day!

Every other Friday, you will be required to sign the In-Kind sheets at the front desk. This is signed by whomever typically picks up and/or drops off. In order to minimize long wait times to sign, **last names that begin with A - L will need to stop and sign in the morning at drop off. Then, children with last names M - Z will need to stop and sign at pick up in the afternoon.** There will be Brightwheel reminders on these days. We are asking that you please stick to this schedule so that we can try to help eliminate congestion at the front desk and to help the Sprouts staff move things along more efficiently. If you need to make other arrangements, please reach out to us.

As a side note, if you are interested in volunteering for your child’s classroom, please reach out to administration to discuss required clearances, as well as which days and times would be best for you to stop by. We can offer you a variety of options, from prep work for projects, to maintenance of the facility, to class event assistance.