



2026-2027

PRIME TIME

HEAD START

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FAMILY HANDBOOK

PRIME TIME AT COUSHATTA

550 Jim Moore Road
Coushatta, LA 71019
(318) 951-1054

PRIME TIME AT MANSFIELD

115 Richards St.
Mansfield, LA 71052
(318) 951-1072

PRIME TIME AT NATCHITOCHES

1504 Gold St.
Natchitoches, LA 71457
(318) 951-1018

PRIME TIME AT NATCHEZ

9166 Highway 1
Natchez, LA 71457
(318) 951-1088

2026-2027 North Central LA Student Calendar: School Year & Summer Session

AUGUST 2026 - 14 School Days (All Students)

- 3-7 All Staff Employee Professional Development
- 10-11 Family Orientation & Home Visits
- 12 First Full Day of School Year

SEPTEMBER 2026 — 20 Full School Days & 1 Half Day (All Students)

- 7 Labor Day Holiday
- 18 Half Day (Students dismiss at 12 noon)

OCTOBER 2026 — 16 School Days (All Students)

- 9 Employee Professional Development (No Students)
- 12-16 Fall Break

NOVEMBER 2026 — 14 School Days (All Students)

- 2 Parent/Teacher Conference (No Students)
- 3 Election Day (No Students)
- 23-27 Thanksgiving Holiday (Dismiss on November 21st)

DECEMBER 2026 — 12 School Days (All Students)

- 4 Festival Weekend Observance
- 18 Employee Professional Development
- 21-31 Christmas Break (Dismiss on December 17th)

JANUARY 2027 — 17 Full School Days and 1 Half Day (All Students)

- 1-4 Winter Break (Students and Staff return on January 5th)
- 16 Half Day (Students dismiss at 12 noon)
- 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

FEBRUARY 2027 — 14 School Days (All Students)

- 12 Employee Professional Development (No Students)
- 15-19 Winter Break

MARCH 2027 — 16 Full School Days and 1 Half Day (All Students)

- 12 Home Visits #2 (No Students)
- 25 Half Day (Students dismiss at 12 noon)
- Home Visits #2 Continued
- 26 Good Friday
- 29-31 Spring Break

APRIL 2027 — 19 School Days (All Students)

- 1-2 Spring Break
- 23 Parent/Teacher Conferences (No Students)

MAY 2027 — 13 Full School Days and 1 Half Day (All Students)

- 20 Last Day of School Year/Half Day (Students dismiss at 12 noon)
- 21 Last Day for 10-Month Staff (No Students)
- 25-28 Mini Summer Session Break (11/12-Month Staff)
- 31 Memorial Day

JUNE 2027 — 18 Full School Days and 3 Half Days (EHS Only)

- 1 First Day of Summer Session for EHS Students Only
- 4 EHS Professional Development (Students dismiss at 12 noon)
- 11 EHS Professional Development (Students dismiss at 12 noon)
- 18 Juneteenth Observance
- 25 EHS Professional Development (Students dismiss at 12 noon)

JULY 2027 - 12 Days (EHS Only)

- 2 Fourth of July Holiday
- 16 Last Day of Summer Session
- 23 Last Day for Summer Session, (12-Month Staff)

Head Start Students: 156 Full Days & 4 Half Days [1,160.80 Total Hours]; 7.33 hours each day
Early Head Start Students: 184 Full Days & 7 Half Days [1,379.03 Total Hours]; 7.33 hours each

Important Dates & Times To Keep in Mind:

Drop-Off For All Students Is: 7:40A-8:10A Each School Day
Head Start Student Pick-Up Is: 2:30P-3:00P Each School Day
EHS Student Pick-Up Is: 2:30-3:00P Each Day

Home Visits #1: August 10-11, 2026 (No Students)

Parent/Teacher Conferences #1: November 2, 2026 (No Students)

Home Visits #2: March 12, 2027 (No students)

Parent/Teacher Conferences #2: April 23, 2027 (No Students)

Red lines denote dates with no students present.
Green lines denote early dismissal/half days.
Blue lines denote holidays for both students and staff
Black lines denote month headings and first/last days for sessions.
Purple lines denote total days for Head Start and Early Head students.

Revision

Board Approved: 7/27/26
Policy Council Approved: 7/27/26



HEAD START

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Prime Time Head Start family! We are delighted that you and your child will be joining our program this year. On behalf of our staff and community partners, I want to thank you for trusting us with your child's early learning experience.

Prime Time is more than a Head Start/Early Head Start program—it is a partnership with families. Our goal is to support your child's growth and development in a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment while also supporting your family's strengths, goals, and well-being. We are committed to providing high-quality early education, health and wellness services, and meaningful family engagement opportunities.

Our dedicated teachers and staff look forward to getting to know your child and working closely with you throughout the year to set the foundation for lifelong learning. We value open communication and encourage you to share your questions, ideas, and concerns at any time. Your involvement plays a vital role in your child's success, and we welcome you as an active partner in our program. As the school year begins, you will receive additional information about classroom routines, family activities, and ways to stay connected. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you need assistance or support.

We are excited about the year ahead and look forward to learning and growing together.

Warm regards,

Ashlyn Hamilton, M.Ed.
Head Start Program Director



Mission Statement: To create the precondition for future learning among economically and educationally vulnerable families.



Vision Statement: Creating a literate society where a quality humanities education is accessible to all.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents, guardians, and families with information regarding the services, policies, of the Prime Time program.

Please keep this guide in a convenient, safe place so you can refer to it throughout the program year. If you have any questions or concerns after reviewing this information, please speak with your child's Teacher, Family Service Coordinator, or the Center Director.

The information contained in this handbook may be modified by changes in federal, state or local regulations. You may also find additional information and updates on our website at: <http://www.primetimefamily.org>

Revised June 2026



Section (1) Parent Rights & Responsibilities

Parent and family participation and involvement are essential to the success of the Prime Time program. Prime Time believes that parents and family members are their child's first and most important teachers and are necessary partners in our mission to close the achievement gap and make sure every child is prepared for success in school and in life.

Parental Access

Prime Time has an open-door policy regarding parental/guardian access to his/her child/ren. This gives the parent/guardian an opportunity to observe Prime Time's educational curriculum, teaching strategies, positive social/emotional interactions, and positive guidance.

For the safety of all children and adults at the Early Head Start/Head Start Center, it is mandatory that all visitors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and contractors show an official military or state photo identification (ID) and sign-in at the front desk with the Front Office Staff. ID must be in the original card form or via the state approved LA Wallet phone application. Photocopies and photographs/screenshots of ID cards are not acceptable. The identification must be current and not expired.

Children in foster care are often picked up by state employees from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for court appearances and DCFS appointments. All DCFS employees must provide their DCFS State of Louisiana identification badge to establish their identity before a child is released.

Visitors, parents/guardians must also follow the same procedures of signing in at the front desk, showing ID, wearing a name badge, and signing out at the front desk when visiting the administrative leaders in the administrative offices.

Parent Rights

My rights as a parent or guardian in the Prime Time program include:

1. To be recognized as my child's primary educator.
2. To not be charged a fee for my child's enrollment and participation in the Early Head Start/Head Start program as it is a federally funded program.
3. To review my child's file upon request unless there is such a restriction through a court order.
4. To be treated with respect by the Prime Time program and to treat staff with the same respect
 - To be welcomed in my child's classroom. Prime Time has an open-door policy, and I may visit the center at any time during its hours of operation (without advance notice). *There may be modifications due to health and safety purposes. *
5. To receive information and guidance from the Early Head Start/Head Start program about my child's progress and development, including Parent/Teacher conferences and regular reports from my child's Teacher about my child's progress and my own.
6. To participate in discussions about my child's progress and set goals for my child's learning and development.
7. To be supported as an advocate for my child. In the event that my child has a diagnosed disability or has been referred for a concern, I will be involved with the local school district in creating an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), and will be kept informed on my child's progress in meeting his/her goals.
 - To take part in decisions regarding my child's center and the Prime Time program. My ideas and suggestions will always be valued by Prime Time, and I will have opportunities to share them with staff and other

parents including during Parent/Center meetings, Committee meetings, Policy Council meetings, and other workshops, training, and events.

8. To be informed about resources within the community related to education, health, social services, employment, and other critical issues.
9. To review and ask for clarification on Prime Time policies and procedures.
10. To submit any concerns regarding the center's alleged violation of the licensing requirements to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE):
LDE Licensing
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, La. 70802
Telephone: (225) 342-9905
11. To report any concerns about child abuse or neglect occurring at the center to 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437)

Parent Responsibilities

My responsibilities as a parent or guardian in the Prime Time program include:

1. Ensure my child attends the Prime Time program **every day** and **is on time** to support his/her development. Having your child in the classroom every day is the only way to ensure that s/he is fully prepared for kindergarten. Please notify us (in advance if possible) if your child will not be attending class on any given day.
2. Participate actively in the program and take advantage of the opportunities that the program offers, this includes, but is not limited to Parent-Teacher conferences, home visits, case conferences, parent committee, Family Engagement Network Meetings, Family Learning Parties, policy council meetings, parent activities, workshops, classes, and seminars.
3. Work with program staff and other families in a cooperative and respectful manner.
4. Be open to new ideas and experiences that can benefit me and my children.
5. Help make the Prime Time program better by offering my opinions, constructive criticism and suggestions in a respectful and collaborative manner.
6. Ask questions of my child's Teacher, our Family Service Coordinator, the Center Director or other members of the Prime Time team. Reinforce what my child learns in the program by completing Home Learning Logs weekly and reading to my child every night, establishing consistent family routines, providing language rich experiences for my child, and using positive discipline at home.
7. Ensure that my child is up to date on all required health screenings, doctor visits and dental visits to guarantee his or her healthy development.

Parent Behavior Policy

Prime Time believes staff, parents and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work. Behavior that causes harassment, alarm, or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of Prime Time.

Approach:

All members of the Prime Time community treat each other with respect.

Expectation:

- Adults set a good example to children at all times, showing them how to get along with all members of the Prime Time and the wider community.
- No members of staff, parents or children are the victims of abusive behavior or open to threats from other adults on the Prime Time premises.
- Parents should be aware of “No Phone Zones” and refrain from talking on phones in areas that may be disruptive to staff and children.
- Physical attacks and threatening behavior, abusive or insulting language verbal or written, staff, volunteers, parents and caretakers, children and other users of the Prime Time premises will not be tolerated and will result in withdrawal of permission to be on Prime Time premises.

Parental Discipline:

On Prime Time premises, the Positive Discipline and Guidance Policy for Children is strictly adhered to. Parents/guardians are expected to follow these guidelines; therefore, positive reinforcements, positive guidance, and redirection are required

to follow safe discipline practices rather than corporal punishment. See *Positive Discipline and Guidance Policy for Children* for complete details. Violation of this policy will not be tolerated.

Guidelines:

Types of behavior that are considered serious and unacceptable will not be tolerated towards any member of the Prime Time community. This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behavior:

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Inappropriate posting on Social Networking sites deemed as bullying
- Speaking in an aggressive/threatening tone
- Physically intimidating, e.g., standing very close
- The use of aggressive hand gestures/exaggerated movements
- Physical threats
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, or kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments
- Corporal punishment (spanking)

Consequences:

- Prime Time reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the Prime Time community are not subjected to unacceptable behavior or abuse.
- It is also an offense under section 547 of the Education Act 1997 for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on Prime Time premises.
- Prime Time premises are private property, and parents have been granted permission from the Prime Time to be on Prime Time premises. However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, Prime Time may prohibit individuals from entering the premises.
- The police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned.
- Prime Time is not responsible for organizing arrangements for children in the above circumstances. Parents will need to provide alternative arrangements for bringing children into Prime Time.
- Should a restricted parent/guardian violate the ban and trespass, legal action may be taken and/or the parent's child/ren may be terminated from the program.

Parents have the right to appeal by completing a complaint form (page 63) within the ten days that permission to enter the Prime Time premises was withdrawn.



Section (2) Information to Parents — Bureau of Licensing

This section of the Family Handbook serves as the official information to parents of every child enrolled at Prime Time.

What We Want You to Know

- Each parent/guardian will receive a copy of Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations upon request.
- We encourage parents/guardians to discuss with the Center Director any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the center or whether the center follows all applicable provisions of Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us.
- Throughout your child’s enrollment in Prime Time HS/EHS, you will have opportunities to participate in the center's operation and activities and to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements. Please speak to the Center Director if you have a particular interest in this area.
- Our program has an Open Door Policy, meaning that you are welcome to visit your child’s Prime Time HS center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the Center Director or any staff member. However, to ensure the safety of the children and staff, all visitors including parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to sign in at the front desk with the Front Office Staff and sign out before leaving the center.
- Parent/guardian written consent will be secured before Prime Time takes your child on a field trip, outing or special event.
- Prime Time’s policy on the disciplining of children by staff members is posted in a prominent location within each center. See related section of this Handbook. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.
- Prime Time has a policy on the release of children to parents/guardians or authorized persons by the parents/guardians. See related section of this Handbook.
- Prime Time has policies about dispensing medicine and the management of communicable diseases. See related section of this Handbook. If you have any questions, please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

- Prime Time has a policy on the exclusion of children from enrollment. See related section of this Handbook.
- Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, or harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other kind of child abuse, neglect or exploitation by any adult - whether working at the center or not - is required by State law to report the concern immediately to Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1- 855-452-5437). Such reports may be made anonymously. Also see the related section of this handbook.
- All Prime Time centers are required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1993 (ADA). Our program will not discriminate against individuals with physical or mental disabilities regarding enrollment practice, term, conditions, or privilege of admissions. Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 669-4000 or (800) 669-6820 (TTY).

Non-Discrimination Policy

Prime Time does not discriminate nor tolerate the discrimination of children and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) based on race, color, creed, sex, national origin, handicap, ancestry or whether a child is being breastfed. Such discrimination must be reported. Parents or community members may request the Parent- Community Complaint Grievance Report from the Front Office Staff at the front desk and return it to the Front Office Staff.

Prime Time is also an equal employment opportunity (EEO) employer. Employment decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and Prime Time's professional and operational needs. Prime Time values a diverse workforce and the unique qualities that individuals of various backgrounds and experiences can offer. Our continued success depends heavily on the quality of our people. Thus, all personnel actions, including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, transfers, employer-sponsored employee activities, termination and other terms and conditions of employment are made without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, creed, ancestry, marital status or sexual orientation, gender identification, genetic information, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, citizenship status, victims of domestic violence, or any other protected category.

Prime Time is committed to providing employees with the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential without regard to the categories listed above. As opportunities for transfer, advancement or promotion occur, we will ensure that all employees receive fair and balanced consideration, and that only valid requirements are imposed for these opportunities. Moreover, we will not condone the unfair and illegal use of stereotypes based on characteristics such as race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, etc.

Management is primarily and ultimately responsible for seeing that Prime Time's equal employment opportunity policies are implemented, but all members of the staff share in the responsibility for assuring that by their personal actions, the policies are effective and apply uniformly to everyone. Thus, any employee, particularly management staff, involved in discriminatory practices will be subject to investigation and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Disclosure of Information

Each Prime Time center is licensed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). A copy of our current license is posted at the front entrance of each center and each classroom. Look for it in your center or ask a staff member for assistance. Each license will indicate the number of children the program is licensed to serve.

Each Prime Time center complies with all applicable provisions of the Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations (the official licensing regulations), which is kept on the premises at each center. If parents/ guardians would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Each parent/ guardian will receive a summary of the Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations upon request.

In addition to the license certificate, we will provide licensing surveys/ inspections, regulations, and information regarding each center upon request. The availability of licensing surveys/inspections, regulations and information regarding early learning centers can be found on the LDOE website.

Prime Time must cooperate with any inspections or investigations of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and/or The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) including the interviewing of staff members and children.

We encourage parents/guardians to discuss with the Center Director any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the center or whether the center is following all applicable provisions of Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us.

Parents and/or community members may file a complaint/grievance to address their concerns about the Prime Time program. To do this, parents or community members may request the Parent Community Complaint- Grievance Report from the Front Office Staff and return it to the Front Office Staff.

If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing standards, you are entitled to report them to the Bureau of Licensing at:

Department of Social
Services Licensing Section
627 N. Fourth St., 3rd Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
(225) 342-9905
ldelicensing@la.gov



Section (3) General Policies & Procedures

Electronic Devices, Computer Practices, Programs, Movies, and Video Games

Prime Time teachers occasionally use electronic media in the classroom—such as computer games, iPad apps, or brief videos to support curriculum concepts. The latest technological advances may also be used with children to help collect ongoing assessment data as appropriate. Any use of electronic media or technology-based tools will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- Electronic media are always used to aid curriculum objectives and school readiness goals. Teachers choose media that are age- and developmentally appropriate for their students.
- Electronic media are used with scaffolding and support from teachers (for example, co-viewing of videos or guidance for using interactive computer games). They are never a substitute for planned activities or used for passive viewing.

Additional uses of electronic media, such as assistive technologies, may be considered for a child with special needs, based on consultation with the parents/guardians and Center Director (or Director of Education and Curriculum Coach) and development of an Individualized Action Plan.

Louisiana Bulletin 137, §1509. Policies Louisiana Regulations define electronic devices as including, but not limited to:

- television,
- movies,
- games,
- videos,
- computers and
- hand-held electronic devices.

Choosing Appropriate Educational Websites

Given the quantity of websites that claim to be “educational” for preschool-aged children, it is crucial that teachers (and education leadership) use the criteria below to determine whether a website is appropriate for the Prime Time classroom.

Criteria 1 and 2 must be met fully; criteria 3 and 4 are highly recommended.

1. Developmentally appropriate

- characters are the same/similar age as children
- characters represent diverse races, ethnicities, and abilities
- most of the content is interactive

2. Educational purpose/content

- site is primarily for educational purposes
- not for commercial purposes
- most of the content connects to learning objectives

3. Child experience/navigability

- minimal teacher assistance (after initial teacher support, students can use the site independently)
- graphical and text navigation
- There are a variety of activities

4. Functional

- loads quickly
- does not require a lot of troubleshooting
- audio is clear and easy to understand
- content contained in website (no external links)
- is free and does not require authentication

(A) Limitations - In Louisiana, teachers shall adhere to the following limitations:

- a) electronic device activities for children under age two are prohibited
- b) time allowed for electronic device activities for children ages two and above shall not exceed two hours per day, with the exception that television, DVD, or video viewing shall be limited to no more than one hour per day.

(B) Ratings & Content- §1509. Policies Louisiana Regulations, Programs, Movies and Video Games Policy:

- a) programs, movies, and video games with violent or adult content, including but not limited to:
 - soap operas,
 - television news, and
 - sports programs aimed at audiences other than children shall not be permitted with children.

- b) All television, video, DVD, or other programming shall be suitable for the youngest child present.
- c) "PG" programming or its television equivalent shall not be shown to children under the age of five.
- d) "PG" programming shall only be viewed by children aged five and above and shall require written parental authorization.
- e) Any programming with a rating more restrictive than "PG" is prohibited; f. all video games shall be suitable for the youngest child with access to the games: i. "E10+" rated games shall be permitted for children ages 10 years and older.
- ii. "T" and "M" rated games are prohibited.

C) Computer Access & Content- §1509. Louisiana Policies and Regulations require *computers that allow internet access* by children to be equipped with monitoring or filtering software that limits access by children to inappropriate websites, email, and instant messaging.

Provisionally Employed Staff Monitoring

Provisional employment status is a temporary status that allows a person to be employed by a center on a "provisional" basis until all the Child Care Civil Background Check also known as CCCBC (Child Care Criminal Background Check) results are received by LDOE and a determination of eligibility or ineligibility is made. Pursuant to both Louisiana and Federal law, LDOE may grant an individual provisional employment status if (a) the individual has submitted fingerprints and (b) LDOE has received the satisfactory results from either the Louisiana or FBI criminal history record. A person with provisional employment status may be provisionally employed by a center only if they are monitored by the center in accordance with Bulletin 137, §1811.D, pending receipt of all CCCBC results.

1. A center may provisionally employ as a staff member, a person for whom it has requested a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for child care purposes, and for whom the department has received a satisfactory fingerprint-based Louisiana or federal criminal history information record, pending the department's receipt of the other CCCBC results and determination of the person's eligibility for child care purposes.
2. A provisionally employed staff member may be counted in child to staff ratios but must be monitored in accordance with the following:

- A. A monitor of a provisionally employed staff member must be an adult staff member for whom the center has a CCCBC-based determination of eligibility for childcare purposes, (or prior to October 1, 2018, a satisfactory CCBC), who is designated by the center to monitor a specific provisionally employed staff member.
- B. The center must designate a monitor for each provisionally employed staff member present at the center.
- C. The monitor shall be physically present at the center when the provisionally employed staff member is there.
- D. Monitors must remain within close enough physical proximity of their designated provisionally employed staff members to be able to intervene at any time if intervention is needed.
- E. A monitor shall perform at least one visual observation of each designated provisionally employed staff member every 30 minutes.
- F. The center may designate one monitor for up to a maximum of five provisionally employed staff members at any given time.
- G. At least one monitor must be present in any room during nap times if a provisionally employed staff member is present.

3. The center shall have a log or other written documentation of the monitoring of provisionally employed staff members that identifies each provisionally employed staff member, the designated monitor for each, and the times of the visual observations.

In accordance with Bulletin 137, this written policy must be provided to each parent/legal custodian of enrolled children, each center staff member and provisionally employed staff member, and the center shall obtain signed documentation from each that a copy of the policy has been received.

Licensing Capacity, Limitations, and Closures

We offer full-day services from 7:40 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday for children six weeks to 5 years old.

Prime Time reviews the annual calendar of the Lafayette and Iberia Parish School System. Currently, Prime Time will be closed on the following Professional Development days and holidays:

September 07, 2026	Labor Day Holiday
September 18, 2026	Half Day (Student Dismissal at noon)
October 9, 2026	Employee Professional Development
October 12-16, 2026	Fall Break
November 2, 2026	Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 3, 2026	Election Day
November 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Holiday
December 4, 2026	Festival Weekend Observance
December 18	Employee Professional Development
December 21-31, 2026	Christmas Holiday
January 1-4, 2027	Winter break
January 16, 2027	Half Day (Student Dismissal at noon)
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
February 12, 2027	Employee Professional Development
February 15-19, 2027	Winter Break
March 12, 2027	Home Visits
March 25, 2027	Half Day (Student Dismissal at noon)
March 26, 2027	Good Friday
March 29-31	Spring Break
April 1-2, 2027	Spring Break
April 23, 2027	Parent/Teacher Conferences
May 20, 2027	Last Day of School (Student Dismissal at noon)
May 25-28, 2027	Mini Summer Session break
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day
June 4, 2027	EHS Professional Development/ Half Day
June 11, 2027	EHS Professional Development/ Half Day
June 18, 2027	Juneteenth Observance (EHS Only)
June 25, 2027	EHS Professional Development/ Half Day
July 02, 2027	Fourth of July Holiday (EHS only)
July 16, 2027	Last Day of Summer Session

Inclement Weather and Program Closings

Decisions regarding center delayed openings or closures (early dismissals) and ability to safely attend a home visit will be made by the Head Start Director, based on the facilities situation at each Prime Time center and utilizing Lafayette and Iberia Parish School System closings as guidance. Families will be notified if there is a delayed opening, closing or home visit via Child Plus messaging, email, and/or phone call to parent/guardian contact information provided on original application or updated form. **Families should ensure that the centers have all updated contact information.**

The Child Plus system is used to send important updates, such as school closures directly to your cell phone by text message or email, to ensure that parents receive important messages about their center and the program.

In addition to the efforts our program will make to notify parents, you should also check local news channels for severe weather closings. While we will make our best effort to provide as many hours of service as possible, the safety of children and staff is our top priority.

Statement of Confidentiality

All files and information recorded by Prime Time regarding children and families in the program are kept strictly confidential. Parents/legal guardians have a right to review their child's file. Prime Time staff are the only people who have access to these files, including Family Service Coordinators, Teachers, and other staff as needed (e.g., in the case of a specific health/nutrition concern). **Access to files is on a need-to-know basis: only staff who are involved with your child/family will have access to the records.**

Release of Confidential Information

Prime Time will not release information from a child's record or file without the consent of a parent or guardian. If we need to provide an outside agency or individual with your child's information, we will ask you to sign a consent form that identifies what kind of information you would like to release/receive, and to/from whom. Parents/guardians have the right not to sign this Release Consent Form; however, confidential records must be released upon receipt of a subpoena for an official court of law.

All Prime Time centers/programs are licensed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE); therefore, all child/family information is available to this agency without parental consent and prior notification.

Parent Concerns

Prime Time deeply values feedback from parents/guardians and community members. For this reason, we have a formal process that we encourage parents/guardians to follow to ensure that concerns are heard and adequately addressed. Attention to confidentiality of all parties involved will be maintained throughout. If you have a grievance with our program, please use the following procedure, and the resolutions for grievances will be reached within a reasonable period.

1. **Meet with the appropriate staff person.** The first step in the process for parents/guardians is to meet with the appropriate staff person with whom there is an issue. If the grievance is regarding a specific policy or procedure a parent should first contact the Center Director. For instance, if parents have a concern about something occurring within the classroom, they are encouraged first to meet with the classroom Teacher.
2. **Meet with the Center Director.** If meeting with the appropriate staff person does not resolve the matter – or if it is uncomfortable to speak directly to the relevant staff person – you are encouraged to meet with the Center Director. We encourage parents/guardians to be open and straightforward in discussing the issue with the Center Director and to set a date for a follow up check-in. The Center Director will share this information with the Director of Education. The Director of Education will share this information with the Head Start Director.
 - A. **Operations, Education, and General Concerns - Share with Head Start Director.** After meeting with the Center Director, if a satisfactory outcome is not reached the complaint should be captured in writing (in the *Parent/Community Grievance Report* at the end of this handbook.) and delivered to the Director of Education. At this point in the process, the Director of Education will collaborate with the Head Start Director before following up directly with the parent/guardian or community member to drive toward a resolution. All written complaints will be shared with the Policy Council and documentation maintained by the Director of Education and Head Start Director.
 - B. **Health and Family Services Concerns - Share with the Director of Comprehensive Services.** After meeting with the Center Director, if a satisfactory outcome is not reached the complaint should be captured in writing (Parent/Community Grievance Report) and delivered to the Director of Comprehensive Services. At this point in the process, the Director of Comprehensive Services will collaborate with the Head Start Director before following up directly with the parent/guardian or community member to drive towards resolution. All such complaints in writing will be shared confidentially with the Policy Council and documentation kept on file by the Director of Comprehensive Services and Head Start Director.
3. **Share concern with the Executive Director, Vice President of Education, Assistant Vice President of Education, Policy Council and Board.** Finally, if working with the Head Start Director to address the complaint is not effective, the issue will be formally submitted to the Assistant VP of Education, Vice President of Education, and the Executive Director. If

needed, the issue will be presented to the governing bodies.

4. **Communication back with the Parent/Guardians (originator).** The Head Start Director will communicate the plan for resolution, follow-up, and/or desired outcome with the parent who originated the complaint. This can be done either in writing or in person.
5. **Communication back with Staff.** The Head Start Director will communicate the resolution, follow-up and/or outcome with the appropriate staff. This should be done in writing and in person.
6. **Documentation.** Whenever this procedure is implemented, each step will be documented clearly and thoroughly.

Positive Discipline and Guidance Policy for Children

Prime Time programs use an approach to discipline and guidance that emphasizes respect for each child; developmentally appropriate expectations of children's behavior; and the use of positive discipline and guidance strategies.

Prime Time staff strives to create a relaxed, positive environment that enables children to explore and experiment while remaining safe and feeling well-supported. Through positive guidance strategies and modeling social skills, staff helps children learn positive social behaviors, build confidence and self-esteem, and develop greater respect for others' rights and feelings, as well as a sense that they are respected. Discipline concerns are handled by staff in a way that encourages children to solve problems and develop a sense of inner self-control. Children are given choices and the opportunity to be an active part of decision-making in their environment, building a sense of personal responsibility. Staff help children to understand the reasons for rules and limitations and to feel good about the choices they make.

Staff will utilize appropriate ways to manage crying, fussing or distraught children. Our teaching staff will attempt to determine the cause of distress. It may be related to a basic need such as hunger or comfort, or it may be that the child just needs some extra time and attention. All staff are trained to remain calm and will do whatever they can do to soothe the child. This may mean just allowing the child to cry for a few minutes and then trying again. As needed, we will ask the parent for advice or assistance in ways that they can successfully soothe their child.

Prime Time staff will also refrain from discussing a child's challenging behavior in front of the child, whenever possible and will never do so in front of other children or families.

Use of any inappropriate child discipline methods by staff or volunteers will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action. If you witness any inappropriate child discipline methods by Prime Time staff, please contact your Center Director or your Head Start Director (contact information is on the first page of handbook). In accordance with the Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations, actions that may be psychologically, emotionally, or physically painful, discomforting, dangerous, or potentially injurious are prohibited. Prohibited actions include spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, slapping, twisting, throwing or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment on the child; verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family; physical restraint, binding or tying the child to restrict the child's movement; enclosing the child in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle; withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps; actions that are cruel, aversive, humiliating or frightening to the child; or punishing a child for lapses in toilet training.

If you would like additional information about using positive discipline and guidance strategies in the home, please speak to your child's Teacher. The Center Director, Director of Education, Positive Behavior Support Specialist, and Curriculum Coaches can also provide additional resources in this key area.

Biting Policy

Prime Time uses an approach to biting that emphasizes respect for each child, developmentally appropriate expectations of children's behavior, and the use of positive guidance strategies.

Behavior concerns are handled by staff in a way that encourages children to solve problems and develop a sense of inner self-control by using positive guidance strategies. Children are given authentic choices and the opportunity to be an active part of decision-making in their environment, thus fostering a sense of personal responsibility. Staff help children to understand the reasons for rules and limits and to feel good about the choices they make.

Unfortunately, some children communicate through biting; however, biting can be harmful to other children and staff. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy protects the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. The names of the children are not shared with either parent.

Procedure for the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.

2. The Child Accident/Injury Report is completed to document the incident, and the parent(s) are notified.

Procedure for the child that bit/bites, the teaching staff will:

1. Redirect child from unacceptable to acceptable behavior: "I am going to help you stop biting. We will find something else for you to do."
2. Complete the Behavior Incident Report to document the incident and notify the parent(s).
3. Pay close attention to children to prevent and/or intervene in challenging behaviors.

If Biting Continues, the teaching staff will:

1. Continue to redirect the child from unacceptable to acceptable behavior: "I am going to help you stop biting. We will find something else for you to do."
2. Continue to document the behavior on the Challenging Behavior Tracking Tool. Continue to pay close attention to children to prevent and/or intervene in challenging behaviors.
3. Share your own feelings about certain behaviors: "I get worried when you bite others because it hurts them. Can you explain why you are biting?"
4. Help children deal with frustration and anger through words or pretend play.
5. Help children understand the consequences of their actions and use problem-solving skills to develop solutions.
6. Acknowledge when the child shows self-control/self-regulation.

If Biting Becomes Excessive:

If a child has three episodes of challenging behavior in a month, or if he/she exhibits behavior that threatens the health and safety of others or him/herself, the teacher must contact the CD. The CD will contact the Disability Specialist and PBIS, or Curriculum Coach to conduct classroom observation.

This observation should take place as soon as possible, but no later than 5 business days after the teacher made contact. During the initial observation, the Curriculum Coach, Positive Behavior Support Specialist, and/or the Disability Specialist will observe.

Based on this observation, the PBIS, Disability Specialist and/or Director of Education should make an initial assessment of whether modifications in the classroom environment or classroom management practices would be likely to positively impact the child's behavior. In these cases, the Curriculum Coach and/or Director of Education should implement coaching strategies to support the teaching team before initiating a functional behavior assessment. All observations and actions

plan/steps identified must be entered into Child Plus by the Curriculum Coach for tracking and monitoring progress.

Developmental and Social Emotional Screenings

Prime Time strives to meet the individual needs of all children in the program. To determine each child's needs, the Prime Time program conducts screenings within the first 45 days (about 1 and a half months) of school to assess children's developmental, behavioral, and language development.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ-3)

Each child will be administered the Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ-3) within 45 days of entering EHS/HS. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 measures several areas of development. The results of this screening will only indicate whether further intervention is needed in certain skill areas (language, cognition, fine motor, and gross motor).

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-SE)

At each child's first Home Visit the Teacher and parent complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire- Second Edition (ASQ-SE). The ASQ-SE assists teachers and families to quickly recognize young children at risk for social or emotional difficulties, to identify behaviors of concern to caregivers, and identify any need for further assessment. Behavior concerns at home and/or in school can include one or more of the following: self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect and interaction with people. The results will be shared with every parent/guardian in a letter home and a discussion of whether further intervention and support is recommended.

The differences between the parent screening (ASQ) and the Teacher's assessment provides insight into areas where parents might benefit from support.

Services for Children with Special Needs

Prime Time strives to meet the individual needs of all children in the program. If the ASQ3 or ASQ SE screenings described above – as well as information gathered from observations or provided by parents, doctors, or other specialists—result in a concern about the child's development or functioning, Prime Time will begin a process to follow-up on that concern, including further evaluation if needed.

The first step in providing individualized services is Referral for Internal Review. Your child's Teacher, the Family Service Coordinator, Center Director, Director of Education, Disability Specialist, and the Curriculum Coaches will meet to discuss the concerns and develop a short-term action plan to address them. Parents will be kept updated.

In the case of children whose suspected disabilities are clear, extreme, or persistent after implementing the short-term action plan, the Director of Education, Disability Specialist, will complete a Referral for Evaluation to the Local Education Agency (LEA) and/or Part C provider, of the public school district for children in HS/EHS. These referrals can only be submitted with parental consent.

Once all information is gathered, the parents/guardians and all personnel involved participate in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) conference with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to discuss a plan of action for the child and/or family. Any additional services to be provided, and who will provide such service, will be determined at this meeting with parental consent. Your child's Teacher, Center Director, Disability Specialist, and Curriculum Coaches will work together throughout the year to ensure that the IEP is being implemented, including the use of special modifications and strategies to support your child in being a fully participating member of the classroom community.

If your child enters the program with documented special needs (medical, physical, a developmental delay or a nutritional/feeding concern) parents/guardians will need to

meet with the appropriate Prime Time staff prior to the child starting. Prime Time will review the child's needs and ensure that the center/program can make all necessary accommodations to fully serve the child. If needed, a child's entry into the program may be delayed ensuring that all accommodation is in place.

Inclusion Policy

All children are fully included in Early Head Start/Head Start and have appropriate resources and support provided to them to be successful. Head Start and Early Head Start includes all children with disabilities whose IEP/IFSP recommends an inclusion in the classroom as an appropriate placement.

If a child demonstrates an inability to benefit from the services offered by the program, and/or the child presents a health and safety concern, Prime Time will work with the child, his or her family, and community mental health professionals to provide alternative services/program options.

In addition, we will never exclude any enrolled child from program participation for a long-term period on the basis of health care, mental health, and/or disabilities needs alone - provided that we can accommodate those needs (i.e. through reasonable modifications or auxiliary aids) -without either fundamentally altering the program or posing a significant health or safety risk to the child or to anyone in contact with him/her.

Prevention of Exclusion

1. A child's challenging behavior will be documented and maintained in confidence.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified verbally and may also be given written copies of the incident reports for challenging behaviors that might lead to consideration of an alternate program option and/or consideration for further interventions.
3. Parents/guardians will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving the child's behavior. In addition, the parent/guardian will be invited to meet with the Curriculum Coach, Positive Behavior Intervention Support Specialist, and/or Director of Education to discuss intervention strategies and to be referred to mental health agencies and/or LEA and Part C providers, as necessary.
4. Staff will use various strategies to support the child in improving their behavior to ensure the child is successful in his/her current program placement. Some examples of these strategies include:
 - Try to redirect the child from challenging behavior.
 - Reassess classroom environment, supervision, and appropriateness of activities.
 - Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
 - Praise appropriate behaviors.
 - Consistently apply consequences for rules.
 - Give verbal positive reminders.
5. The classroom staff, parent/guardian, and other support staff within our program will have a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. Prior to any decision to offer an alternate program option, the child's Teacher will hold a meeting with the child's parent(s) to discuss the issue(s) and obtain permission to have the Director of Education further assess the child/issue. The Family Service Coordinator, Disability Specialist, Curriculum Coach, Positive Behavior Intervention Support Specialist, and Center Director will be made aware of the process and involved as needed. Designated staff, such as Teachers and the mental health professional will be responsible for executing an Action Plan that will include plans for implementing positive discipline methods, evaluating outcomes, making modifications, and communicating with parents. In addition, parents must ensure that their child's physicals and immunizations are kept up to date.

Alternate Program Options for Behavior & Health Concerns

Should the decision be made to offer the family an alternate program/option, the following procedures are followed. Please see the health exclusion list.

Child actions that may require *offering the family alternate program/option* due to behavior concerns include the following:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time and multiple attempts using different strategies.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse of staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Parental actions that may require offering the family alternate program option of the child for behavior and health concerns include the following:

- Failure to complete required forms or health information including the child's immunization record.
- Failure to cooperate with areas of Action Plan.
- Violations of the attendance policy.
- Physical or verbal abuse to staff.

Approval Process for Alternate Program Options

1. The Assistant VP of Education, Head Start Director, Director of Comprehensive Services, and Director of Education will be the primary decision-makers on all issues related to altering a child's program/schedule, as well as long-term medical, mental health and/or disabilities accommodation, with input from the Manager of Family Services and Health and other leadership team members as needed.
2. They will also provide all Prime Time staff with appropriate training and support to enable them to understand and implement this policy.
3. The Assistant VP of Education and Head Start Director will be the primary decision-makers on all issues related to offering a family an alternate program/option for children with behavior concerns.

Schedule of Support

If the above or other remedial actions above have not been successful, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent/guardian's specific behavior that is calling for an alternate program option. In this instance, Prime Time will consider alternative means of serving this child and family such as through a shortened day option. During this time, Prime Time will work with special education and mental health service providers - in partnership with the family - to identify behavioral support that could allow the child to re-enter and participate successfully in the center-based option.

1. The parent/guardian will be informed about the alternate program's length. If a child is no longer attending our program, parents/guardians will be given transition assistance that will include receiving a maximum of two weeks' notice so other childcare options can be made.

2. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected changes required by the child or parent for them to return to the center.
3. Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in an alternate placement.
4. Only in special circumstances-when the Director of Education recommends that the child receive services from a more intensive program other than Head Start – will the child be transitioned out of the program and removed from the class list.

Every child/family will receive adequate support from Prime Time, including transition assistance (see #1 above), or if the child's parent/guardian:

- Makes a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the center's alleged violation of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.

Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect

If a staff member has cause to believe a Head Start child is being or has been abused or neglected, he or she has a duty to report this suspicion to local child protection as a mandated reporter. If it is suspected that a child is being harmed, call The

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Child Protection hotline at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437) or call the local police if the child is in immediate danger.

Natchitoches Parish Child Welfare Office DCFS

Phone: (318) 357-3128; Fax: (318) 357-3298

Physical Address

106 Charlene Street

Natchitoches, LA 71457

Desoto Parish Child Welfare Office DCFS

Phone: (318) 575- 5330; Fax (318) 872-2468

Physical Mailing Address

104 Crosby St, Suite B

Mansfield, LA 71052

Red River Parish Child Welfare Office DCFS

Phone: (318) 932-3222

Physical Mailing Address

5040 Cutoff Road

Coushatta, LA 71019

Staff will be notified as deemed necessary about reports of suspected child abuse or neglect by either the Center Director or Director of Education. Staff are expected to keep the facts of the report and all relevant information confidential from all other parties, this may include the child's family members, per the policy below.

Parent Communication about Child Abuse/Neglect

The decision to notify parents that a report was made will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If, after an investigation, a determination is made that corrective action is necessary to protect the child, Prime Time will carry out the Department of Children

and Family Services (DCFS) recommendation for corrective action.

In addition, staff shall advise parents of any unusual incident that occurred at the center that may indicate abuse and/or neglect involving the child such as unusual sexual activity; violent or destructive behavior; withdrawal or passivity; or significant changes in the child's personality, behavior, or habits. Such notification shall be made on the same day on which the incident occurred, and documentation of the incident and of parent notification will be kept on file.

Overview of Family Services

Prime Time's work with families is shaped by our mission to close the achievement gap so that all children - regardless of family or community background - enter kindergarten ready to learn. Our program is deeply committed to providing the highest quality services to families and to assisting families in achieving positive family outcomes. To make this happen, we have a strong Family Services/Health staff team.

The Family Service Coordinator's relationship with each family begins during the application process and as the child transitions into our program. This relationship is built on mutual trust, respect, and collaboration. In the first 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) after a child enters our program, the family works with its Family Service Coordinator to develop a Family Partnership Agreement. This consists of specific goals that will benefit the family's self-sufficiency and the child's healthy development. The initial step in this process, which may occur during a home visit, is the Family Success Roadmap.

The questions in this assessment are focused in four areas:

- Family Life Practices that Promote Healthy Child Development
- Family Self-Sufficiency
- Support for Families with Children with Chronic Health Conditions or Special Needs
- Support for Families Impacted by High-Risk Behaviors

The first category includes family practices that, according to research, are strongly linked with child outcomes. For this reason, we encourage all families to participate in parent/guardian and child engagement activities. Prime Time utilizes Frog Street at Home to extend learning at home.

Family Service Coordinators have constant communication with families and work with them individually. They also work with other program staff (Teachers, Center Director, Manager of Family Services and Health, Director of Education, Director of

Comprehensive Services, etc.) to provide additional support to families as needed. Family Service Coordinators also collaborate with community agencies to help meet families' needs, and this support can continue even after children have moved on from our program to kindergarten.

Prime Time expects that parents will be actively involved in our program to support children's early learning experiences. Our program reaches out to both parents of each child (unless one parent is documented to have limited access to see the child). We also hope to see involvement by any other family members that play a critical role in the child's life.

Traditionally, mothers tend to be more actively involved in their child's education; therefore, Prime Time offers specific opportunities for fathers and prominent male figures in a family to volunteer and participate in program activities.

As discussed during the intake process, there are many rewarding opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's Prime Time experience:

- **Parental Involvement: Prime Time has an open-door policy where parents are welcomed.** Parents are encouraged to come to the centers to assist in the classroom, read to the children, etc. To be an effective part of your child's early learning experience, parents should have daily conversations with their child's Teacher and Family Service Coordinator; participate in Parent-Teacher conferences and Home Visits; review and follow-up on materials that are sent home; and attend workshops, training, or classes that are offered by the program.
- ***There may be modifications due to health and safety concerns.**
- **Parent Workshops:** Each Prime Time center offers workshops, training, and presentations for families, at least monthly. The center will send out a survey to determine which topics are of greatest interest to you as parents. You are also encouraged to speak with the Family Service Coordinator or Center Director with your ideas or requests for training.

- **Program Governance:** The following are the program governance opportunities at both a local and national level:
 - Family Engagement Network Meeting (FEN): Monthly meetings are held to discuss important topics such as family engagement activities, field trips, or activities to note special times of the year.
 - Policy Council: Parents can have a broader input by volunteering to represent their center on our Policy Committee, along with parents and community members from throughout Lafayette and Iberia parish. The Policy Council meets monthly and oversees our program (in conjunction with our Board of Directors).
 - Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee: This committee includes parents and local community health agencies, who work together to ensure that we are offering the best health services for our children. This committee meets two times a year.
 - School Readiness Committee: This committee includes parents and local agencies, who work together to ensure that our children possess the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. This committee meets two times a year.

Section (4) Center & Classroom Operations

Enrollment Procedure, Required Documents, and Program Options

Head Start Performance Standards: 1304.20 Selection among applicants.

In selecting an agency to be designated to provide Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant or Seasonal Head Start or tribal Head Start or Early Head Start services, the responsible HHS official will consider the applicable criteria at Section 641(d) of the Head Start Act and any other criteria outlined in the funding opportunity announcement.

In competitions to replace or potentially replace a grantee the responsible HHS official will also consider the extent to which the applicant supports continuity for participating children, the community, and the continued employment of effective, qualified personnel.

In competitions to replace or potentially replace a current grantee, the responsible HHS official will give priority to applicants that have demonstrated capacity in providing effective, comprehensive, and well-coordinated early childhood education and development services and programs to children and their families

Enrollment Procedure

Prime Time is committed to ensuring that our program remains fully enrolled (as per Head Start Program Performance Standards), and that new children and families begin receiving services as promptly and efficiently as possible. We accomplish this by implementing a clear process for enrolling children and documenting it in Child Plus (our database used to manage information on the children and families in our program).

To begin the enrollment process, a parent is notified that his/her child has been awarded an available slot in the program. It is on this date that the child is assigned a classroom teacher and a Family Service Coordinator (in the center-based program option) and can begin to receive services as appropriate, for example, a home visit or referral to community resources for emergency needs. To be chosen for enrollment, a child must have the highest score on the selection criteria among children on the waitlist for that specific program option. Ninety percent of enrolled children must be income-eligible for our services, and 10% may be over-income. We always verify income eligibility before a child is enrolled in our program.

Enrollment is (1) the official acceptance of a family by a Head Start program, (2) the completion of all procedures necessary for a child and family to begin receiving services, and (3) the attendance of at least one class at the Head Start center. Therefore, enrollment does not officially begin until the first day the child enters the program (entry date).

We then, define the date of entry in the following way:

- **Center-Based Program Option:** the first day the child participates in classroom activities in his/her designated classroom at the Early Head Start/Head Start center.
- On that date, the Front Office Staff or the Designated Staff captures the date of entry in Child Plus, and the countdown begins to the 45- and 90-day deadlines.

The intake process consists of the following basic steps:

- a) **Application.** The family completes the coordinated enrollment application and the Head Start application, and submits several other key pieces of documentation, including income information and child's birth certificate to determine eligibility.
- b) **Selection.** The HS team completes Selection Criteria to prioritize the selection of applicants, the application is then presented for review and approval and when appropriate, families are then contacted to inform them of acceptance.
- c) **Intake Meeting.** In this important meeting, families are thoroughly briefed on HS program information and policies; ask any key questions; and complete a range of paperwork required by HSPS. This typically takes place prior to the first day of the new program term, and in an individual meeting with the Family Service Coordinator.
- d) **Home Visit.** These visits by classroom teachers to families in the center-based program serve multiple purposes, including relationship-building, communicating information about the center-based program, and beginning the developmental screening process.
- e) **Orientation.** During this step, families are familiarized with various Prime Time policies and procedures, including in-kind and parent involvement, curriculum, the Policy Council, and the Family Handbook.

Although we understand that parents have obligations during the day such as work, school, etc., it is highly recommended that the parent(s)/guardian(s) attend the Orientation. If this is not possible, another individual can participate in place of the parent such as the grandmother, aunt, or older brother—providing that the person is at least 18 years of age.

Separation Anxiety in Preschool

It is common and developmentally appropriate for preschool children to have anxiety when coming to school for the first time. Separation anxiety is a stage of development in which children become anxious, nervous, or scared upon separation from a parent and is normal in preschool. Children may cry and cling to parents at drop-off time, need to carry a security item throughout the day, and/or cry at pick up time. A child may feel anxious, nervous, and/or scared about the unique environment and fear being alone. Over time, with appropriate support/interventions and environment, this fear should become less intense. If you have any questions/concerns regarding separation anxiety, you should speak to your child's Teacher.

Recommendations for Decreasing Your Child's Anxiety

- Separation anxiety can be heightened because of a parent's anxiety and/or reaction to leaving the child at preschool. A parent should remain positive and upbeat about the experience. If a parent is expressing anxiety about the situation the Teacher should talk with the parent about his or her fears.
- Parents should establish a goodbye ritual and stick to it. It should be something quick like a special hug/kiss combination, secret handshake, or unique/silly exchange of words (i.e., see you later alligator, in a while crocodile).
- Following a schedule is also helpful. Teachers have the schedule posted with pictures and words for the children, so they know what is coming next and can see when their parents will be coming to pick them up.
- Teachers/Parents must respect the child's feelings when he or she is missing the parent. The Teacher or parent does not ever want to criticize the child's feelings or label them as baby-like or wrong. Also, bribing the child is not good practice. It is not a desirable choice to offer a reward (or punishment!) in return for the child's behavior during separation.
- Teachers and parents should be consistent in their approach. Overall, the Teacher wants to provide a sense of warmth and caring while encouraging independence.

Allergies and Diet Restrictions

Parents/guardians must notify the center in writing of any allergies or other medical conditions at enrollment, or as the parent becomes aware of them. Any special diet requiring food substitutions at the center must be documented in writing by the child's doctor or Parent/Guardian (for religious reasons). All the meals in this program are seafood and peanut-free. No outside food will be accepted. The Food Service Manager is available to work with the parent of any child who has special dietary requirements. We strive to ensure that all children in the program are well nourished.

Programming for Preschool-aged Children

Prime Time will ensure that programming will be age appropriate for the children enrolled in our program. The day's schedule will incorporate intervals of activities including a schedule of free play, large group, small group, meals/snacks, gross motor, and rest.

Arrival

Please be conscious of where you park as some areas are designated for emergency and handicap use only. Please remember to follow all other posted parking lot notices such as speed limits and directional arrows.

Children must be accompanied by the parents or a designated adult who is at least 16 years old, on the property. It is your responsibility to sign your child in upon arrival.

Sign In/Out

Prime Time will utilize an electronic method for sign in/ sign out.

Mealtimes and Feeding Routines

During mealtime children are encouraged to taste all food, but they are never forced to eat anything they do not want. One goal of the program is to introduce the children to a wide variety of foods.

Teachers will sit with the children during mealtimes, model appropriate eating behavior, and initiate conversations like a home setting. Teachers will also use this time for learning so that nutrition education is incorporated into the routine of meals.

Meals will be reviewed by our Food Service Manager and a Registered Dietitian to ensure they comply with the USDA Child and Adult Food Program requirements. This staff member ensures that the meals are nutritious, attractive, and tasty while providing 1/3 of the recommended daily allowance for nutrients for preschoolers. Menus will be posted in each classroom, kitchen and/or food preparation area and provided to parents monthly.

Necessary adaptations will be made for any children with special needs. If a child arrives late at the center, they will be offered a nutritious breakfast.

***All food and drinks served must be consumed in the classroom.**

Meals will be served at the following times for children.

	<u>Schedules A & B</u>	<u>Schedules C & D</u>
Breakfast:	8:15 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Lunch:	11 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	11:15 a.m. -11:45 a.m.
Snack:	1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	1:45 p.m. – 2 p.m.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement with Complaint Filing Procedure

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Nutrition Assessments

All children receive a Nutrition Assessment within 90 days of entering the program. This assessment is based on their height and weight, lead level and hemoglobin or

hematocrit levels (iron in the blood). Information about the child's eating history is gathered from the parents and Teachers. If there are any concerns with the information gathered, the Food Service Manager develops an Individual Care Plan, which includes a suggested treatment. The coordinator assists the staff in implementing that treatment. They also meet with the parents in Case Conferences to discuss their child's nutritional health. Any parent concerned about their child's eating habits or nutritional health should ask their Family Service Coordinator to schedule an appointment with the Food Service Manager.

Outside Food

All food consumed by children under the supervision of Prime Time must be provided by the center. In addition, due to the possibility of severe food allergies, no seafood, no peanuts, or other nuts will be allowed in any Prime Time building. Each Prime Time staff member is trained to follow this rule even when bringing personal food or snacks into the center.

Holidays and Celebrations

The Prime Time program is interested in facilitating experiences with cultural and academic purpose for children; therefore, we only emphasize specific holiday celebrations or themed activities that are meaningful and educational. Although a few select holidays are observed, no emphasis is placed on religion. Children will be encouraged to share essential experiences from their own family traditions with the class. Conversations about the diversity of cultures will be encouraged and will be included as part of our comprehensive curriculum and program.

Children's birthdays are acknowledged in many ways in our classrooms. We want all children to feel special when celebrating birthdays; therefore, we do not allow parents/guardians to bring goody bags or gifts for the children in the class or center since this can cause an added hardship on families. We prefer to keep the celebration simple, but special for your child.

*In keeping with our Nutrition Policy, **we do not allow families to bring any food or treats into the center to celebrate birthdays.** Classrooms will once a month celebrate all that month's birthdays.*

Each year, we host an End of the Year Celebration. Developmentally appropriate End of Year Celebrations will be organized each year to celebrate children's growth and development.

During the month of April Prime Time celebrates the Week of the Young Child. The purpose of this week is to focus the public's attention on the needs of young children and their families. Prime Time's centers celebrate in a variety of ways.

During October, Prime Time celebrates Head Start Awareness. Head Start Awareness is celebrated to promote what Head start programs do, who they serve, and how they help communities nationwide.

Prime Time does not promote or practice religious teachings within the center due to respect for individual family's beliefs or faiths.

Bathroom & Toileting

As a component of our comprehensive early childhood program for children, Prime Time works with children who are still becoming toilet trained. Classroom Teachers will be available to assist your child at the Prime Time program and will support your child in learning to use the toilet. Parents must ensure their child has extra clothing. If assistance is needed with this, please see your Family Service Coordinator.

- Classroom staff will respond promptly when a child requests assistance using the toilet.
- Classroom staff will not show disapproval or punish children for any accidents.
- Children who have toilet accidents are NEVER degraded by harsh words or appearances of disgust. A conference between the Teacher(s) and the parent(s) will establish common goals and methods for toilet training.

A child's soiled clothing will be replaced with clothing provided in advance by the parent/guardian immediately following a toileting accident. Soiled clothing is placed in a sealed, labeled, moisture proof bag and sent home with the child so that a fresh change of clothes can be sent back to the center. Faculty members are required to wash their hands with soap and water after each toileting and to assist children with handwashing, using soap and water.

The following procedures are implemented to ensure sanitary conditions:

- Gloves are used whenever staff need to assist children in the bathroom following universal precautions procedures.
- Faculty members always respect a child's privacy.
- If an accident occurs, faculty and parents will not humiliate the child.
- If a child lacks the necessary self-help skills in the bathroom, the faculty will inform parents.
- Staff encourages the child to be independent and allow the child to become self-sufficient.
- Bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected properly after any accident and regularly daily.

What to Send to School with Your Child - Appropriate Clothing

In the Prime Time program, children are involved in active play every day – both inside and outside. It is important that children come to school dressed appropriately. Please remember that the children are fully engaged in all activities and clothes may be messy, like painting, digging, etc.

This includes:

- Comfortable clothing, which is easy to put on and take off (for easier toileting)
- Comfortable shoes, preferably sneakers. *Open-toed or backless shoes are not permitted, and children will need to go home and change footwear.*
- Appropriate clothing for the weather/season:
 - Umbrella/rain jacket when needed
 - Coat, mittens, hat in winter
 - Boots for rain or snow
 - Sun hat in summer (if desired)
 - Sunscreen to be applied prior to child coming to the center
- Children **must** have always at least one complete change of clothing in case of messy play or a bathroom accident. This includes:
 - Shirt (short-sleeved in warm weather, long-sleeved in colder weather)
 - Pants
 - Underwear
 - Socks
 - Extra pair of shoes (optional)

All extra clothing must be labeled with the child's name or initials with a permanent marker. Please ensure that you send in a new set of extra clothing the next day when extra clothing has been used.

Backpack Policy

All Head Start children are allowed to bring a clear backpack to school. Every Monday, your child will receive a home learning log with activities to extend learning at home. We asked that you check your child's backpack daily for letters and/or communication from Family Service Coordinators or your child's Teacher. The backpack should include the following:

- Child's folder (provided by the school)
- Extra change of clothes when needed

The backpack should not include the following:

- Toys
- Food
- Electronic devices
- Medication

Accessories and Jewelry

Children's accessories and jewelry are extremely attractive to young children's eyes, fingers, and mouths. We ask parents to cooperate and be safety conscious when choosing accessories that their children wear to the center. We ask that you do not send your child to school wearing jewelry—including rings, bracelets, necklaces, scarves, or dangly earrings—as these items can get caught in equipment when children play, increasing the risk of injury. Likewise, necklaces and scarves can pose strangulation hazards, as well as small hair accessories.

We do not permit the following type of accessories or jewelry:

- Rings of any kind.
- Hair beads of any kind.
- Bracelets of any kind.
- Necklaces of any kind.
- Scarves of any kind; and
- Dangly earrings (small, snug-fitting pierced studs are permitted).

The center is not responsible for the loss or damage of clothing and/or jewelry.

Outside Time

Your child will participate in outdoor activities daily, as the weather permits. We follow the licensing childcare regulations concerning outdoor play. When inclement weather occurs, Teachers have alternate recreational activities on their weekly lesson plans. State regulations classify inclement weather (stormy or severe weather) as the following: heavy rain; temperatures above 90 degrees or below 32 degrees.

When inclement weather occurs or ozone alerts are issued, children will not be permitted to play outside. However, we would like to stress the importance of dressing your child for outdoor play all year round. If your child is well enough to attend school, they are well enough to go outside in a safe and supervised environment.

It is Prime Time's policy that parents/guardians apply sunscreen to your child before coming to school in the morning. Additionally, we encourage applying sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) would like the center staff to apply sunscreen to their child, they must supply the sunscreen labeled with the

child's first and last name and complete a medication authorization form which requires a signature from the child's physician.

Please note that Prime Time will not be able to apply any form of sunscreen without a signed medication authorization form completed by the child's parent/guardian and the child's physician authorizing us to do so. Additionally, the use of aerosol cans is never allowed for safety purposes. Aerosols can cause risk to those children with asthma, and the spray can get into children's eyes; therefore, we ask that you bring in sunscreen lotion, foams, or wipes.

Prime Time ensures that all water play activities are supervised by teaching staff and do not allow the use of swimming or wading pools at any of the centers.

Rest Time

Young children may need rest time to help them relax and unwind from their busy morning schedule. Rest time in the daily schedule enables children to have a more positive afternoon and be a happier child at home at the end of the day. If a child falls asleep at a time in the daily routine when rest time is not scheduled, it is our perspective that his/her body requires the rest; therefore, we will make no efforts to keep a child awake during this time. On the other hand, if a child does not go to sleep during naptime, the child will be allowed to get up and participate in quiet activity that does not disturb the other children. Children must keep their shoes on in case of emergency.

All centers provide daily rest and/or sleep for each child who attends a center for four or more consecutive hours. The center will provide an alternate quiet activity for each child who has rested or slept for 30 minutes and does not appear to need additional rest or sleep.

Prime Time provides cots and blankets for nap time. Blankets will be laundered by Prime Time staff. Parents/guardians are encouraged to reinforce with their children the importance of resting during the day. All infants are placed on their backs during rest time in individual cribs.

Pet Policy

Prime Time programs are committed to ensuring the health and safety of each child and family we serve. For this reason, and in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards and State licensing regulations, this Animal Policy clearly defines our procedures for children's interactions with animals and animals in the classrooms.

A. Classroom Animals & Pets

The following are procedures for pets in the classroom:

1. Approval: Classroom pets must be approved by the Center Director after consultation with the Manager of Family Services and Health.
2. Communication to and Permission of Families: *Classroom Animal Experience* Form, which grants permission from the family, must be signed prior to the child's interaction with the animal(s).
3. Animal Contact with Children: "Any pet or animal present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, shall be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, be fully immunized, and be maintained on a flea, tick, and worm control program. All contact between animals and children shall be supervised by a caregiver who is close enough to remove the child immediately if the animal shows signs of distress or the child shows signs of treating the animal inappropriately.

B. Visiting Animals & Pets

The following are procedures for visiting animals and pets:

1. Approval: Any animal or pet that will visit the program/center/classroom must be approved by the Center Director after consultation with the Manager of Family Services and Health.
2. Communication to and Permission of Families: Classroom Animal Experience Form, which grants permission from the family, must be signed prior to the child's interaction with the animal(s).
3. Animal Contact with Children: (Same as above – Classroom Animals & Pets)

C. Class Trips Involving Animals & Pets

The following are procedures for trips involving animals and pets:

1. Approval: Any trip that is planned that will involve animals or pets must be approved by the Center Director after consultation with the Manager of Family Services and Health.
2. Communication to and Permission of Families: Classroom Animal Experience Form, which grants permission from the family, must be signed prior to the child's interaction with the animal(s).
3. Animal Contact with Children: (Same as above – Classroom Animals & Pets).

Transportation

Prime Time does not provide any transportation services. Transportation for field trips will be provided through a contracted transportation service.

Contingency Plans: Fire, Tornado, Missing Child or Other Emergencies

Practice emergency drills, such as fire and disaster drills, shall be conducted monthly in each center, with two (2) practice emergency drills conducted in the first two (2) weeks of the new school year.

Fire Drills

As required by the Federal Performance Standards and childcare licensing, the centers will hold monthly fire drills and post evacuation plans in all classrooms. Fire drills will be conducted at various times of the day to include all children. During the fire drills, staff will lead children to a safe area outside of the building. Please do not be alarmed if a fire drill occurs while you are in the school building, simply follow the direction of the Prime Time staff.

The center will maintain records of these drills. Documentation will include Date and time of drill, number of children present, amount of time to evacuate the center, problems observed during the drill and corrective actions taken, and the signatures of all staff present. At least one fire drill every six months is held at rest time.

Tornado Drills

As required by childcare licensing, staff will be trained on how to appropriately respond to a tornado drill, including taking children to an area without windows or minimal number of windows, to take name-to-face attendance and keeping everyone as low to the floor as possible. Drills will be conducted at various times of the day to include all children. Tornado drills will be practiced from March through June, as identified as tornado season.

Prime Time shall require special drill activities for tornadoes to be planned by the Center Director and the center staff of each Early Head Start/Head Start center to assure orderly movement and evacuation of students to the safest area in the event of fire, weather, or other disasters. The center will maintain records of these drills. Documentation will include date and time of drill, number of children present, problems observed during the drill, corrective actions taken, and the signatures of all staff present. At least one tornado drill every six months will be held at rest time.

Hurricane Drills

As required by childcare licensing, staff will be trained on how to appropriately respond to a hurricane drill, including taking children to an area without windows or minimal number of windows, to take name-to-face attendance and keeping everyone as low to the floor as possible. Hurricane drills will be conducted at various times of the day to include all children. Hurricane drills will be practiced from June through November as identified as hurricane season.

Prime Time shall require special drill activities for hurricanes to be planned by the Center Director and the center staff of each Early Head Start/Head Start center to assure orderly movement and evacuation of students to the safest area in the event of fire, weather, or other disasters. The center will maintain records of these

drills. Documentation will include date and time of drill, number of children present, problems observed during the drill, corrective actions taken, and the signatures of all staff present. At least one hurricane drill every six months will be held at rest time.

Missing Child

If there is an incident of a missing child, staff members will thoroughly check the entire facility to make a visual report of all areas of the center. If the child is not found within the Center, the child's parents and/or emergency contact and the local police department will be immediately notified. The Center Director will notify the Department of Children and Families Services within 24 hours of the incident.

Responding to other emergencies (Bomb Threat, Earthquake, Mechanical Problems)

In addition to fire and tornado drills, staff will receive training in our policies and procedures in addressing additional types of emergencies. These step-by-step procedures will be clearly documented in our Significant Incident reporting policy that is provided to all staff.

Section (5) Attendance, Arrival & Departure

Attendance

As mentioned, and agreed to in your Family Engagement Contract, we know that children who attend our program daily and on time experience better outcomes than those children who attend only occasionally. We also maintain a long waiting list of children and families who would like to participate in the Prime Time program but cannot, due to a limited number of available slots.

For this reason, we expect all parents to bring children to the Prime Time program on time **every single day!** We want to maximize the number of days and the amount of time that children spend learning, growing, and developing their skills in the classroom. We encourage families to arrive on time each morning so that children may be included in the daily transition process and other morning routines, which prepare the child for that day's educational experience. Additionally, Head Start Program Performance Standards require us to maintain a monthly average daily attendance of 85% or more for all children in our programs. HS children can only miss a maximum of 24 days and EHS can only miss a maximum of 28 days in a program year.

Family Service Coordinators monitor attendance everyday via Child Plus, and/or sign-in sheets. Please contact the center as early as possible if your child will be absent or late that day. If a child's attendance is not consistent or there are numerous unexcused absences, the Family Service Coordinator will contact the parent/guardian to discuss and if applicable an attendance-action plan will be put in place to address the issue. If after a period, there is no improvement it may be determined that the current program option does not meet the needs of your family.

Please follow these procedures related to attendance:

1. Parents or designated adults that are at least 18 years must sign their children in and out each day. (If a parent would like a sibling or designated person that is between the ages of 16-18 year to drop off their child, they must provide in writing this request and the person **MUST** have ID)
 - Family Service Coordinators will monitor attendance daily.
 - All absences must be reported to the child's Teacher or Family Service Coordinator (FA). Please contact the child's Teacher or Family Service Coordinator as early as possible if your child will be absent or late that day.

- If a child is absent for three days a month and has not contacted their child's Teacher or Family Service Coordinator, they could be returned to the waiting list. Staff will contact the family to identify the reasons for the absence.
- If the absence is due to medical reasons a doctor's note is required.
- Teachers and Family Service Coordinators will continue to reinforce the need for consistent attendance.
- Family Service Coordinators will assist the family with any issues that may be causing their absences, by creating an attendance-action plan that may include home visits and other direct contact.
 1. Chronic absenteeism will result in the child's slot being considered an enrollment vacancy.
- Family Service Coordinators will work with families to resolve issues which may be the cause of tardiness/absenteeism.

Emergency Contact Information

During the Intake Process, the Family Service Coordinator will complete an Emergency Contact Information form with new children/family. The Family Service Coordinator will review the current form with the children/family returning to the program, making changes, and/or completing a new form that will be completed before each new program year.

Parents/guardians must ensure that the Emergency Contact form is current at all times:

- The center/program must have at least two phone numbers by which we can reach you (or another parent/guardian) Temporary exclusion may occur if the center does not have a phone number to reach the parent/guardian.
- We require at least 2 but recommend at least 3 emergency contacts (authorized people that can pick up and transport the child home in the parent/guardian's absence). Family Service Coordinators update this information each year.
- The program may request that the Emergency Contact Information form be updated several times throughout the year. If contact information changes at any time, please let your Family Service Coordinator know immediately.

Changes or additions to the Emergency Contact Information form must be made in writing and/or in person. If an emergency occurs, a change in the information (e.g., authorizing someone new to pick up your child) over the phone but just for that day. Permanent changes must be made in writing and or in person.

Arrival & Departure

To ensure your child's safety,

- Parents/guardians must accompany their child to and from his or her classroom when dropping off and picking up. ***There may be modifications due to health and safety purposes.**
- Children must be signed in when dropping off and signed out when being picked up.
- Parents/guardians or adults must stay with the child until the program starts.
- Children must be picked up promptly at the program's closing time.

Release of Child

Prime Time programs are deeply committed to the safety of the children we serve. The following will be strictly enforced:

- Children will only be released to parents/guardians and persons designated as authorized contacts on the Emergency Contact Information form.
- The program recommends that these authorized contacts be adults of 18 years of age or older. However, if due to the family's needs a person of a younger age is needed to pick the child up from the center this request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- All picking up the child from the center must always have proper identification at each pick up, including parents/guardians. Staff will refer to the child's Emergency Contact Information form and request all authorized persons to show photo identification as needed.
- If a non-custodial parent has been denied access or granted limited access to the child by a court order, Prime Time will secure documentation to this effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the documentation.
- If a parent or another designer fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, Prime Time will follow the Child Release Contingency Procedures outlined below.
- If the parent picking up the child, or the person authorized by the parents to do so, is physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the staff on site, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, Prime Time will not release the child. In this event, staff will attempt to contact the child's other parent/guardian, or an alternative person authorized by the parents/guardian.

Child Release Contingency Procedures

If a child is not picked up by an authorized person or at the appropriate time, Prime Time will adhere to the following procedures:

1. The parent/guardian and persons listed on the Emergency Contact Information form will be called three (3) times in 15-minute intervals, beginning fifteen (15) minutes after the expected pickup time.
2. The center faculty will ensure the safety and well-being of the child at the center until the issues are resolved.
3. At 3:30 pm, Prime Time may contact the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)'s 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter, and we know you understand that for the safety and well-being of your children, it is essential that children are noticed time by the appropriate people and that a responsible adult is available to receive the children from the center. At no time will staff hold the child responsible for the situation or discuss the issue with the child. If you are having a problem picking up your child on time, please speak with your Family Service Coordinator. If you are having a problem picking up your child on time, please speak with your Family Service Coordinator.

Late Pick-Up Policy

It is essential that parents/guardians pick their children up on time from our program. If an emergency occurs, parents/guardians should call Prime Time and inform the center staff of the emergency and provide a time when a parent/guardian or an authorized person on the Emergency Contact Information form will be able to pick up the child.

If the parents/guardian knows in advance that they will not be able to pick up their child by the expected pick-up time other arrangements should be made. If not known in advance and the parent/guardian is late in picking up the child, the Family Service Coordinator will follow up with the parents. If this continues, parents must meet with your Family Service Coordinator to set a goal to help parents meet the on-time pick-up requirements.

If you are consistently late bringing your child to the Prime Time program, Prime Time Staff will ask that you meet with your Family Service Coordinator so that you can develop a plan of action for dropping off and picking up your child on time. The pattern of picking up your child late is unacceptable and is also upsetting to your child and difficult for staff to manage. Your Family Service Coordinator will schedule a conference with you to help you pick up your child quickly. If this issue is not resolved over a period of time and a health and safety concern is present, the Center Director and/or the Family Services Manager will meet with the family to discuss a plan of action. This may include short-term exclusion from the program.

Contacting Parents/Guardians After an Emergency Evacuation

If a Prime Time Center must be evacuated, the center will evacuate to the following locations based on the cause of the evacuation.

Coushatta's Walking Evacuation: open field behind the main school site.

Gold Street Walking Evacuation: LP Vaughn Elementary School next door.

Mansfield Walking Evacuation: the open area beside Corinth Baptist Church next door.

In each emergency evacuation pack, there will be child master cards for each child with parent and emergency contact information and phone numbers.

Contacting the parents/guardians will be done in the following ways:

1. Use of local media
2. Contact each parent and/or emergency contact from the child emergency contact form. Administrative staff and support staff will assist in contacting parents.

Parent/Guardian Reunification After an Emergency Evacuation

Prime Time is responsible for reuniting children with their parents after an evacuation has been implemented. During an emergency it is critical to keep children and staff safe and to reunite children with parents as quickly as possible.

The following are the guidelines in implementing this policy:

1. Children's teachers will remain with the children until each of them are reunited with parents or emergency contact individuals.
2. We will only release children to individuals the parents have designated as approved to take the child from the program.
3. These individuals must produce photo identification before releasing a child to them.
4. Parents are informed regarding the evacuation by:
 - a. Local media
 - b. Individual phone calls from Prime Time staff.
 - c. If parents cannot be contacted, children will be turned over to the local police department.

It is our goal, when possible, to notify parents before an event happens, such as a pending hurricane, and reunite parents and children at that time.

SECTION (6) Health & Safety

Prime Time does not permit any staff member, parent or visitor to smoke cigarettes or vape at any time in any of our facilities.

Keeping Children Up to Date on Health Requirements

Prime Time works with families to ensure that each child is up to date on all preventive medical procedures, including doctor's visits, immunizations, and screenings. Please review the following pages for specific health requirements, per Head Start Performance Standards and State licensing.

How Can Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Help?

All necessary *immunization shots* required by state health laws are required prior to enrollment to attend/participate in Prime Time programs unless an exemption letter/form are provided. LA accepts health, religious and personal belief exemptions. A letter as such will need to be on file for students whose parents/guardians present no immunization records. Additionally, prior to entering the HS program, current records for the following must be provided if possible:

- Physical (well-visit/doctor's exam) performed within the past year
- Hemoglobin/Hematocrit blood test
- Lead test- 24 months (about 2 years) or most recent
- Dental exam
- Vision and Hearing screening
- Rescue medication if needed

New children must have a Universal Child Health Record (physical) completed that is dated in the past year and all necessary immunizations required by State licensing. Returning children must complete their yearly physical within thirty days of the expiration date of their current physical. Please provide all health-related documents to a member of the Family Service team.

Notifying & Following Up with Families

Prime Time staff will communicate and follow-up with your family to ensure that their health requirements are met, including the following steps as needed:

- **Letter Explaining Health Requirement.** We notify families one month prior to when a health requirement is due and assist families as needed.
- **Follow-up/Confirm Appointment.** Your Family Service Coordinator will follow up to confirm the date of the required appointment.

Parents/guardians must provide copies of health documentation to the Family Service Coordinator.

Immunizations – Special Cases

In the case where immunizations are not recommended for your child for medical, personal, and/or religious reasons, Prime Time may choose to admit the child, provided that the parent/guardian submits documentation to Prime Time Learning:

Medical Objection: a written statement from a health care provider attesting to the reason the immunization is medically contraindicated; and the specific period that the immunization is medically not recommended.

Personal Objection: Parent/guardian must submit a signed written statement to Prime Time explaining that the immunization conflicts with personal beliefs and/or practices.

Religious: Parent/guardian must submit a signed written statement to Prime Time explaining that the immunization conflicts with the child's exercise of bona fide religious tenets or practices.

Requirements for Preventive Care, Screenings, and Immunizations

The chart on the following page shows the health requirements for children before and after their enrollment in the Prime Time program. These requirements are based upon Louisiana's Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Testing (EPSDT) guidelines.

At Enrollment		After Enrollment
Physical /Well Baby	Upon enrollment	Annually
Immunizations	Required. <i>See the following page for specific requirements.</i>	Updated as appropriate for child's age and health history.
Hemoglobin/HCT	A requirement for all Head Start children. Most current lab results.	As medically indicated or with a history of iron deficiency anemia
Lead 24 months (about 2 years) or most recent	A requirement for all Head Start children. Most current lab results.	As medically indicated (abnormal results)
Dental	Required, within 90 days (about 3 months) of enrollment	One dental exam and one cleaning/fluoride annually; documentation of follow-up treatment, as indicated.
Vision/Hearing	Completed by child's physician with updated physical, or by Head Start after enrollment	Annually by Head Start

As per the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, requirements for an individual child's shot record may depend on his/her age entering the program.

Taking your child to the doctor regularly is a requirement of the HS program. Based on the child's age, different medical tests and procedures must be performed at each visit.

Illness Policy

Prime Time centers are committed to ensuring the health and safety of each child and family we serve. Prime Time has not been authorized to provide care for mildly ill children. However, we may care for children who have a common, temporary illness that is non progressive in nature and is not considered a communicable disease by the Louisiana Department of Health. For this reason, and in compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standards and state licensing regulations, the Illness Policy clearly defines our procedures for short-term exclusion.

Symptoms

The following are symptoms that if displayed by a child, he or she cannot attend the program and if they attend the program, they will be sent home immediately and may require a physician note to return. ****Illness/symptoms with an asterisk will need a doctor's note before they can return.***

- ****Confirmed excludable communicable disease or illness*:***
- ****Injuries needing sutures, cast(s), or other restrictive device(s)*:***
- ****Infected (weeping) or untreated skin lesions or patches including impetigo and uncovered ringworm*:***
- ****Red eyes with discharge*.***
- ***My mouth sores with drooling.***
- ***Fever at or above 100.4° F oral or 100° F axillary (must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines to return):***
- ***Two or more episodes of vomiting within 24 hours (excludes chronic conditions):***
- ***Two or more episodes of Diarrhea within 24 hours or bloody diarrhea).***
- ***Severe or harsh cough with green thick discharge from nose.***
- ***Sore throat.***
- ***Rapid breathing or severe coughing.***
- ***Rash with fever or behavior changes; Head Lice.***
- ***Bumps filled with fluid (Chickenpox, Monkeypox, etc.)***
- ***Stiff neck.***
- ***Lethargy is more than unexpected tiredness.***
- ***Severe pain or discomfort, especially abdominal pain.***
- ***Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin (requires immediate care); and***
- ***Trench mouth***

A child may also be excluded if illness/injury prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, or results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children at the center.

Communicable Diseases

Respiratory Illness	Gastrointestinal Illness	Contact Illness
COVID-19	Giardia	Impetigo
Chicken Pox	Lambliia	Lice
German Measles	Hepatitis A	Scabies
Haemophiles	Salmonella	Shingles
Influenza	Shigella	Swimmer's Itch
Meningococcal	Campylobacter	Coxsackievirus
Measles	Escherichia Coli	Molluscum
Mumps	Fifth Disease	Contagiosum
Strep Throat		
Tuberculosis		
Whooping Cough		

*For a full listing of Communicable Diseases, please visit [cdc.org](https://www.cdc.org) *

If the Center Director and Manager of Family Services and Health discovers that the illness of a child is contagious or communicable after a medical professional's diagnosis, all parents will be notified within 24 hours that a child has a communicable disease, specifying its nature. The program will not permit a child or staff member with an excludable communicable disease, as specified by the above table to attend or to remain in the center until a note from the child or staff member's health care provider states that the child or staff member that has been diagnosed no longer presents a health risk to themselves and/or others.

Expectations for Parents

1. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up the child within one (1) hour of being notified that the child is ill.
2. If the child is brought to the center and staff observes symptoms of illness, appropriate staff may determine that the child cannot be accepted into the classroom. Teaching staff may deny acceptance of any child who is too ill to participate in daily classroom activities, or who may pose a health threat to the other children in the classroom. Staff will contact the parents and may recommend medical intervention if needed.

Criteria for Temporary Exclusion

- If any of the symptoms listed on the previous page(s) occur, the Center Director must be notified
- If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. We will ensure that whoever is coming to pick up the child is on the child's Emergency Contact Information form. Persons coming to pick up a child must have proper identifications.
- When enforcing this policy, and maintaining optimum overall health among our school population, the physician's note, nature of the illness and perceived health of the child will be considered by the Center Director for a determination of whether your child should return to school. The Center Director will consult with the Manager of Family Services and Health when making the final determination. This policy was established to protect everyone in our center.

Prime Time Criteria for Return to School after Illness, Injury or Surgery

Physician's Note Needed BEFORE Child can Return:

- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected (weeping) or untreated skin lesions or patches including impetigo and uncovered ringworm
- Confirmed communicable disease or illness according to the local health district
- Sutures, cast, or other restrictive device – Physician's note must state any restrictions of activities. Also, a parent/guardian must meet with Prime Time staff to review the child's condition and any restrictions, to make sure the child will be safe and healthy at the center.

Physician's Note Requirements:

- Doctor's note must contain,
- type of illness,
- the contagious nature of the illness,
- Date child can return to classroom, and
- proof of medication (if needed).

Physician's Note NOT Needed Before Child can Return:

If a doctor's note is NOT required, the child may not return until symptom free for 24 hours without the assistance of medication.

- In the case of a child with head lice, children may return to school after treatment and must be evaluated by designated staff upon return to ensure the child is nit and bug free. The child may be evaluated again 7 days after returning to school. This designation may be confirmed by a trained teacher and does not require a physician's note.
- A child who has been absent due to illness cannot return to the Prime Time Head Start program until s/he has had:
 - no fever within the last 24 hours without the assistance of medication,
 - no vomiting within the last 24 hours without the assistance of medication,
 - no diarrhea within the last 24 hours without the assistance of medication, and
 - no symptoms of a contagious excludable illness within the last 24 hours without the assistance of medication.
- If a child has chickenpox, a note is not needed from the doctor if all pox has been dried up for 7-10 days.

Obtaining Medication Authorization

The Medication Policy was established to protect all children in our center.

1. The need to administer medication will originate from the child's health care provider/physician, who may have noted this need on the child's yearly physical or other medical record.
2. The Medication Authorization form completed and signed by the physician and parent/guardian authorizes staff to administer the medication on-site. For asthma, allergies and seizures, additional forms are required.
 - Before any prescription medication and over the counter medication (including sunscreen and bug spray) can be administered at the center the parent/guardian must meet with their Family Service Coordinator to review the physician's orders and complete all necessary forms. If needed, the Manager of Family Services and Health will be part of this meeting or follow up with the parent/guardian.

Medication Administration Files

The staff must maintain a separate file for each child receiving medication. The file must contain record of:

1. Signed **Parent Authorization for Medication** form to administer the medication

2. Instructions for administering the medication including the dose and frequency.
3. The medication log should include:
 - time medication was administered
 - type of medication administered
 - amount of medication administered
 - name and signature of staff administering medication
 - reason for administering medication
 - any adverse reactions or side effects of the medication
4. The staff must request a new medication supply within one month before the end of the medication or medication expiration.
5. Medications requiring refrigeration must be brought to the center by a parent or guardian in a zip lock bag/thermal bag on ice.
6. The Manager of Family Services and Health, center staff and parents/guardians will set up an individual care plan for unusual reactions to the medication, including physician's name, phone number and other pertinent information (to be kept in the child's medication file).

Medication Procedures

1. Medication will not be given for the first time at the Prime Time program. A child may come to school after the first dose is administered at home with adequate time for signs of adverse reactions to be noted by the parents.
2. Over-the-counter medication and medication by prescription will only be administered when:
 - a. Written permission is obtained from a person licensed to prescribe medication and by parent/guardian.
 - b. The Medication Authorization form is completed by a healthcare provider. A Medication Case Conference must be completed by the parents with the Prime Time staff to ensure proper administration techniques are shared.
3. The Manager of Family Services and Health must receive from the parent/guardian a thirty (30) day supply or the prescribed amount (if for less than 30 days) of the medication, non-expired, with the following information on the label:
 - Child's name and address
 - Name of medication/dosage
 - Date medication was prescribed or updated, and expiration date
 - Directions for administering: Time/frequency for the medication to be administered
 - *(If as-needed, also known as PRN, the time between each dose is required)*

- Side effects.
 - Physician's name and phone number and pharmacy name with phone number
4. All medications will be inaccessible to the children. Medication will be refrigerated if indicated on the label. All staff members authorized to give medication will be aware of the location. All medication must be returned to the secured area immediately after the dosage has been administered.
 5. All staff administering medication will be trained by a health professional and in accordance with any local, State or Federal regulations.
 6. Staff administering medication must follow directions carefully. A medication cup or spoon if needed with marked amounts (calibrated for giving liquid medication) must be provided by the parent/guardian. Nothing should be given except water with the medication unless otherwise directed by a physician.
 7. Inhalers should be accompanied by a spacer, mask or mouthpiece and cleansed according to directions.
 8. The staff will check if the prescription requires refrigeration and act accordingly.
 9. The staff must return unused medications to the parent/guardian, and the parent must sign the Medication log indicating they have received the medication.
 10. Whenever there is a new medication, medication change, or the dose is adjusted, an updated Medication Authorization Form must be received from the child's health care provider.
 11. Parents must be notified prior to administering medication as needed. Parent contact must be documented on the Medication Administration Record.

Authorization for Emergency Medical or Dental Treatment

In the event the parent/guardian cannot be located, the **Emergency Consent Authorization for Medical Care for a Minor Child form** that is completed in the intake process allows your child to receive emergency medical or dental treatment until the parent or guardian arrives.

Emergency Procedure

In the case of a severe accident or illness to a student, Prime Time will do the following:

- Have an adult stay with the child.
- Call the Emergency Squad (911).
- Notify the parent/guardian at home or work.

- Have an adult accompany the child in the ambulance, and will take the child's health record, Emergency Contacts and **Emergency Consent, Authorization for Medical Care for a Minor Child.**
- Ensure the Manager of Family Services and Health or your Family Service Coordinator is notified.

Accident Procedure

If a child sustains any type of injury not requiring medical attention, the child's parent/guardian will be notified by the Teacher, Family Service Coordinator, or Center Director.

All accidents will be documented on a Child **Accident/Injury Report** Form. An accident report will be prepared by the child's Teacher or witness immediately after the child is treated. A copy of the report will be given to the parent/guardian and the original to the Manager of Family Services and Health in the child's file. A copy is also kept on file in the Center Director's office.

The Center shall immediately notify the child's parent(s) verbally when one of the following occurs while the child is in the center's care:

- A child is bitten, and the skin is broken.
- A child sustains a head injury.
- A child falls from a height greater than the height of the child; or
- An injury requiring professional medical care occurs

First aid will be administered in the classroom and may consist of a cold compress, when appropriate. Open wounds may be cleaned, using soap and water only. A non-medicated Band-Aid or sterile cloth may be used to cover the exposed area.

SECTION (7) Employee and Volunteer Orientation

The Employee Orientation must be completed **prior to beginning work in a classroom**. This orientation will include training in:

- Review of CCDF Bulletin 137 – Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations (including the prohibited use of personal devices for pictures/videos)
- Review of center policies and confidentiality
- Review of the center contingency plans required including fire and tornado evacuation, Hurricane plans and the operations of fire extinguishers
- First aid procedure, CPR, Medication Administration and AED training
- Job responsibilities in relations to the job description
- Training in the recognition of childhood illnesses and infectious disease control, including hand washing procedures and universal precautions for handling bodily fluids
- Schedule of activities of the center
- Review of child abuse and neglect laws, how to identify children who have been abused or neglected and center reporting procedures
- Procedures to ensure that all childcare workers know the children always assigned to their care and their whereabouts, including during center-provided transportation
- Child management techniques
- Procedure for sharing information related to a child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive disabilities with any childcare worker who may be assigned to care for that child throughout the day
- The procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from the center without prior notification from the parent
- Information on how any special needs a child enrolled in the center may have and the plan for how those needs will be met
- Training on shaken baby syndrome prevention
- Training on the supervision and tracking of children will include ensuring that they always know the whereabouts of the children
- Procedure for tracking transported children
- When dealing with child custody issues, Prime Time staff will follow the court documents/orders and that Prime Time does not get involved

In addition to regularly employed staff, the above orientation will be provided to volunteers and any substitute staff members prior to being allowed to work in the classrooms.

Administrative Team

Name	Title/Role
Ashlyn Hamilton	Head Start Director
LaBria Trufant	Director of Comprehensive Services
Niko Peters	Manager of Food Services
Andrea Brown Thomas	Positive Behavior Intervention Specialist and Disabilities
Monica Rogers	Administrative Coordinator/ Data and IT
Jasmine Taylor	Center Director Gold Street
Catherine Braxton	Center Director Coushatta and Natchez
	Center Director Mansfield



Parent/Community Grievance Report

Our program values feedback from parents and community members. We use this form as part of a consistent process to ensure that any grievance with the Head Start program is heard and adequately addressed.

Name of Parent/Community Member: _____

Child's Name (if you are a parent): _____ Center: _____

Phone: _____ Best time to call: _____

Describe your concern. Include specifics such as date of incident(s), location, individuals involved, etc.

Describe steps already taken to address this concern. Check all that apply & provide details.

Spoke with program staff (e.g., teacher, family coordinator)

Who and when? _____

Spoke with center director

Who and when? _____

Other. Please specify: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please mail or present in person to:

Ashlyn Hamilton
Prime Time at Gold Street
1504 Gold Street
Natchitoches, LA 71457

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date received: _____ Reviewed by: _____

Follow-up taken: _____

Important Dates to Remember

Aug.10-11, 2027	Family Orientation and Home Visits
September 07, 2027	Labor Day Holiday
September 18, 2027	Half Day (Student Dismissal at noon)
October 9, 2027	Employee Professional Development
October 12-16, 2027	Fall Break
November 2, 2027	Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 3, 2027	Election Day
November 23-27, 2027	Thanksgiving Holiday
December 4, 2027	Festival Weekend Observance
December 18, 2027	Employee Professional Development
December 21-31, 2027	Christmas Holiday
January 1-4, 2027	Winter break
January 16, 2027	Half Day (Student Dismissal at noon)
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
February 12, 2027	Employee Professional Development
February 15-19, 2027	Winter Break
March 12, 2027	Home Visits
March 25, 2027	Half Day (Student Dismissal at noon)
March 26, 2027	Good Friday
March 29-31	Spring Break
April 1-2, 2027	Spring Break
April 23, 2027	Parent/Teacher Conferences
May 20, 2027	Last Day of School (Student Dismissal at noon)
May 25-28, 2027	Mini Summer Session break
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day
June 4, 2027	EHS Professional Development/ Half Day
June 11, 2027	EHS Professional Development/ Half Day
June 18, 2027	Juneteenth Observance (EHS Only)
June 25, 2027	EHS Professional Development/ Half Day
July 02, 2027	Fourth of July Holiday (EHS only)
July 16, 2027	Last Day of Summer Session

**Should home visit and/or parent teacher conference dates change, notifications will be sent at least one week in advance.*

Handbook Acknowledgement 2026-2027

I, parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____, have received the **Prime Time Policies and Procedures Family Handbook 2026- 2027**.

This handbook provides the policies and procedures of the program. I understand that I need to read the entire handbook and follow up with the Center Director or my Family Service Coordinator with any questions or concerns that I may have. Although parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to read the entire handbook, key components are listed below with corresponding page numbers for emphasis.

Parental Access	6
• Parent Behavior Policy	8
• Non-Discrimination Policy	12
• Disclosure of Information	13
• Electronic Devices, Computer Practices, Programs, Movies, and Video Games	15
• Provisionally Employed Staff	17
• Positive Discipline and Guidance (Behavior Management)	22
• Inclusion Policy	26
• Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	29
• Parental Involvement	31
• Enrollment (Admissions)	34
• Outdoor Time (Physical Activity)	41
• Rest Time	42
• Attendance	46
• Arrival & Departure	47
• Release of Children to Authorized Person	48
• Illnesses Policy	54
• Medication Procedures	58
• Parent/Community Grievance (Complaint) Form	63

I have received the Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this Handbook and any revisions made thereto.

Parent/Guardian Name PRINTED: _____

Name of CHILD Enrolled: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Center/Program: _____

Please sign and return this form.