

Pro Action of Steuben & Yates, Inc.

Early Head Start, Head Start, and Universal PreK

Family Engagement Handbook





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Letter from the Director

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Pro Action Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS) and Universal PreK (UPK)!

This program provides family and child development services to children birth to age 5 in Steuben & Yates counties. We also serve children with special health care needs, disabilities, and developmental delays. The programs are offered through a unique partnership with several school districts throughout our two-county service area. It is the goal of our programs that every child we serve will enter kindergarten healthy and prepared for school. To reach this goal, we provide comprehensive and integrated infant, toddler, preschool, 3PK and 4 year old pre-K programs focusing on the development of the whole child. This includes a curriculum addressing children's cognitive, developmental, and social-emotional needs; medical and dental screenings and referrals; nutritional services; parent engagement; and referrals and follow-up to social service providers, mental health services and local school districts.

An essential part of the program is the active participation and engagement of parents in education, program planning, and day-to-day activities. In Early Head Start, parents work directly with their Early Head Start (EHS) Teacher or Home Visitor to improve the development of their infant/toddler. As the child enters the Head Start/UPK program, children continue receiving quality services and learning life-long skills in a classroom or home environment.

Parents also have opportunities to learn about parenting, nutrition, and literacy, and to become an advocate for their child's future by attending parent activities and workshops. The intent of this handbook is to provide you with the necessary information and guidance that will further enhance your partnership with us in your child's education and preparation for kindergarten. We are glad you decided to join the Pro Action family!

Tricia Shirey
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Our Commitment to You:

Pro Action Head Start recognizes that parents are their child's primary teacher and advocate. We also understand the importance of providing information and support to families so that, in turn, parents will be better prepared to take an active role in their child's education and development. We will:

- Provide a safe, fun, and enriching environment where every child and family is accepted and supported.
- All employees undergo a full comprehensive background check prior to hire, including:
 - NY State and Federal criminal history
 - Child Abuse and Maltreatment clearance
 - Sex offender registry
 - Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs
- All incidents of employee misconduct or performance are reviewed in a timely manner in order to protect the safety of children and quality of the program. Disciplinary action, if necessary, will be in accordance with Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc Personnel Policies.
- HS/UPK program staff, management staff, Head Start Policy Council, Pro Action's Board of Directors and local school district partners ensure that Head Start Program Performance Standards and State regulations are met.
- Maintain regular communication with parents/guardians.
- Partner with parents/guardians to support individual child and family goals.

Your Commitment to Us:

- Regular daily attendance in class or weekly home based home visits, unless the child is ill.
- Maintain regular communication with staff.
- Participate in family engagement opportunities (Drop in Days, Socializations, home visits, parent committee meetings, Family Activity Calendars, Policy Council, etc)
- Show courtesy and respect
- Use of inappropriate language is not allowed
- Threats of any kind will not be tolerated and will require a report to the appropriate authorities
- Staff are not allowed to share information about any other child or family
- Families will not correct the behavior of another child, other than their own
- Share any concerns with program staff in private, so we can help find a solution rather than contacting other families or sharing concerns on social media

Confidentiality, Record Access, and Privacy of Information

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Under federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs information in your child's education record. FERPA was enacted in 1974 and guarantees that parents have access to their child's education record and restricts who can access and use this student information.

Under Head Start Program Performance Standard (1303.21) any educational agency or institution that receives funds under a program administered by the Department of Education is subject to the confidentiality provisions under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

FERPA gives parents specific rights to their child's education records, including the right to:

- inspect their child's educational record.
- request corrections (or deletions) for anything that is inaccurate.
- consent to or deny disclosure of some of their child's information in certain situations.

FERPA also permits schools to share information with:

- another school system regarding a student's enrollment or transfer.
- specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- appropriate parties about financial aid to a student.
- organizations conducting certain studies for, or on behalf of the school, and accrediting organizations.

Schools may also disclose information to comply with:

- a judicial order or subpoena.
- appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies.
- state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system pursuant to specific state law. (This disclosure of information does not apply to Head Start students.)

Parental Rights

Pro Action Head Start established procedure:

1. The parent of an enrolled child has the right to inspect the contents of the child's record. This request must be in writing on the program "Request to Inspect and Review a Record" form.
2. The parent of an enrolled child has the right to request copies of content from the child's record. This request must be in writing on the program "Request for Copy of Specified Record" form. A written request is not needed for a copy of a child's Birth Certificate, physical, and immunization record.
3. If a parent completes a "Request to Inspect and Review a Record" form or a "Request for Copy of Specified Record" form, the program has up to 45 days from the receipt of the request to make the child's record available for the parent. Line staff must obtain clearance from their supervisor prior to releasing information to the parent. Staff review records and remove information from a child's record that pertains to another child to ensure the parent only inspects information that pertains to his/her child.
4. A staff person is present to answer questions and provide clarification when a parent is inspecting his/her child's file. The program ensures that the parent only inspects information pertaining to the parent's child.
5. Child records are maintained for a period of three years beyond the end of the program year in which the child was last enrolled in the Head Start program. The agency maintains documentation of outstanding "Request to Inspect and Review a Record" in the Head Start ERSEA office to ensure records are not destroyed if there remains an outstanding request to review.

*Confidentiality

Pro Action HS/UPK takes the matter of confidentiality and privacy very seriously. The program maintains a record on all children enrolled in the program and may include documentation in print and electronic format. Child records are locked when not in use. Access to children's records is limited to only program staff working directly with the child/family and members of the management team. During program review/assessment, members of the review/assessment team may review records to ensure compliance. All HS/UPK paid employees, volunteers, paid therapists, or support persons paid by any other outside agency sign an agreement to abide by the program's confidentiality policies. When participating in HS/UPK classroom activities, individuals may become aware of the needs of enrolled children. HS/UPK expects that all staff, parents/guardians, providers, and volunteers will maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of others.

Individuals having access to confidential information while employed by Pro Action are reminded that their legal obligation to maintain such confidences extends beyond their employment and they are prohibited from releasing, disclosing, or otherwise disseminating confidential information or records while working for the program and after leaving Pro Action.

When families are enrolled in multiple Pro Action Early Head Start and Head Start/UPK program options, staff from each program may share information with one another to provide comprehensive support services for the family and prevent duplication of services.

Release of Information with Parental Consent

A signed release form is obtained prior to releasing information to any person who is not program staff. The release form includes details on what information will be disclosed, the purpose for disclosure, the parties between whom the information may be shared, and a time frame. The release form is signed and dated by the parent/guardian and a staff member. Granting consent for this type of release is voluntary and can be revoked by the parent at any time.

Release of Information without Parental Consent

There are times when the program may be required to release information without parental consent. This may include officials conducting a study to improve outcomes, program audit, or routine monitoring; in response to a judicial order or subpoena; caseworker or other representative of local child welfare agency/foster care placement; DSS/CPS consistent with applicable laws on reporting child abuse and neglect; to protect the health and safety of children and others during an emergency. Pro Action Head Start/UPK may disclose limited information from a child record to another program or school district, when the disclosure is related to the child's enrollment or transfer to/from another program. Parents/Guardians are notified about the disclosure in advance and are given an opportunity to refuse the disclosure. Some examples of this type of disclosure may include but are not limited to: information from a child's enrollment application to be shared with the local school district upon enrollment in the HS/UPK program or use of the signed Record Access/General Program Policy Agreement to allow specific health and academic information to be shared with the local school district for the purpose of transitioning into kindergarten.

What is Head Start?

Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive child development program which prepares young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school. To achieve this, Head Start programs deliver services to children and families in core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way. The range of services available is responsive to the unique development, ethnicity, culture and interests of each child and family.

Early Head Start enrolls prenatal parents and children, birth to 3 years of age. Head Start enrolls 3-4 year old children. Services are provided in a home based or center based program option.

Pro Action partners with many local school districts to operate a Head Start/UPK program. These partnerships combine Federal Head Start funding and State UPK funding to provide a quality PreK opportunity to as many children as possible within the local school district.

Head Start and UPK programs must be in compliance with regulations including the Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards; the Head Start Act of 2007; New York State Office of Children and Family Services Child Care Regulations; and New York State Universal Pre-Kindergarten Regulations.

There are no fees for services under Early Head Start/Head Start/Universal Pre-Kindergarten programming.

* Program Staffing and Supervision

Center-Based Programs

Most **HS/UPK classroom teams** consist of a Teacher, Teacher Assistant, and may also include a Support Staff. The **Infant and Toddler classroom** teams consist of two Teachers and one Support Staff. HS/UPK classrooms comply with NYS OCFS Day Care Center Regulations regarding the number of supervising adults per child. **CHILDREN ARE NEVER LEFT UNSUPERVISED.** Staff members hold credentials which comply with appropriate New York State Universal Pre-Kindergarten Regulations, Head Start Regulations, and NYS OCFS licensing requirements.

In addition to the classroom staff, a Family Partner is assigned to each classroom-based program. Family Partners complete enrollment applications, support parent/guardian engagement in the program, inform families of special events and activities which are planned for parents/guardians of enrolled children, inform families of community resources, and provide supportive services to families as necessary.

Home-Based Programs

Staff consists of a Home Visitor who will conduct weekly educational home visits with families and twice a month socialization opportunities. Parents/Guardians and Home Visitors partner together to plan learning activities which meet each child's individual needs.

All staff members complete required background clearances prior to employment and participate in extensive training to support efforts in providing a high-quality early childhood program.

Alternative Services

There may be situations throughout the year when face to face meetings are not possible due to illness, lack of transportation, inclement weather, or other barriers. In order to maintain open lines of communication and provide consistent and uninterrupted services, staff will work with families to provide virtual services or alternative meetings whenever possible.

In the event of significant public health or safety risks, HS/UPK will follow the advice of school district personnel and local or state officials and may be forced to modify services or close any or all programs or classrooms for an extended amount of time. Necessary accommodations will be made in response to the situation. This may include putting practices in place to support social distancing, limiting in person contact, wearing of masks or other protective equipment, prohibiting non-essential visitors, establishing designated drop off/pick up areas, use of daily health certifications, modifications to family style meals, restriction of field trips, use of electronic signatures, or any other necessary accommodations. Staff will provide regular communication to keep families informed of program updates.

How Parents Can Be Involved

Family Engagement

A child's parent/guardian is their first, and most important, teacher. There are many ways for parents/guardians to be involved in the program. We invite you to partner with us to provide your child with a valuable school readiness experience.

We hope you will:

- Share information with staff about your child's strengths, interests, and development.
- Give input in planning of activities and individual goals to meet your child's needs.
- Share your special interests, skills, and knowledge.
- Attend classroom Drop in Days
- Attend home based Socializations.
- Attend parent committee meetings.
- Utilize the Family Activity Calendars for suggested activities at home.
- Regularly communicate with staff through home visits, parent-teacher conferences, notes, emails, phone calls, and classroom visits.

To ensure ongoing communication, be sure to inform HS/UPK staff immediately of any changes in contact information (phone number, email, etc.)

*Classroom Visitors/Volunteers

Families are welcome and encouraged to spend time in the classroom. HS/UPK has an Open Door Policy, which allows parents/guardians to visit and observe their child's classroom at any time. Other family members may visit the classroom with signed permission from the parent/guardian.

Community volunteers (such as practicum students) who plan to work in the classroom must complete the volunteer clearance process and will receive ongoing training in accordance with New York State Office of Child and Family Services Child Care Licensing requirements.

Volunteers are supervised at all times by HS/UPK staff, are never left alone with children, and are not counted in adult: child ratios. Other professionals may be in the classroom to work with individual children (i.e. speech, physical therapy) or to assist in the health screenings of children. Parents/guardians are notified in advance of scheduled screenings involving their child.

During a state of emergency, the school district, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, and/or Pro Action Head Start may limit classroom visitors in order to protect the health and well-being of children, families, and staff. Families will be notified promptly of any changes to the visiting procedures.

Policy Council

A decision-making group made up of Head Start parents and community members. The group meets monthly, in-person or virtually. Members of Policy Council will share and receive information about the program, make decisions about program policies, participate in the staff hiring process, make decisions about the budget and how money is spent, and participate in the program self-assessment process. Policy Council is a great way to meet other parents, learn more about the program, and share valuable input. Membership does not require any special knowledge or experience. The Director will provide all necessary training and information to ensure Policy Council members are well informed before making decisions.

Health Advisory Committee

Parents, staff, and community members who help develop policies, procedures, and offer advice on medical, dental, nutritional, mental health, and disability related concerns. This group meets twice each year.

Other Advisory Committees

Additional advisory committees are formed to address various program areas, as needed.

Education Services and Curriculum

The *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* (ELOF) describes the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs will work to foster in all children. The domains that make up this framework are Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Literacy; Cognition; and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development.

Because the guiding principles of ELOF illustrate that all children are unique and learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure, all Head Start programs practice foundational methodologies of social-emotional support. Additionally, programs utilize ongoing, authentic curriculum and assessments to measure each child's progress and success. *Implementation of methodologies, curricula, supplemental curricula and assessments may vary by site, program age, and applicable district partnerships – see below for more information.*

*Curriculum / Developmentally Appropriate Program

The curriculum for all Head Start/UPK center-based programs is *The Creative Curriculum*® Sixth Edition. This curriculum rests on a firm foundation of research, responds to the New York State Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core and aligns with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* for addressing academic content. *The Creative Curriculum*® features exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

In addition, HS/UPK staff members collaborate with local school districts to align the curriculum with the district's program as able. Children in all center-based programs are observed regularly, formally and informally, to help the staff


plan classroom activities which support each child’s growth. Children are encouraged, but never forced, to participate in activities.

The curriculum for home-based programs is the *Parents as Teachers Curriculum (PAT)*. *PAT* is an evidence-informed and research-based curriculum which promotes the optimal early development, learning, and health of young children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. The curriculum is designed to strengthen child development, parent-child interaction, and family well-being.

Developmental Screenings / Ongoing Assessments

All children receive a developmental screening within 45 days of enrollment (conducted during the summer, beginning of the year, or upon the individual child’s starting date). Throughout the year, various assessment tools are used to provide information on each child’s developmental progress. Information is freely available to parents, with parent-teacher conferences or education home visits scheduled after each developmental checkpoint (typically fall, winter, and spring). This information is used to plan activities for each child’s individual goals.

For reference, a visual guide of our program’s methodologies and assessments are included below.

 <p style="text-align: center;">Conscious Discipline</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">The Pyramid Model</p>
<p>What is it? <i>Conscious Discipline is the philosophy used with children to develop positive behaviors.</i></p>	<p>What is it? <i>The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children’s healthy social and emotional development.</i></p>
<p>What does it do/measure? <i>Conscious Discipline teaches children to name their emotions, regulate them, and then solve problems. It empowers children to learn self-control, develop social skills, and practice conflict resolution.</i></p>	<p>What does it do/measure? <i>The Pyramid Model offers comprehensive classroom management strategies specifically tailored to each child’s individual needs. Children receive targeted social-emotional supports and intensive interventions as needed.</i></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">e-DECA</p>
<p>What is it? <i>The DIAL-4 is a screening tool used with children in center-based programs that provides a brief overview of a children’s development.</i></p>	<p>What is it? <i>The DECA (e-DECA for online platforms) is an assessment used to promote young children’s social-emotional health and resilience.</i></p>
<p>What does it do/measure? <i>The DIAL-4 examines three areas of development: motor, concepts, and language.</i></p>	<p>What does it do/measure? <i>The DECA assesses within-child protective factors (i.e. characteristics that can help reduce the risk of negative outcomes or lessen impacts of negative experiences).</i></p>

 <p style="text-align: center;">ASQ[®]-3</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI-3)</p>
<p>What is it? <i>The ASQ[®]-3 is a screening tool used for children participating in a home-based program.</i></p>	<p>What is it? <i>The BDI-3 is a play-based assessment tool used to measure a child's development (birth – 7 years, 11 months).</i></p>
<p>What does it do/measure? <i>The ASQ[®]-3 questionnaire includes questions about your child's communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal skills areas.</i></p>	<p>What does it do/measure? <i>The BDI-3 measures mastery in developmental milestones: communication, social-emotional, adaptive, motor, and cognitive development.</i></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Strategies[®] – GOLD[®]</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Second Step[®]</p>
<p>What is it? <i>Teaching Strategies[®] - GOLD[®] is a web-based assessment for children, birth-kindergarten, that helps teachers evaluate their students in an ongoing, authentic way.</i></p>	<p>What is it? <i>Second Step Early Learning is a social-emotional curriculum for children ages 4-5 that helps them develop skills like emotional management, situational awareness, and school readiness.</i></p>
<p>What does it do/measure? <i>Teaching Strategies[®] - GOLD[®] measures what children know in the context of everyday experiences (e.g. play, mealtimes, etc.). This assessment is used in conjunction with The Creative Curriculum[®].</i></p>	<p>What does it do/measure? <i>Second Step uses child-friendly games, songs, puppet scripts, and peer work to develop positive relationships, identify and manage emotions, and empathize with other adults and children.</i></p>

Approach to School Readiness

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. The program provides parents/families with multiple opportunities to participate in and plan for their child's school readiness such as Parent Teacher Conferences, Parent Meetings, Home Visits, and Monthly Family Activity Calendars.

When transitioning from HS/UPK into Kindergarten, or from one EHS/HS option to another program, staff provide support and involve families in the transition process, provide information on the expectations of the next program, and offer an opportunity to meet the staff and visit the classroom/program where the child will enroll. School district staff may also visit or observe HS/UPK classrooms as part of the transition process.

*Daily Schedules

Daily plans and program schedules are available in each classroom. You will receive a copy of your child's daily schedule during enrollment to the program.

Daily Schedule

7:50 - 8:10	Arrival
8:15 - 8:25	Morning Centers
8:25 - 8:55	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:20	Morning Meeting
9:25 - 9:40	Small Groups
9:40 - 10:00	Music and Movement
10:00 - 10:30	Large Group/ Read Aloud
10:30 - 10:50	Snack
10:55 - 11:55	Learning Centers
12:00 - 12:30	Gross Motor
12:45 - 1:15	Lunch
1:25 - 2:10	Rest
2:10 - 2:30	Quiet Table Activities
2:30 - 2:45	Afternoon Meeting
2:45	Dismissal

**This is an example of what your child's schedule may look like.*

Dress to Play

What should my child wear?

- Clothes that allow your child to move comfortably and safely. Children will be participating in activities such as climbing, running, painting, and sitting on the floor.
- *Due to our messy nature, we encourage play clothes.*
- Sneakers and other comfortable shoes which are secured to their feet are strongly encouraged.
- **We ask that children do not wear sandals, flip-flops or open toed shoes.**
- **Please provide an extra change of clothes, including underwear and socks, to be kept in your child's cubby.**

If your child's classroom is located in a school district building, please be aware that the school district may have additional dress codes. Classroom teachers will inform families of district dress codes.

Field Trips

Field trips are a special part of preschool education. Children learn about the resources in their community when they visit special places. Classrooms may walk within the neighborhood, or travel by bus for field trips. Children will need a signed permission slip/transportation plan to attend a field trip. Parents/guardians are welcome to be a part of the planning of field trips, will be notified in advance of special trips, and are encouraged to participate. The program may need to limit these opportunities in the event of a state of emergency or concerns of public health and safety.

Individualized Planning

Activities are planned to reflect the individual needs based on each child's temperament, experiences, developmental needs, and learning style. Staff partner with families regularly to review children's progress and ensure that each child's needs are met. Families are encouraged to share their ideas to help develop an individualized plan that includes both classroom and at home activities that target each child's needs.

*Plan for Behavior Management

Pro Action HS/UPK's Behavior Management Plan is developed to provide positive guidance, promote self-esteem, guide children in developing self-regulation skills and assume responsibility for his or her actions. Staff provide clear and consistent expectations and safe boundaries appropriate to their age.

Behavior Management:

- Is only conducted by Pro Action staff.
- Is developmentally appropriate.
- Implements the *Conscious Discipline* practices to support the social and emotional awareness and skills of the staff and children in HS/UPK classrooms.
- Utilizes *The Second Step* curriculum to help children discuss and manage their feelings in appropriate ways, make friends, and solve problems.
- May include a Positive Support Plan (PSP) meeting between family members and classroom staff to plan for a child's success.

Behavior Management never involves:

- Corporal punishment or any form of physical punishment or force.
- Isolation where a child cannot be seen or supervised.
- Withholding food, bathroom needs, rest, or sleep.
- Methods of intervention that punish, demean or humiliate a child.
- Physical restraint; or any abuse or maltreatment of a child.

Staff develop rules that provide clear expectations and safe boundaries for children at the beginning of each program year. These rules are posted in the classroom and are reviewed with the children frequently throughout the school year. If a child requires time to self-regulate, he/she will be supported and supervised by a staff person until they are ready.

Services for Children with Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requires that all programs, such as Head Start, be accessible to persons with disabilities including staff, parents/guardians, and children. Head Start Federal Program Performance Standards require at least 10% of a program's funded enrollment serve children with identified disabilities.

HS/UPK staff works closely with each county's Early Intervention program and school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) office and each county's Special Children's Services. With these working relationships, HS/UPK staff can ensure children with a disability are receiving services identified in their Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP). The program partners with service providers, such as speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and special education itinerant teacher (SEIT) providers to support the child's identified needs and goals. These service providers can work with the children in the classroom or the home.

Through developmental screenings and ongoing observations of children, parents or staff may identify potential developmental concerns. Some classrooms have the ability to utilize school district related service providers to conduct a screening in their functional area (i.e. - speech, OT, PT). This screening may suggest further evaluation. Staff, with the family's consent, refer children to the local Early Intervention Services (EI) or Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) for further evaluation. HS/UPK staff are available to support families throughout this process and to become advocates for their child.

Holidays and Birthdays

Holidays

HS/UPK respects the ethnic, cultural, and religious practices of all families and tries to offer a culturally diverse program. At enrollment, families are asked to complete a Family Interest Survey that helps staff get to know each individual family, their interests, and cultural preferences. HS/UPK does not initiate holiday celebrations. Occasionally, communities and school districts sponsor holiday related events that include the HS/UPK program. Any activities related to holidays and cultural celebrations will be reflective of the communities in which we serve and will be developmentally appropriate. We may take part in these activities if they meet the guidance above. At no time will HS & EHS families be asked to contribute financially to these events. Maintaining a normal classroom routine helps minimize stress children may feel during these special times.

Birthdays

Many families choose to acknowledge their child's birthday in the classroom. Family involvement is always welcomed! Do not feel obligated to provide a birthday celebration in the classroom. Call your child's teacher to discuss any plans you have. Any birthday celebration must be developmentally appropriate and fit into the curriculum and schedule. Please do not send a birthday treat.

Pro Action Head Start cannot accept any outside food, whether it is homemade or purchased from a store. This helps to support children with special health care needs and food allergies.

Suggestions of other ways to celebrate your child's special day, if you choose:

- Come into your child's class and read a story, participate in the day's activities, or mealtime.

- Bring in an item for show and tell.
- Come in and share family memories/pictures.
- Come in and play a game with the class.
- Come in and share your child’s favorite book with the class.
- Work with staff to plan a special activity.
- Create a “Celebrate Me Book” with the class with each child drawing a picture of the birthday child.

Please do not send any invitations for parties or other gatherings with the intent to have them sent home with other children in the classroom. Staff are not allowed to do this.

If a private party invitation is received, parents/guardians are encouraged to verify safety before allowing the child to attend. The program is not responsible for a child’s safety at an event outside of program operation.

During holidays, parents sometimes want to provide gifts to the HS/UPK staff. Please note, due to Federal regulations, HS/UPK staff cannot accept personal gifts from enrolled families.

Health, Wellness, and Safety

A child’s physical, emotional, and mental health impact his/her ability to learn. Pro Action Head Start programs support families in completing and/or obtaining the following health assessments and screenings:

- Well child visits
- Lead screening
- Hearing screening
- Dental exam
- Immunizations
- Hemoglobin/Hematocrit screening
- Vision screening

Physical Examinations / Immunizations

NYS Child Care Regulations require the following documents to be up to date and on file for each enrolled child:

- Current physical exam (completed within the last 12 months prior to enrollment date).
 - If the physical exam expires during the child’s enrollment, staff will provide support for families to obtain a new physical exam.
- Immunizations up to date based on age, or, if the child is behind on immunizations, they must be in process of being brought up to date following the CDC catch up schedule. (For more information on the NYS Public Health Law 2164 see: https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/laws_regs.htm)

Please contact your child’s teacher or home visitor with any questions.

Dental

Early dental care is essential to a child’s health. Infants and toddlers are strongly encouraged to see a dentist by the age of 2 years. Parents/Guardians of children 3-5 years old are asked to provide documentation of a recently completed dental exam (within the last 12 months), signed by a dentist.

To promote effective oral hygiene, children in all HS/UPK classrooms brush their teeth daily using fluoride toothpaste, with supervision and assistance from staff.

Hearing/Vision Screenings

HS/UPK makes arrangements for hearing and vision screenings to be completed on all enrolled children. If a referral is made because of these screenings, parents/guardians are notified and supported through the follow up process with proper medical providers.



Illness

Following the guidance of NYS Child Care Regulations, when illness is suspected, parents/guardians are notified immediately. The child is supervised until arrangements can be made for the child to go home.

If your child is not feeling well enough to participate fully in the program, including outdoor play, please keep him/her home until all evidence of illness is gone. Children need to be fever free, without medication, for a complete 24 hours before returning to school. If your child has a communicable disease, they must have a doctor's note stating the illness and the date that they may return to the classroom.

Head Lice

We know head lice is not a pleasant topic for most families, and yet is very common in groups of young children. If live lice are found, children will be sent home to be treated. If nits (eggs) are found, children will be sent home to be treated if they have not already been treated within 7-10 days. If the partnering school district has a stricter policy regarding head lice, the district policy will be followed.

Signs and Symptoms

- itching of scalp and/or back of neck
- visible presence of louse on scalp, or nits on hair shaft
- red areas on scalp or behind ears and back of neck

Nits (eggs) are usually found on strands of hair close to the head. They may resemble dandruff, but unlike dandruff which can be easily removed, nits are hard to remove with fingernails. Nits may be small yellow or grayish white and tear shaped. They usually hatch within 7-10 days.

Treatment

All household members should be checked and treated, as needed for lice/nits. We recommend the use of products that kill both live lice and eggs/nits. A second treatment is often recommended 7-10 days after the first treatment, to kill any newly hatched lice. Always read treatment instructions carefully and do not overuse them. After treating the hair, nits must be removed. Hand picking is the best way to get rid of the nits. The hair should be rechecked and picked through daily, for a period of 2-3 weeks, to remove all nits. All bedding, linens, towels, clothing, soft toys (stuffed animals) will need to be washed and dried on a hot cycle. If it is not possible to wash and dry items, place them tightly in sealed plastic bags at room temperature for at least two weeks. Combs, brushes, barrettes, and other head gear should be soaked in hot soapy water for at least ten minutes. The home should be vacuumed thoroughly, including carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture, and vehicle car seats.

Return to classroom.

An adult will need to bring the child to the classroom, where program staff will re-examine hair prior to the adult leaving. A child can return to the classroom when there are no live lice present, and the child has received a head lice shampoo treatment. If the partnering school district has a stricter policy regarding head lice, the district policy will be followed.

When to Keep Your Child Home

- If your child is not feeling well enough to participate fully in the program
- Fever
 - ** **Children must be fever free for 24 hours without the assistance of medication to return to the classroom (with the exception of antibiotics) ****
- Diarrhea-changes in the child's stool pattern-two or more loose/watery stools, uncontrollable loose stool, and/or stool that runs out of underwear/pullup.
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Earache
- Red eyes with discharge
- Head Lice/Nits (lice eggs)
- Rash of unknown origin, which appears and spreads quickly.
- Signs of a concussion
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Other signs of illness

In the event of a serious Public Health emergency, the program’s exclusion criteria may change based on guidance from the local Public Health department and/or school districts.

***Injuries/Serious Incidents**

If a child is injured in a HS/UPK classroom, the parent/guardian will be notified via telephone, text message, verbally, or a note sent home with the child that day. The method of contact will depend on the seriousness of the injury.

***Emergency Information**

NYS Day Care Licensing Regulations require that HS/UPK staff members must be able to reach parents/guardians or emergency contact people at all times. Children will not be allowed to attend the program without up-to-date and reliable emergency contact information.

Families will be asked to provide names and WORKING PHONE NUMBERS of responsible adults who are at least 18 years of age and can be contacted in an emergency if parents/guardians cannot be reached. These people must be available to pick the child up from the classroom in a parent’s absence and may be asked to show ID when picking up the child.

Please notify staff of any changes in emergency contact information.

***First Aid / Medication Administration**

Program staff are certified in First Aid and CPR.

Classroom staff have the ability to give and/or apply the following medications and topical ointments to your child with appropriate permissions (parent and/or health care provider) on file:

- Over the counter topical ointments including sunscreen, Vaseline, diaper cream, and hand lotion.
- Prescribed emergency medications including Epinephrine autoinjectors, rescue albuterol inhaler, albuterol nebulizer, and/or Benadryl if it is given with an Epi-Pen.
- Routine prescription medications: Not all classrooms have the ability to give routine prescription medication; please contact your child’s classroom.

Do not send medications, including over-the-counter ointments (i.e.: sunscreen, lotion, diaper cream, lip balm, hand sanitizer etc.) to school with your child. Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation of all medications.

The HS/UPK program has an Anaphylaxis Policy in place for staff to follow when children with identified allergies (food, seasonal, environmental etc.) are enrolled in the program. The policy covers identification of children with allergies, prevention of allergen exposure, recognition of anaphylaxis, and response to a child experiencing anaphylaxis. For more information, please see the program’s Anaphylaxis Policy.

When a classroom is located in a school district building, they have access to the school nurse. Some school nurses have access to non-patient specific Epinephrine autoinjector in case of an emergency such as an allergic reaction. If your child is having a life-threatening allergic reaction, the nurse may utilize this medication to counteract the allergic reaction.

Mental Wellness

The HS/UPK program provides mental health consultation services to support children's mental health, social-emotional well-being, and overall health. Mental health is a state of well-being that allows people to cope with life's stresses, realize their abilities, and contribute to their community. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It is often referred to as mental well-being, social-emotional wellness, and behavioral health. These services aim to support effective classroom management, positive learning environments, and strategies for children with behaviors that are challenging. Referrals for further evaluation or additional support can be facilitated by the mental health consultant.

Mental health for young children includes the ability to:	Having positive mental health makes it easier for children to:	When children are sad, worried, or angry, it can be hard to:
- Understand and share feelings	- Do well in school - Learn new things	- Make friends - Follow simple directions

- Form close and positive relationships with family, peers, and caregivers - Explore and learn	- Solve tough problems - Develop patience - Ask for help - Focus on a task	- Express feelings and needs - Solve problems in positive, helpful ways - Sleep well
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What you can do to help your child develop social-emotional health and mental wellness:

For Infants:	- Hold your baby during feedings - Make eye contact with your baby and smile - Talk out loud about the tasks you are doing - Try to relax and have fun - Read and sing to your baby every day - Take care of yourself and create a support network
For Toddlers & Preschoolers:	- Make sure your child always feels safe - Offer choices - Practice patience - Allow extra time for activities and transitions - Play together for at least 15 minutes per day - Praise your child regularly - Take care of yourself and create a support network

Emergency Preparedness

*Emergency Drills/Emergency Closings

Classroom staff will support children in practicing emergency drills, evacuation drills, shelter in place, and other safety drills as needed. Each HS/UPK classroom has emergency plans in place and also works with the local school districts to follow their required procedures.

In an actual emergency or weather-related event, it is important to stay calm. Ensuring the safety of children, staff, and families will be a priority. The classroom may need to evacuate, close, or have a delayed opening. In a school district partnership, if the school district where your child attends HS/UPK issues a closing or delay, then the HS/UPK classroom is also closed or delayed.

School districts do not release the location of emergency evacuation sites in advance. If there is a need to relocate, staff will contact parents as soon as possible to provide further information on how and where to meet their child. Please understand that law enforcement agencies will determine when it is safe for children to be released and identification may be required before releasing a child.

Please keep all emergency contact information up to date so that staff can reach you in the event of an emergency.

Emergency closings are announced on the radio along with other school closings or delays.

School cancellations/closings - listen to:

*Nutrition/Food Service

- All HS/UPK classrooms serve children breakfast and lunch. An afternoon snack varies by program.
- Meals are at no cost to families.
- Meals follow USDA guidelines for meal requirements, serving foods low in sodium, fat, and sugar.
- Children are never forced to eat.
- Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
- HS/EHS has planned opportunities for children to learn about healthy food choices and how food helps your body grow throughout the program year.

- If a child requires a specific diet for religious or medical reasons or has any food allergies, parents/guardians are required to provide appropriate documentation from the child's doctor.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

PLEASE do not send lunches or snacks for your child from home. The program provides all meals to enrolled children.

For additional information regarding CACFP, healthy foods, beverages, and childhood obesity, please see:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/resources/parentres.htm>

Transportation

Availability of Transportation Services

Pro Action Head Start directly operates buses in limited locations. Parents can also work directly with some school districts to arrange transportation. The transportation procedures specific to each classroom are reviewed with families at the initial home visit. Parents/guardians should be aware that transportation services are not guaranteed in all locations.

Children transported by a Pro Action operated bus:

- Buses pick up and drop off children at their home or an authorized location at scheduled times. Delays in these times can occur due to inclement weather, changes in bus routes or traffic conditions.
- If a child misses the bus, parents may self-transport him/her to the classroom.
- If a child will not be attending class, parents/guardians **MUST** notify the classroom. If a child does not arrive for class and we have not heard from the parent, staff are required to contact parents to verify the child's absence.
- Parents must provide written documentation/permission which identifies the person(s) who has permission to get the child off the bus at the end of the bus route.
- Children are not permitted off the bus unless an authorized adult is there to receive them.
- A responsible adult needs to assist the child in crossing the street, as necessary, when loading and unloading the bus.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST PROMPTLY UPDATE, IN WRITING, ANY CHANGES IN THEIR RELEASE AND EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION.

Emergency Bus Drills

Children participate in Emergency Bus Evacuation Drills, which are done as a group to ensure everyone's safety during an emergency.

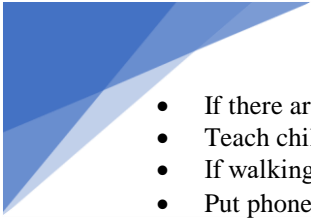
Bus Safety

Please review the following rules with your child to help him/her develop safe riding habits:

- Remain in your seat.
- Keep your seat belt on.
- Keep all belongings under the seat and out of the aisles.
- Large objects or toys can be unsafe and are not permitted on the bus.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- No food or drinks on the bus.
- Quiet voices on the bus.
- Follow the bus driver's and/or bus monitor's directions.
- When walking to and from the bus, hold hands with an adult.
- If it's necessary to cross the street at the bus stop, do so in front of the bus where the driver can see you and wait for the bus driver to direct you to cross.

Pedestrian Safety

- Teach children to look left, right, and left again before crossing the street and continue looking until safely across.
- Cross a street only when accompanied by an adult and at designated crosswalks.
- It's best to walk on sidewalks or paths, and cross at street corners using traffic signals and crosswalks.

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- If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.
 - Teach children not to run or dart into the street or cross between parked cars.
 - If walking when it's dark out, be alert and be visible to drivers. Wear brightly colored clothing or reflective gear.
 - Put phones, headphones, and devices down when crossing the street.

Self-Transportation

Parents/guardians are welcome to provide transportation for their child to and from the HS/UPK classroom. In some locations, self-transportation is the only form of transportation available.

Please drop off and/or pick up at the classroom's arrival and dismissal times. Staff use time before and after class for meetings or to prepare for the day and are not able to care for children before or after these arrival and departure times.

If a child has not been picked up from the classroom and the parent has not made contact or other arrangements for the child to be picked up by the scheduled departure time, staff will attempt to contact the parent and/or individuals listed on the authorized emergency card. If necessary, appropriate authorities may be contacted to ensure the safety of the child.

Adults must sign children in when arriving and sign them out when departing. Should there be a need for another adult to transport a child to and/or from the classroom, this person must be at least 18 years of age and parents must provide written authorization, in advance. Staff will ask to see ID when a child is being picked up by an adult who is not known by staff.

Please do not leave other children alone in a vehicle during drop off or pick up.

Release of Children

At enrollment, parents/guardians will be asked to complete paperwork stating who is authorized to pick up their child from the bus and/or from the classroom.

Any individual picking up a child must be able to present a photo ID upon request.

Parents/Guardians will also complete a separate Emergency Card which will list who to contact in case of an emergency with the child during the school day, or an emergency with the parent (for home based services).

Please notify staff if there is a change in your child's pick-up routine.

All changes must be in writing. You may send a note in your child's backpack, send an email or fax.

It is important to keep this information up to date. Staff cannot release to any individual without written permission from parents/guardians.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important!

Please contact the classroom at the beginning of each day if your child will not be attending school, along with the reason for the absence. Most classrooms have voicemail, allowing parents to leave a message at any time of the day. Classrooms can also be contacted by email or text message to an agency cell phone. If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the classroom, a staff member will contact the family to confirm the child's absence. In some cases, parents may be asked to provide a written statement from the child's doctor stating when he/she may return to class.

Regular attendance is also important for families enrolled in the home-based program. Home Visitors will work with families to schedule visits at a time that is convenient for families. If families are unable to keep their scheduled home visit, they are asked to notify their home visitor in advance, whenever possible. Attempts will be made to reschedule a cancelled home visit.

Staff will follow up on patterns of chronic absenteeism. If absences are due to family circumstances that prevent regular attendance, no further action is needed. Staff will provide support in an attempt to improve attendance.

Missing 30 consecutive days (for center-based programs) or 4 consecutive home visits (for home-based programs) with no valid excuse and/or no contact from the family, may be considered an enrollment vacancy.

Other Policies and General Program Information

*Admission

Recruitment and enrollment of children in the Pro Action of Steuben & Yates, Inc. Head Start/UPK programs is without regard to sex, color, race, religion, national origin, gender identity or disability. Head Start funded slots are filled with Head Start-eligible children; UPK funded slots are filled with UPK-eligible children. Ten percent (10%) of available Head Start funded slots must be reserved for children with identified disabilities. Annual recruitment occurs every spring, however, applications can be taken at any time during the year. A waitlist is maintained based on eligibility points. If an enrollment slot becomes available during the year, a family/child on the waitlist with the highest eligibility points are contacted to determine interest.

Actual enrollment of a child is contingent upon the program's receipt of:

- 1) Documentation of a current physical examination
- 2) Documentation that immunizations are in compliance with New York State Public Health Law

There is no charge to families for a child's participation in the HS/UPK program.

Photos/Videos

Due to strict federal and state regulations regarding the privacy of children and families, the use of photographs within the program will be limited. **In an effort to respect each family's privacy, we ask that parents/guardians only take pictures of their own child/children during program events and activities. Parents/Guardians are responsible for notifying other family members or friends of the Photo/Video restrictions, if they plan to attend program events.**

Staff may take pictures, using program equipment or cameras, of daily activities, field trips, socializations, or special events. These photographs may be used for classroom displays, activities, media coverage, and various agency publications.

Some school districts take individual child or classroom photographs for use in school yearbooks and publications.

The program cannot be held responsible for any school district, individual parent/family, or media use of photographs, videos, or names if used in such things as yearbooks, press releases, publications, or sharing of such content through social media.

Drug & Alcohol Policy

Center based programs:

In the case of a parent/guardian coming to the classroom to pick a child up and suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will ask the parent/guardian to leave the child in the classroom until an alternate release person can be located. If the parent/guardian does not cooperate with staff or insists on taking the child from the center, staff will be required to notify authorities immediately, to ensure safety of the child.

In the case of another authorized adult coming to the classroom to pick a child up and that adult is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, that person will be asked to leave the child in the classroom. Staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian immediately to arrange alternate transportation.

Home based programs:

Home visitors cannot complete a home visit if the parent is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Whenever possible, staff will determine if there is another responsible adult present who can care for the child. During socializations, parents must accompany their children to the socialization site. Upon arrival, if a parent is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will ask the parent to remain at the socialization site until another responsible adult can be located.

If a parent is unable to care for a child due to being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and no other adult is available to provide care, staff are legally required to report to the New York State Child Abuse Central Registry. If a parent/guardian does not cooperate with staff or insists on taking the child from the site, staff will be required to notify authorities immediately, to ensure safety of the child.



Smoke/Tobacco Free Environment

Pro Action Head Start will provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and participants. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of any tobacco product, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes and/or vape products, as well as legalized or illegal drugs (including marijuana). This policy applies to both employees and non-employee participants of Pro Action Head Start.

1. Smoking/chewing tobacco, marijuana, and vape products are prohibited on ALL Pro Action Head Start and school district properties, vehicles, field trips, and off-site activities at all times.
2. Head Start/UPK requests that parents refrain from smoking while waiting at bus stops with their children.
3. Staff will not smoke and will request that parents refrain from smoking during home visits. Parents will be informed of the smoke-free request prior to the home visit.

Sex Offenders

Pro Action HS/UPK may limit involvement in program activities by any known sex offender, depending on the situation, relation to the child, and legal restrictions. Please refer to the *Procedure Re: Registered/Convicted Sex Offenders* for further information. Parents/guardians who are registered sex offenders, or those who would like more information about this procedure, should contact staff for a copy of the procedure or to discuss their situation and options.

*Child Abuse/Maltreatment Reporting Requirements

Pro Action Head Start/UPK staff are legally required to report situations of suspected child abuse and maltreatment to the New York State Child Abuse Central Registry. HS/UPK does not investigate whether abuse or neglect has actually taken place. That is the job of the local Department of Social Services. Head Start/UPK staff will provide continued support to families.

Families are not eliminated from the program because of suspected or actual abuse/maltreatment. The program offers informal counseling, and information on services available in the community to assist families in coping with emotional, social, economic, school, or discipline problems which threaten the family's unity and health. Throughout the year, families receive information on child safety and the identification and prevention of child abuse.

Children Whose Parents Do Not Live Together

HS/UPK supports and respects the unique composition of each family, including those that are separated, divorced, and/or never married. With custody arrangements varying from family to family, this policy does not expect to cover every situation that might arise. Contact staff or the Family & Community Engagement Manager for clarification of specific family situations.

HS/UPK makes every effort to remain a neutral party and to work with both parents and/or guardians to support the best interest of the enrolled child. Staff are not in a position to provide legal advice.

- Please provide the most current copies of legal/custody paperwork.
- Generally, staff work directly with the parent/guardian who has either sole custody, or physical placement in joint custody situations.
- Staff will attempt to encourage the involvement of both parents.
- Current Orders of Protection will be followed.
- Changes to custody/visitation orders will only be honored when new written orders, signed by the court, are provided by either parent.
- Staff may contact the Family Court to be sure we have the most recent court order.
- By law, if custody arrangements have not been established by the court, each biological parent has equal access to the child.
- Individuals may be asked to show proof of being the child's parent, either through birth certificate, court paperwork, or an Order of Affiliation (Statement of Paternity).

Release of Child (will follow legal court documentation):

No one can restrict the rights of parents except for a court of law.

- **JOINT CUSTODY WITH JOINT PLACEMENT:** Generally, both parents have equal rights and the child shares equal time with both parents. Staff will work with the parents to obtain a typical drop off/pick up schedule. If a parent comes to pick up on their non-scheduled day, without prior notice, staff will attempt to contact the other parent.

- **JOINT CUSTODY WHERE ONE PARENT HAS PRIMARY PLACEMENT:** Generally, both parents have legal rights to the child, unless court paperwork states otherwise. Typically, the parent who has primary placement will provide information on the drop off/pick up schedule. Custody paperwork often specifies a visitation schedule.
- **SOLE CUSTODY:** Generally, only the parent who is awarded sole custody has the right to pick up the child, unless written permission is granted for another adult to pick up. Current HS/UPK policy prohibits the release of a child to anyone not listed on the emergency card and authorized pick-up list. Photo identification may be required when picking up a child. Custody paperwork may state specific rights of the non-custodial parent.
- **NO LEGAL CUSTODY ESTABLISHED:** If there is not a current custody order in place for the child, or paperwork has not been provided by the parents, both biological parents will have equal rights to the child. In this case, neither parent can be prevented from picking up the child, and staff will make a phone call to inform the parent who lives with the child that the other parent has picked up the child from class.

Release of Information:

- Typically, both biological parents have a right to their child's academic information, unless court paperwork states otherwise. Staff will be able to share information regarding the child's health, academic progress, and screenings with both biological parents.
- Information about a parent or the parent's household will not be shared with the other parent.


Parent Participation:

- HS/UPK will offer both parents the opportunity to participate in the program activities, unless court orders specifically prohibit contact. In cases of sole legal custody, the custodial parent may have the right to deny participation of the non-custodial parent. In cases of supervised visitation, staff are NOT able to provide supervision during program activities.

* Parent/Guardian Concerns

The following process will be followed to resolve parent concerns:

1. When a parent is concerned about an issue involving a staff member, the following steps should be followed:
 - a. First the parents should speak directly to the staff member about the concern.
 - a. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion with the staff member or the parent feels he/she cannot talk to the staff member, the parent should then talk with the staff member's supervisor.
 - b. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion with the supervisor or feels he/she cannot talk to the supervisor, the parent should talk with the HS/EHS Director.
 - c. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion with the HS/EHS Director, the parent can request that the matter be brought to the attention of the Policy Council.
2. When a parent is concerned about any program issue not involving a staff member (for example, budgets, space, playground, transportation):
 - a. The parent should reach out to the Home Based Home Visitor or attend a classroom team meeting to discuss the issue.
 - b. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion, the parent can speak directly to the HS/EHS Director.
 - c. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion with the HS/EHS Director, the parent can request that the matter be brought to the attention of the Policy Council.
3. If the concern reaches the Policy Council level, the process for resolving concerns or complaints brought forth by parents is:
 - a. The HS/EHS Director will ask the complainant to submit a written request for a meeting with the Policy Council Executive Committee, the HS/EHS Director and representative of Pro Action's administrative team.
 - b. Upon receipt of the written request, the HS/EHS Director will confer with Pro Action's Administrative team regarding the complaint. The HS/EHS Director will arrange for the meeting to hear verbal testimony from the complainant within ten (10) working days of receiving the written request for a meeting.
 - c. After hearing the testimony, the PC Executive Committee, a representative of Pro Action's Administrative team and the HS/EHS Director will agree on a solution to the complaint and be prepared to present it at the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting.
 - d. At the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting, the HS/EHS Director will review the complaint. The complainant can request to be present at the meeting, and, if the complainant desires, will be given the opportunity to address the total Council about the complaint.
 - e. After hearing the review of the complaint from the HS/EHS Director and the complainant (if present), the HS/EHS



Director will present the proposed solution to the Council. If the complainant is present, he or she will be excused from the meeting while the solution is being presented and discussed. The Council will formally approve or disapprove the proposed solution (including any newly developed policy or revision to current policy).

f. If the complainant is present at the Policy Council meeting, he or she will be informed verbally of the Policy Council's approval of recommended solution. If the complainant is not present at the Policy Council meeting, he or she will be informed in writing of the decision within five (5) working days of the Council meeting.

4. If the complainant believes that the solution offered by the HS/EHS Director and the Policy Council does not fully address the concern, the matter will be presented to the agency's Executive Director and Pro Action's Board of Directors' Executive Committee for further review. Pro Action's Board Executive Committee can accept the proposed solution and inform the complainant that the matter has been sufficiently addressed and no further discussion will be held. Or, the Board Executive Committee can meet with the complainant, the HS/EHS Director and the Executive Director. After the meeting, the Board Executive Committee will work with the Executive Director and HS/EHS Director to develop an alternative solution. The alternative solution will be presented to the Policy Council for approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Policy Council will formally approve or disapprove the alternative solution. Notice of approval will be given in writing to the complainant within five (5) working days. If the Policy Council disapproves the alternative solution, the matter will be resolved utilizing the established Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.

NOTE: Below are the phone numbers of individuals who can assist you with questions or concerns.

1. Your classroom staff (names/phone numbers are provided at the initial home visit).
2. Tricia Shirey, Pro Action Head Start/UPK/Early Head Start Director
(607) 776-2125 ext. 7100
3. Laura Rossman, Pro Action Executive Director
(607) 776-2125 ext. 1100

For comments or concerns related to potential violations of the NYS Child Day Care Regulations, please contact Tricia Shirey, HS/UPK Director and / or:

Virginia Primm, Regional Day Care Manager
NYS Department of Social Services
Office of Child and Family Services
Rochester Regional Office
259 Monroe Avenue, 3rd Floor Rm. 301
Rochester, NY 14607
585-238-8531