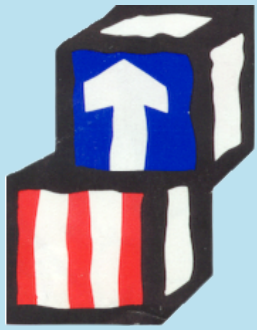# Head Start
Birth to Five Program

2022 - 2023 Back to School Plan

COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION OF SOUTH TEXAS

Head Start
Birth to Five Program

ELENA ESQUIVEL

HEAD START DIRECTOR

As the 2022-2023 school year is quickly approaching, we continue to face uncertainty, fear and challenges due to the current pandemic.

While we know that parents are facing the mixture of emotions and uncertainty, we would like you to know that we have been preparing and planning for a year that will be filled with new ways to engage your child in meaningful learning that will help them become kindergarten ready! We will also continue with safety measures and protocols to help make learning as safe as possible.

We continue to closely monitor local COVID-19 cases and change plans according to local situations. The first day of school for students is tentatively scheduled for August 15, 2022, unless your child's classroom is participating in a full collaboration classroom with the local district. If you are unsure, please contact the enrollment department at 361-664-0145 ext. 2042.

Enjoy the last few weeks of summer and thank you for choosing our Head Start Birth to Five Program as the best fit for the educational needs of your child. We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,
Elena Esquivel
Head Start Director

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Introduction

Community Action Corporation of South Texas (CACOST) Head Start Birth to Five Program is looking forward to opening its doors and providing a safe learning environment for our children and families. As the situation with COVID-19 is continuously changing, as are the protocols that are necessary to ensure a safe learning environment for your child(ren). CACOST continuously monitors the health and safety measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and will update measures appropriately.
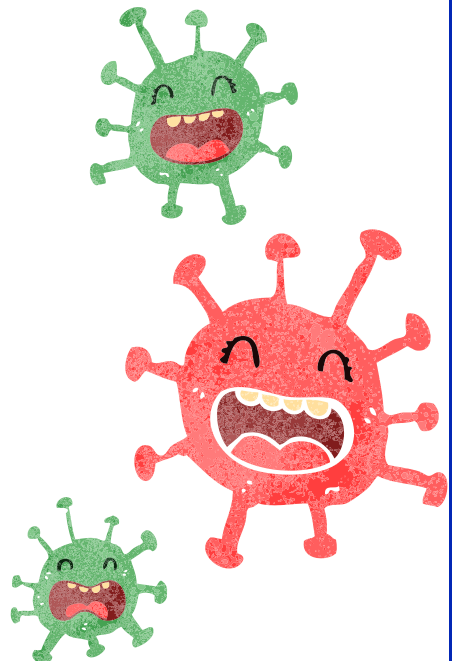
Health and Safety

While no school plan can eliminate all risks, CACOST has adopted numerous health and safety measures that prioritize the health and safety of all children, staff, and families.
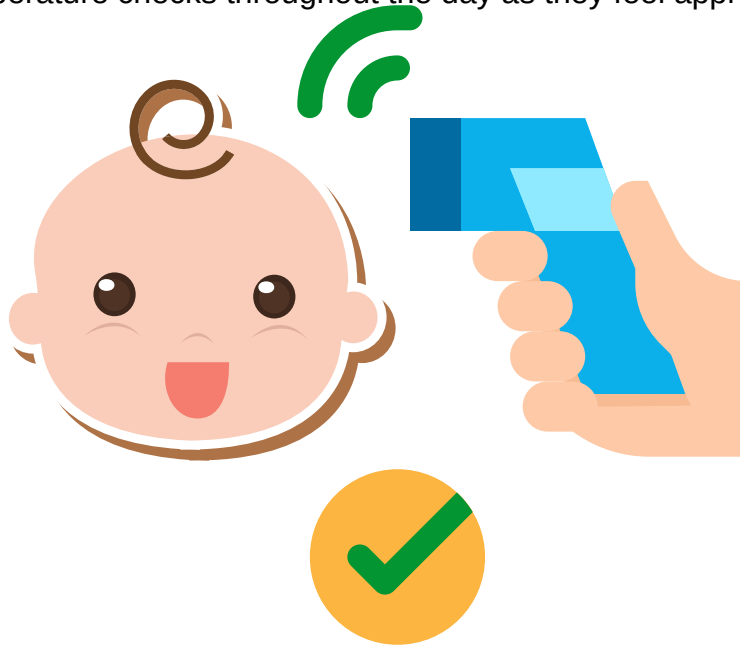
Symptom Screening

CACOST will implement consistent measures for symptom screening. All children must stay at home when sick. With the exception of temperature checks, families will be asked to verbally affirm eligibility to attend school based on the following criteria:

1. Have you or your child had any close contact with someone lab-confirmed COVID-19 positive in the last 10 days?
2. Have you or your child had any close contact with someone who suspects they might have COVID-19 in the last 10 days?
3. Does your child have any of the following symptoms?
    - A temperature greater than or equal to 100°F
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Chills, shaking with chills
    - Muscle pain or body aches
    - Headache
    - Sore throat
    - Loss of taste or smell
    - Diarrhea
    - Nausea and/or Vomiting
    - Nasal congestion or clear nasal discharge
    - Poor appetite or poor feeding

Temperature Checks

Temperature screenings will be conducted daily as an additional precaution for the protection for children, staff and families. Temperature checks will be done on children, teachers and staff. Temperature checks will be done by an assigned staff member upon arrival to the Head Start Center using a no-touch infrared thermometer for a forehead scan. Any reading with a no-touch thermometer of 100°F or higher will not be permitted to stay at the Head Start center. Staff members may conduct additional temperature checks throughout the day as they feel appropriate.

School Arrival and Dismissal

ARRIVAL

Each classroom will have one designated entrance to ensure symptom screening and temperature checks are conducted in a safe and efficient manner. Children and families will need to maintain social distancing from other families during arrival screening and temperature check procedures. Please ensure that anyone age 2 and older are wearing face masks. If you or your child do not have a face mask, we will provide you with one.

DISMISSAL

One authorized parent/guardian/adult per household will be allowed to pick up their child. According to CACOST policies, authorized individuals must wear a face mask. They will sign their child out in the classroom's designated area.
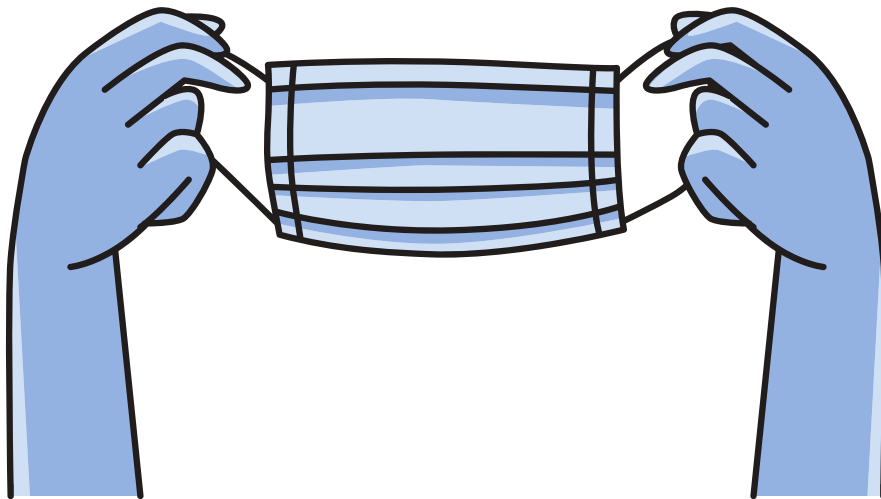
Separation of Ill Students

Every classroom will designate an isolation area with sufficient space to allow for social distancing. When a child displays symptoms of COVID-19, they will remain supervised in a designated isolation area. Parent/guardian will be notified to pick up their child. Children who are ill and have been separated from their peers should be picked up within 30 minutes from the time the parent has been contacted. Children will be provided with activities until they are picked up. The designated area will be cleaned and disinfected immediately after use and will not be used again until it has been thoroughly sanitized.

Social Distancing/ Physical Distancing

Social distancing remains a best practice for reducing the risk of spread for COVID-19. All Head Start activities and locations have been evaluated and modified to support social distancing between each child and between child and teacher/staff. Floor markings will be visual reminders to practice social distancing. Students will be encouraged to show their kindness and excitement to see a friend or a teacher through a wave, thumbs up or air hug.

Masks

Based on scientific research, the CDC recommends the use of face masks. The Head Start Program will encourage all children over the age of 2 to wear a face mask. Age appropriate education will be provided to children on proper mask usage, including how to put it on, how to take it off, and where to store it when not in use. The Head Start Program will provide face masks to children, staff, and visitors. Teachers will provide opportunities for students to take breaks from mask wearing, such as: breakfast, lunch, nap time, snack time and when children are brushing their teeth. We highly encourage parents and families to practice wearing a face mask prior to the first day of school if your child is over the age of 2. Staff will wear a face mask at all times, with the exception of meal times.

Protocol for Classroom or Center Visitors

- All visitors will be required to wear a face covering and follow the same screening procedures and temperature checks as outlined above.

- Volunteers are vital to the Head Start program and we hope to work together to find safe and innovative ways to support the program.

- Professionals that need to provide behavioral and/or disability services to children will be allowed to enter, with the exception that they must pass all entry screening procedures and temperature check guidelines.

COVID-19 Guidelines

1- If the child is exposed to family members/friends at home, they may come to class unless the child develops symptoms.

2- If there is a child in the class testing positive, the child is sent home for 7 days, (may test if asymptomatic after 5 days and return with a negative test), but the other kids remain in the class if asymptomatic.

3 - A letter will be sent to parents informing them about any child being exposed or positive and let them make a decision whether to send their child to school or not.

The above may be subject to change if guidelines are not followed properly and/or if any surge of infection is seen.

EXPOSURE IS DEFINED AS SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD CLOSE CONTACT (LESS THAN 6 FEET) FOR GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO 15 MINUTES IN A 24 HOUR PERIOD REGARDLESS OF WEARING A FACEMASK.

Breakfast, Lunch and Snack time Procedures

Meals will be served by one staff member
(following all health and safety requirements)
and it will be taken to the child.