



Head Start

... building bridges & transforming lives

Know Your Why. Be the Difference.



My Why Is My SuperPower!

**2025-2026
Parent Handbook
and
Program Calendar**

"The power of imagination makes us infinite." unknown



Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome back! I hope your break was restful and peaceful. As we begin this new year, we are filled with hope, joy, and a renewed sense of purpose. After a few months of a slower pace, the time for rest and rejuvenation has brought us back ready to do the important work of supporting our young people—and we are excited to continue partnering with you.

This new season offers a valuable opportunity for reflection. As educators, mentors, and community partners, we are constantly thinking about *why* we've chosen this work and *how* we can best show up for our students and families. Each of us is here because we care deeply about the success, well-being, and future of the children of communities.

Working with young people requires dedication, compassion, and thoughtful action. We know that how we show up for our students every day makes a difference—and we believe in building strong relationships with you, our families, to create lasting change.

Please know that we take this opportunity to work closely in partnership seriously! This is more than a job - it's a calling. And together, with your continued support and trust, we believe we can help shape not only the future of each student, but the future of our entire community.

Let's move forward this year with open hearts, focused minds, and a shared commitment to doing the good work—*together*.

Please take an opportunity to review the 2025-2026 SIUE Head Start Program Parent Handbook and Program Calendar. This handbook provides an overview of the SIUE Head Start Program's Policies and Procedures and is designed to provide guidance to the quality services provided by our program. If additional information is needed, please contact the Center Coordinator at your child's center or your child's Home Visitor.

With appreciation and hope,

Dr. Hughes, Dean, The School of Education, Health and Human Behavior
Head Start Transition Team Member



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Mission Statement



The mission of the SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start Program is to provide quality individualized comprehensive services that empower children, families, and staff from diverse backgrounds in order to achieve success.

Center: SIUE Head Start

Center's Phone Number:

Center Coordinator:

My Child's Teaching Team:

Room #:

Family Advocate:

Program Calendar

SIUE Head Start Program						
CHILD Attendance Days: EHS: 5 Minimum Hours: EHS: 32.5					August 2025	
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 2 nd Home Visit Due (EHS)	2
3	4	5	6	7 Last Day of CHILD Attendance EHS	8 EHS Professional Development	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	No School - Summer Break (8/11/25 - 8/18/25)					
17	18	19 2025-2026 All staff return	20	21	22 Opening Session	23
	NO CHILD ATTENDANCE: Pre-Service Professional Development (8/19/25 – 8/27/25)					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	NO CHILD ATTENDANCE: Pre-Service Professional Development/Opening Session (8/19/25 – 8/27/25)			NO CHILD ATTENDANCE: Classroom Prep: 8/28/25-8/29/25		

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 20
Minimum Hours: 130

September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 No School: Labor Day University Closure	2 Family Orientation	3 First Day CHILD Attendance: EHS/HS Fall Assessment Begins	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Policy Council 	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 22
Minimum Hours: 143

October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 30-Day Deadline* Home Visit # 1 Due ~ Transportation & Pedestrian Safety Due	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 No School: Indigenous People's Day	14	15	16 Policy Council 	17 45-Day Deadline* ASQ-3 & ASQ-E, Hearing & Vision Due	18
19	20	21	22 Early Dismissal ~ Professional Development	23	24	25
26	27 CLASS Observation Round #1 Begins	28	29	30	31	* Repeats every 30/45 calendar days following enrollment of new children

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 16
Minimum Hours: 104

November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7 Fall Assessment Ends/ CLASS Observation Ends	8
9	10 Early Dismissal	11 No School: Veteran's Day	12 Winter Assessment Begin	13	14	15
Parent Teacher Conferences: 11/10/25-11/14/25						
16	17	18	19	20 Policy Council 	21	22
23 30	24	25	26 No School: Fall Break	27 Thanksgiving Day  No School: University Closure	28 No School: University Closure	29

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 15
Minimum Hours: 97.5

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 90 Day Deadline*	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	NHSA Parent & Family Engagement Conference, Orlando, FL: 12/8/25 -12/11/25					
14	15	16	17	18 Policy Council 	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	No School: Winter Break 12/22/25-12/23/25		No School: University Closure/Holiday: 12/24/25-12/31/25			
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve			* Repeats every 90 calendar days following enrollment of new children
	No School: University Closure/Holiday: 12/24/25 – 12/31/25					

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 19
Minimum Hours: 123.5

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 New Year's Day No School: University Closure	2 No School: Winter Break	3
4	5 ITERS Observation Round #1 Begins Sessions Resume	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Early Dismissal ~ Professional Development	15 Policy Council 	16 ITERS Observation Round #1 Ends	17
18	19 No School: University Closure MLK, Jr Day	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 19
Minimum Hours: 123.5

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Winter Assessment Ends	14
15	16 No School: 	17 Spring Assessment Begins	18	19 Policy Council 	20 EEP Phase 2 Due	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 21
Minimum Hours: 136.5

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 No School: Casmir Pulaski Day	3 Early Dismissal	4	5	6	7
		Parent/Teacher Conferences #2: 3/3/26 - 3/6/26				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 Early Dismissal ~ Professional Development	19 Policy Council 	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 CLASS Observation#2 Begins	31				

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 17
Minimum Hours: 117

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 No School: Spring Break	3 No School: Spring Break Good Friday	4
5	6 No School: Spring Break	7	8	9	10 CLASS Observation Round #2 Ends	11
	NAEYC- Week of the Young Child: 4/6/26 – 4/11/26					
12	13	14	15	16 Policy Council 	17	18
19	20	21 ITERS Round # 2 Begins	22	23	24 No School: Professional Development/ ESL Center Faculty- Staff Appreciation Day	25
26	27	28	29	30		

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days:

EHS: 19 HS: 13

Minimum Hours:

EHS: 123.5 HS: 84.5

May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 ITERS Round #2 Ends TBD	2
3	4 Spring Assessment Ends	5 Summer Assessment Begins	6	7	8 Fun Day 2nd Home Visit Due (HS) TBD	9
	National Head Start Association Conference, Minneapolis, MN: 5/4/26 - 5/7/26: Teacher Appreciation/Staff Appreciation Week: 5/4/26 – 5/7/26					
10	11	12	13	14 Policy Council 	15	16 * Will occur on the last HS attendance day
17	18 EEP Phase 3 Due	19 Parent Recognition/ Moving-Up Day* Last Day of CHILD Attendance: HS Only (No Emergency Closure Days Utilized)	20 Last Day of CHILD Attendance: HS Only (Emergency Closure Days Utilized)	21	22 Last Day 9-mos Head Start Staff ~ NO CHILD ATTENDANCE -EHS	23
24 31	25 No School: Memorial Day University Closure	26 Submit EEP Phase 3 to Program Director	27	28	29	30

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: 21
Minimum Hours: 136.5

June 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 No School: Juneteenth Day University Closure	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: EHS: 21
Minimum Hours: EHS: 136.5

July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 No School: Break for Independence Day	3 No School: University Closure Independence Day	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Summer Assessment Ends TBD	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 2 nd Home Visit Due (EHS) TBD	

SIUE Head Start Program

CHILD Attendance Days: EHS: 3
Minimum Hours: EHS: 19.5

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 Last Day of Child Attendance: EHS	6	7 Last Day 12-month EHS Staff	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	No School Summer Break (8/10/26 - 8/14/26)					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Arrival

All SIUE Head Start classes will begin at 8:30 a.m. Regardless of which program option your child attends, it is important for your child to arrive on time for your child to have a smooth, happy transition from home to school. Parents/guardians are expected to log their child into the center using the iPad and provide a legible signature and printed name on the sign-in sheet. **To ensure the safety of your child/children, children are not to be sent to Head Start using ride-share platforms such as Uber and Lyft.**

Assessments

In order to demonstrate your child's developmental growth and academic achievement, teaching staff complete ongoing assessments. Ongoing assessments also help the teaching staff to plan your child's future instruction. Parents and teachers will work collaboratively in the completion of child assessments. All Head Start children are assessed three times each year – fall, winter and spring. Early Head Start children are assessed four times each year – fall, winter, spring and summer. SIUE Head Start utilizes an assessment tool called *TS GOLD*. The *TS GOLD* assessment tool reflects how your child is developing in the areas of: language, literacy, mathematics, cognitive skills, physical development, and social/emotional development. Your child's teacher will share the results of the *TS GOLD* assessments shortly after each assessment period and during home visits/parent teacher conferences.



Attendance

There is a significant correlation between a child's attendance and a child's developmental growth and academic achievement. It is important for your child to establish a healthy pattern of attendance at an early age and to attend whenever he/she is able. In the event your child is ill or is unable to attend, parents/guardians are requested to call your child's SIUE Head Start center at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the day's session each day their child is absent and state the reason for their child's absence. If a child is absent from school and the parent/guardian has not called the center, the Family Advocate will contact the parent/guardian to support the family's health and safety.

If your child has excessive absences or demonstrates a pattern of absences, the Center Coordinator or a Family Advocate will contact you to discuss the reasons for the absences, offer help when needed, and develop a plan to improve your child's attendance. If your child's attendance does not improve within five school days and there is no documented illness, a case staffing may be scheduled. Your child's Center Coordinator or Family Advocate may need to consult the Assistant Program Director/Center Operations regarding a possible transfer of your child from the center-based program option to the home-based program option.

Authorization to Pick up Child

To keep your child safe, your child will not be released to any non-parent/guardian without the custodial parent/legal guardian's written consent. Any non-parent/legal guardian picking up your child must be:

- Named, in writing, as an authorized person on your child's *Pick-Up List*
- 18 years of age or older
- Show a picture ID to center staff upon request



Behavior and Child Guidance

The SIUE Head Start Program offers universal behavioral health services to all children. Universal positive behavior guidance strategies are implemented to support all children in achieving social, emotional, and academic success. Our Program has implemented the Pyramid Model to guide the implementation of these services. The Pyramid Model is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework that uses systematic thinking and implementation science to promote evidence-based practices to assist staff in building skills for supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving, creating learning environments, providing targeted social-emotional skills, and supporting children who may exhibit challenging behavior.

Individuals, including children, have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. No one is allowed to hurt another human being in our centers or collaborations.

Examples of positive behavior guidance strategies:

- Redirecting your child's behavior and encouraging him/her to choose a different activity or make a different choice
- Utilization of S.H.A.R.E (social, health, and academic readiness). S.H.A.R.E. are academic readiness strategies that teach the skills needed for conflict resolution.
- A safe space will provide a designated place within the classroom where children can go to cool off, relax, or take a break.

All parents/guardians receive and are required to sign the *SIUE Head Start Program's Guidance and Discipline Policy*. A signed copy of this policy is placed in your child's file, and a copy is provided to parents/guardians for future reference.

Intervention and Support

All children engage in some challenging behaviors occasionally, but in the event a child displays excessively challenging behaviors that occur repetitively or behaviors that pose a safety risk to him/herself, other children, or staff members, the child may need individualized behavior health support. All responses to unsafe or inappropriate behaviors will be grounded in the understanding that children's behavior conveys a message. Unsafe or inappropriate behaviors are almost always

signaling distress or unmet needs. Staff will make every effort to understand the causes of such behavior and find solutions that support the healthy social-emotional development of each child.

Pyramid Model tiered approaches will be utilized in response to behavior. When an excessively challenging behavior occurs, the teacher documents the child's behavior on a Behavior Observation Report form and informs the designated Center Coordinator and Family Advocate. The brief consists of reviewing the Behavior Observation Report, discussing the child's needs/strengths, and assessing current classroom supports. The Teacher or Family Advocate contacts the parent/guardian and discusses the Behavior Observation Report, adding parent/guardian input to the form. Additional steps will consist of sharing information with Specialized Services Program coordinator and mental health consultants to determine the tiered approach that best fits the needs of the child and family.

Birthdays and Celebrations



There is a lot of joy in your child's school experience, and our program chooses to acknowledge and celebrate that joy. Once each month children with birthdays within that month are celebrated and their classroom is provided with a healthy birthday treat, prepared and provided by the SIUE Head Start Program. Children with summer birthdays are celebrated in the month of May. To keep all our children healthy and safe, no outside birthday treats are permitted. Our program does not celebrate specific holidays but, rather, host's seasonal festivals.

Bus Policies and Procedures

When your child participates in a field trip or group socialization, the following transportation policies and procedures are followed. These policies and procedures help the bus routes run smoothly, arrive on time, and keep your child safe.

1. At all times while riding the bus, your child must remain seated, in a secure seatbelt.
2. There is no eating or drinking on the bus.
3. The SIUE Head Start Program is not responsible for any articles lost on the bus.
4. If room is available on the bus, SIUE Head Start parents/guardians may ride the bus to and from their child's field trip or group socialization experience.
5. If a problem arises on the bus, the bus driver/assistant or parent/guardian should immediately contact the Center Coordinator or Teacher. A conference with the parent/guardian may need to be scheduled to problem solve or discuss the concern.



It is important for families and SIUE Head Start Program staff members to collaboratively stress the importance of bus safety. Children practice safe riding practices for boarding and leaving vehicles and participate in a minimum of two bus evacuation drills during the school year.

Cell Phone Free Zone

To promote the importance of your child's school experience, **the use of cell phones during arrival and dismissal times is prohibited.**

Center-based Program Option

There are two center-based program options within the SIUE Head Start Program. If your child participates in the center-based program option, he or she attends one of our managed centers that are staffed by SIUE Head Start employees. The center-based program option, operates between 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday – Friday

Center Locations

Belleville Center

1404 East Main St.
Belleville, IL 62220

Edna Brown Center Coordinator

Phone: (618) 277-4681
Fax: (618) 277-5768

Bluffview Center

8100 Bunkum Road
Caseyville, IL 62232

Jessica Kohl, Center Coordinator

Phone: (618) 394-0718
Fax: (618) 394-1381

Cahokia Center

150 Edgar Street
Cahokia, IL 62206

VACANT, Center Coordinator

Phone: (618) 332-2026
Fax: (618) 332-7932

Discovery Center

601 James R. Thompson Blvd,
Building D.
East St. Louis, IL 62201

Chrystal Anthony, Center Coordinator

Phone: (618) 482-6971
Fax: (618) 482-6973

Home-based/Expectant Families

601 James R. Thompson Blvd.
Building C, Suite 103
East St. Louis, IL 62201

Kristen Moore, Home-based Supervisor

Phone: (618) 482-8323
Fax: (618) 482-6942

Jackie Joyner-Kersee Center

101 Jackie Joyner-Kersee Circle
East St. Louis, IL 62204

Marcia Oliver, Center Coordinator

Phone: (618) 874-0179
Fax: (618) 875-9812

New Life Center

689 Scott Troy Road
O'Fallon, IL 62254

Amie Little, Center Coordinator

Phone: (618) 239-4747
Fax: (618) 482-6942



Administrative Office Contact Information

The SIUE Head Start Program balances the concepts of maintaining an open-door policy and honoring the chain of command. Parents/guardians' initial level of contact should always be at the center/site level.



SIUE Head Start Program Administrative Office

**601 James R. Thompson Boulevard
Building C, Suite 103
East St. Louis, Illinois 62201**

Directors

- VACANT Program Director (618) 482-6955
- Robin Hughes Transition Team (618) 482-6955 robihug@siue.edu
- Alison Reeves Transition Team (618) 482-6955 alireev@siue.edu
- Rosa Thorpe Transition Team (618) 482-6955 rothorp@siue.edu
- Amy Wilkinson Transition Team (618) 482-6955 amwilki@siue.edu
- Lisa Tate Assistant Program Director for
Center Operations (618) 482-8331 litate@siue.edu

Family Services

- Alina Schnietz Program Coordinator for
Family Support Services (618) 482-6951 aacosta@siue.edu

Fiscal Operations

- VACANT Accountant III (618) 482-6955

Health Services

- Denise Brown Program Coordinator for
Health Services (618) 482-8324 denbrow@siue.edu

Instructional Services/School Readiness

- LaTonya Waller Program Coordinator for
Instructional Services/School
Readiness (618) 482-6955 lwaller@siue.edu

Specialized Services

- Carol Schanuel Program Coordinator for
Specialized Services (618) 482-6936 cshanu@siue.edu

Change of Family Contact Information

To ensure your child's safety parents/guardians must always provide current emergency contact information. It is the parents/guardian's responsibility to ensure that emergency information is up to date.

Clothing and Cubbies

During the school day, children sometimes have accidents or participate in activities that may require a change of clothing. Please send a seasonally appropriate change of clothing (pants, shirt, underpants and socks) to keep at school in your child's cubby. All your child's clothing should be clearly labeled with his/her name.



Code of Conduct

Program Wide Behavior Expectations:

✓ Be Kind

✓ Be Safe

✓ Be Responsible

These are the three expectations to be implemented by all children, staff and families of the SIUE Head Start program.

The SIUE Head Start program's goal is to ensure all classrooms, facilities, and agency functions are safe for all children and adults.

The SIUE Head Start program understands that adults serve as a role model of appropriate behavior for children. To best serve and keep our children, families, and staff safe, the SIUE Head Start Program maintains a policy of zero tolerance for behavior that is aggressive or violent. Prohibited actions include but are not limited to harassing, intimidating, threatening, attempting to assault, challenging to fight, or fighting. Parents/guardians, volunteers and staff members who may be involved in a relationship or situation that is considered violent or who have received threats, need to report it to their child's Center Coordinator. This would include advising the Center Coordinator of any orders of protection or similar restrictions directed at another person. Weapons or ammunition of any kind are prohibited on any of the SIUE Head Start Program's premises and during any program sponsored event. Other behaviors that may constitute a violation of the SIUE Head Start Program's Code of Conduct include:

- Falsification of enrollment requirements or any documentation needed for program participation
- Violation of privileges related to using the program's phones or computers
- Violation of confidentiality
- Violation of safety rules, such as refusing to exit the building during a fire drill
- Mistreatment or repeated disrespect of other children, parents/guardians, volunteers or staff members
- Use of inappropriate language
- Theft of property

Collaborations

The SIUE Head Start Program participates in collaborations throughout St. Clair County – currently one privately owned/operated child-care center. Collaborations are generally staffed by individuals who are not employed by the SIUE Head Start Program but offer the same quality comprehensive services as do our managed centers. Parents/guardians of children enrolled in a SIUE Head Start Program collaboration are asked to participate in program governance, such as parent committees and Policy Council.

Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House

1045 State St.
East St. Louis, IL 62201

Lisa Tate, Assistant Program Director/Center Operations

Phone: (618) 875-9756
Fax: (618) 875-9762

Communication

Communication between your child's center staff members and your home may be in the form of memos and other written materials, emails, telephone calls, or text messages. Inform your child's teacher about your preferred method of communication and if translation is needed. For your child to fully benefit from his/her school experience and for your family to have the information needed, it is important to create a strong communication system.



Concerns or Complaints

The SIUE Head Start Program promotes communication among parents/ guardians, staff members, and community members. It is important that questions, concerns and problems be addressed in a timely, positive manner. A parent/guardian or community member with a concern needs to address that concern with the individual directly involved. If the situation needs to be further addressed, the parent/guardian or community member needs to contact the Center Coordinator, Home-based Supervisor or Assistant Program Director for Center Operations who will respond within five working days. If the situation still needs additional attention, contact the SIUE Head Start Program Director in writing by completing the *Parent/Community Complaint and Concern Form*. The Program Director, or his/her designee, will respond to the completed form within three working days from the date it is received. Finally, if the issue is still not resolved, the Policy Council may address the concern.

Confidentiality

All children and family records are confidential and are stored in a secure location. All SIUE Head Start staff members adhere to the *SIUE Head Start Program Confidentiality Agreement*. The SIUE Head Start Program does not share any information about your child or your family without your permission. All parents/ guardians are required to complete and sign a *Consent to Release/Obtain*

Information Form before SIUE Head Start will release or obtain information regarding your child. Parents/guardians are also required to complete the *SIUE Head Start Photo Release Form* to grant or deny permission to take pictures of their child.

Core Beliefs

The SIUE Head Start Program believes...

- In the unique value, dignity, respect, and equality of all human beings
- In the commitment of equal partnership between parents/guardians and staff
- That the quality of life is affected by the interaction between people and their environments
- That education can empower people to make decisions about their own lives
- In maintaining confidentiality of all individuals
- In respect and appreciation of diversity
- In the rights and privileges of all people through the provision of opportunities for growth and development
- In the capacity of people to change
- In providing developmentally appropriate programming
- In an interdisciplinary approach in addressing issues related to children and families
- In working with people to empower them to overcome obstacles
- In lifelong learning for all people



Culture of Safety

The SIUE Head Start program is committed to creating a culture of safety. It is our primary goal to keep children safe while in our care. In this effort, it is all staff's responsibility to help ensure that all safety measures are adhered to and to immediately respond to any child that needs assistance with a health or safety need. We ask that our families support us in providing a culture of safety by being aware of anything they may see while at a center that would possibly be harmful to a child or cause safety concerns. If this occurs, please report it to the Center Coordinator as soon as possible. We appreciate our families helping us to keep all our children safe.

Dental Treatment and Oral Health



The SIUE Head Start Program advocates the importance of health care, including oral health. A dental examination is required for all Head Start children. Toothbrushes and toothpaste will be replaced every three months by the program. If follow up dental treatment is needed, our program collaborates with the SIUE Dental School to provide follow up treatment.

All SIUE Head Start children 24-month-old or older are required to have a dental examination.

Dismissal

It is important that your child is picked up at the designated dismissal time. It can be frightening to a preschooler when he/she sees all his/her friends leave for the day, but no one has come for him/her. Head Start sessions are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. If your child is not picked up at the designated time, staff members will attempt to contact you 15 minutes after the designated dismissal time. If staff members are unable to reach you, they will attempt to contact the emergency contacts as listed on the *Emergency Contact Information Form*. One hour after dismissal time, if staff still cannot reach you or an emergency contact individual, the staff may need to contact the police or the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Parents/guardians of children in a collaboration should adhere to the dismissal policies of the collaborating school.

Drug Free Zone



Federal, state, local and SIUE's policies and laws prohibit the unlawful use, possession or distribution of alcohol or illicit drugs at all SIUE Head Start centers and events.

Emergency Contact Information

All SIUE Head Start parents/guardians complete an *Emergency Contact Information Form* during the application process. To ensure your child's safety, two adults other than the parents/guardians must be listed on this form. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to maintain **current** emergency contact information.

Expectant Families

The SIUE Head Start Program assists pregnant women by providing prenatal and post-partum care through referrals to outside agencies. The SIUE Expectant Family Program also provides prenatal education on topics such as fetal development and the benefits of breast-feeding.



Family Goal Setting and Family Partnership Agreement

The SIUE Head Start Program provides services to families that go beyond children's participation in screenings, home visits and classroom interactions. Family Support Services staff members help families set goals and support the family throughout the process of achieving those goals. Family Support Services staff members help families to determine their family's strengths and challenges, to set realistic goals, and to take specific action steps to reach those goals. The goals are identified in collaboration and are referred to as a *Family Partnership Agreement*. Family Advocates meet with parents throughout the year to assess the achievement of their family's goals.

Sample *Family Partnership Agreement* Goals:

- Obtaining a GED
- Developing or changing careers
- Beginning college or technical training
- Reinforcing and enhancing school readiness skills at home
- Exploring concepts regarding financial literacy and financial self-sufficiency
- Developing and/or improving parenting skills
- Obtaining medical/dental treatment and/or completing medical/dental follow up treatment



Family Orientation

Parents/guardians must be oriented to the Head Start program during Family Orientation sessions. Orientation is scheduled annually and on an as needed basis. During Family Orientation, parents/guardians are given the opportunity to learn about the program structure and the philosophy of Head Start and how they are implemented in your child's Head Start experience. This orientation will consist of familiarizing you with the Head Start Performance Standards, volunteering, center operations and program procedures. Parent/guardians are required to attend the Family Orientation.

Field Trips

Parents/guardians will be notified in advance anytime your child is away from the center. This includes local trips, such as to the library or local parks. Signed permission slips must be completed for each child, prior to participating in the field trip. Permission slips will be sent home with the children with a brief explanation of the field trip and its location. Parents/guardians must provide emergency contact/pick up information that can be used during the field trip. If your child incurs a minor injury on a field trip, trained staff will apply appropriate first aid, and a phone call will be made to you upon return to the center. In the event of a more serious injury, your child will be taken to the nearest emergency room, by ambulance if warranted, while staff contact designee. Field trips are designed to be an educational experience and to be a special time between parent/guardian and Head Start Program may not attend. Siblings not enrolled in the SIUE



Field Trip Guidelines

To ensure the safety of our children and to provide a happy field trip experience for all children, please adhere to the following field trip procedures:

- No souvenirs (balloons, toys, etc.) are purchased during the field trip
- An adult/child ratio of at least 1:5 preschoolers and 1:2 toddlers is always maintained
- Field trip permission slips with the parent/guardian's signature and emergency contact information are brought to the field trip by a staff member

- No food or beverages, other than those provided by the program, are purchased or consumed during the field trip
- The SIUE Head Start Program provides transportation to and from the field trip location (All transportation policies apply during field trips)
- Profanity, smoking, drug and alcohol use are prohibited
- The SIUE Head Start Program staff always supervises children by both sight and sound

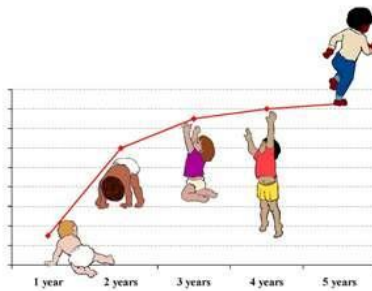
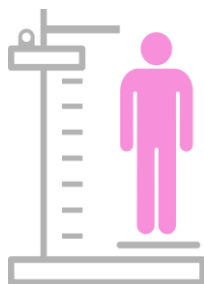
Field trips are a vital part of your child's educational experience. The health and safety of children, families and staff is our priority.

Food and Nutrition Services

The SIUE Head Start Program provides healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals and snacks. Children participate in family style dining, which encourages a language-rich, hands-on approach to eating. Family-style dining participation encourages healthy eating and aids in teaching the children necessary table skills, including appropriate social interactions. In part-day and full-day centers, children receive breakfast, lunch and one snack, meeting at least 2/3 of children's daily nutritional requirements. In the home-based option, one meal is served during each group socialization experience. If you have any nutritional concerns regarding your child's nutritional health, such as food allergies or special dietary guidelines, please contact your child's teacher. **All foods served to children enrolled in SIUE Head Start Program must be served by SIUE Head Start trained staff or a vendor contracted by SIUE.** This includes birthday celebrations, classroom activities, field trips and other special events that occur at the centers. Center staff members plan educational programs to teach parents/guardians how to select healthy foods and prepare well-balanced meals.

Health Services

The SIUE Head Start Program advocates the importance of health care. The health of your child directly affects his/her ability to learn. Parents/guardians play an important role in keeping their child up to date with health and dental examinations. The program emphasizes the importance of good health care practices, such as dental prevention, early intervention, and health maintenance. For these reasons, children participate in a comprehensive health care program. Prior to enrollment, your child will be required to complete specific medical screenings and tests. After enrollment, your child will receive an opportunity to receive a dental examination and cleaning/fluoride treatments.



Health Services: Physical and Oral Health Requirements

Head Start

	At Enrollment	After Enrollment
Physical Exam	Required, dated less than 6 months prior to enrollment date	Annually
Immunizations	*Required, must show evidence of immunization against Hepatitis A; Hepatitis B; Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (Whooping cough); Polio; Measles; Mumps; Rubella; Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib); Influenza/Flu; Varicella (chickenpox); Rotavirus and certain pneumococcal diseases.	Updated as appropriate for child's age and health history.
Hemoglobin	Required, result may be older than 6 months	Annually from ages 2-5 years, as medically indicated or with a history of iron deficiency anemia
Lead	Required, result may be older than 6 months	Required, at 12 and 24 months
Tb	Required	Required, as medically indicated (travel to endemic countries, positive results)
Dental	Required	One dental exam and one cleaning/fluoride annually; documentation of follow-up treatment, as indicated.
Vision/Hearing	Completed after enrollment by Head Start	Annually by health provider or Head Start
Health History	Required, dated less than 6 months prior to enrollment date	Annually, using the Health History form



Early Head Start

	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	9 months
Well Baby/ Child Visit	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Immunizations*	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Hemoglobin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lead	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tb	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dental	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vision/Hearing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health History	Required	N/A	Required	Required	N/A



Cont'd	12 months	15 months	18 months	2 years	3 years
Well Baby/ Child Visit	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Immunizations	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Hemoglobin	Required	N/A	Required, as medically indicated	Required, ages 2-5 years, as medically indicated	Required, ages 2-5 years, as medically indicated
Lead	Required	N/A	N/A	Required	Required, if no previous result or if medically indicated
Tb	Required	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dental	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required, provided by HS	Required
Vision/Hearing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required, provided by HS
Health History	Required	N/A	N/A	Required	Required

History of SIUE Head Start

Since 1965, Head Start has played a major role in focusing the attention of the nation on the importance of early childhood development and education, especially in the first five years of life. Federally funded through the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Head Start is widely recognized as one of the most cost effective and successful programs for children and families. The SIUE Head Start Program provides eligible families of children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old and expectant families' comprehensive services that meet health/nutritional, instructional, and family engagement/support needs.

Home-based Program Option

Through the Home-based Program Option, pregnant women and children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old, receive health/nutritional, educational, and family engagement/support services through home visits and group socialization experiences. In the Home-base Program option, a Home Visitor (Teacher qualified) visits a family's home week. The Home members to participate instructional activities well as in between Home Visitor also and helps the family challenges and sets month, children and Head Start center or a the public library or the group socialization. children in the Early Program are required to attend group socializations with their child. Children in the Head Start Home-based Program may attend without a parent/guardian, although parents/guardians are encouraged to attend. The SIUE Head Start Program provides transportation and there is no charge to the family for field trip expenses.



for one and half hours per Visitor encourages family in developmental and during the home visit, as home visit sessions. The serves as a Family Advocate determine family strengths, goals. Two times each their family meet at a SIUE designated location, such as local apple orchard, for Parents/ guardians of Head Start Home-based

Home Visits

Unique to the SIUE Head Start Program is the recognition of the importance of parents as their child's first teacher and the benefits of conducting home visits. Home visits serve as an important bridge between home and school, and it is insightful for a child to be observed in his/her home environment. Home visits help parents/guardians foster a learning environment within their home-- parents/guardians continue to be their child's teacher long after their child leaves the SIUE Head Start Program. As outlined by the Head Start Program Performance Standards, parents/guardians are annually required to participate in at least two home visits.

Illness/Sick Child Exclusion Policy



Teachers complete a daily health check for any obvious signs of illness with each child in his/her classroom. If a child appears to be ill or uncharacteristically irritable (continuously crying and needing more one-to-one comforting than can be provided without compromising the health and safety of other children), the child who appears to be ill is isolated from other children and the parent/guardian is asked to pick the child up from the center as soon as possible.

Illness/Sick Child Exclusion Policy: Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

The SIUE Head Start Program adheres to the guidelines for exclusion of children in licensed centers as identified by the Illinois Department of Public Health. To protect all children in the SIUE Head Start centers, please do **not** send your child to school if he/she shows any sign of the following illnesses:

1. Diarrhea: Runny, loose, or bloody stools
2. Fever: Oral temperature of 101 degrees or higher or under the arm temperature of 100 degrees or higher
3. Fever with any of these symptoms:
 - Body rash
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Runny discharge from the eyes
 - Vomiting
 - Earache
 - Persistent crying
 - Vomiting two or more times within the previous twenty-four hours
 - Sore throat with a fever and swollen glands
 - Diarrhea
 - Unusual Irritability

The above symptoms may indicate the presence of a contagious disease. A child's symptoms must be evaluated by a doctor before returning to any SIUE Head Start center. **The child may return to school only when the child's pediatrician has provided a written statement, indicating the child is healthy enough to return to school.** Please note that some illnesses/treatments will require that a child be excluded from school for more than 24 hours.

Inclement Weather Policy



In the event of inclement weather or emergency conditions, the following radio stations announce school closures: KMOX (AM 1120), WSIE (FM 88.7), WBGZ (AM 1570), WSMI (AM 1540), and WGEL (FM 101.7). Additionally, three television stations provide information relevant to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville operations and the SIUE Head Start Program: KTVI Channel 2, KMOV Channel 4, and KSDK Channel 5. Notices of school closure will also be posted on the Southern Illinois University

Edwardsville website at <http://www.siu.edu>. Parents/guardians need to see the exact listing of St. Clair County SIUE Head Start Centers. An internal school messaging system is also utilized to notify parents

and staff of school closing related information, as well as regarding other important program events. **It is important that all emergency phone numbers are kept current.**

In the event of inclement weather, all parent center meetings and Policy Council/Governance Group meetings are cancelled.

In-Kind Resources

As required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards, all Head Start programs must match \$0.25 for every \$1.00 of Federal funding—this is referred to as in-kind resources or matching. In-kind resources may come in the form of cash, goods, space, or contractual services. Sources of in-kind resources include:

- **Parent/Non-Parent Volunteers** – The large majority of in-kind efforts for the SIUE Head Start Program come from volunteers. Volunteers include biological parents, step-parent, foster parent or legal guardian, as well as grandparents, relatives, or family friends. The time spent by volunteers in the classroom assisting teachers, helping on field trips, or preparing materials for the classroom is a major portion of the mandated SIUE Head Start program’s in-kind hours. In the home-based program option, the time parents/guardians spend during home visits, group socializations, and working with their child throughout the week implementing instructional activities is valued as in-kind.
- **Space Donated** – Any space donated to the program is also an in-kind resource. In our home-based program option, the value of space used within the home for the home visit is considered an in-kind resource.
- **Mileage** – When a parent/volunteer travels to and from the center or another location for an approved SIUE Head Start business-related meeting, the miles traveled, and the time taken to travel to and from the meeting are considered as in-kind. Meetings that are counted as in-kind include Policy Council and Parent/Center Committee.
- **Goods Donated** – When a parent/guardian or other community member donates items to the SIUE Head Start Program that would typically be purchased with federally funded program funds, those items are considered a source of in-kind. Examples of in-kind goods donations are paper and diapers/wipes. Individuals donating goods to the SIUE Head Start Program are asked to complete an in-kind form.



Instructional Services

In the SIUE Head Start Program, one of the program’s primary goals is to help children possess the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in kindergarten, subsequent grades, and life. School Readiness! This continues to be the goal whether your child’s learning will occur virtually or in a classroom setting. Within the first 45 days of your child’s enrollment, developmental, sensory, and behavioral screenings are completed. The results of these screenings allow the Teacher/Home Visitor to provide individualized skill-building activities for your child and drive future instruction. Children learn

best by exploring, trying new things, and asking questions. When children play, they use their bodies, imagination, power of choice, and problem-solving skills.

Instructional Services: School Readiness Goals

The SIUE Head Start Program's School Readiness Goals focus on five areas of learning, referred to as learning domains. The School Readiness Goals are outlined for children six weeks to five years of age and are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines and Developmental Standards:

CENTRAL DOMAINS					
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

Each of the five learning domains addresses specific skills or widely held age-appropriate expectations. Detailed copies of the program's School Readiness Goals are posted in your child's classroom.

Teachers/Home Visitors conduct three formal assessments (four formal assessments for Early Head Start) throughout the year, using the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* assessment tool. This assessment tool measures your child's mastery across the five central learning domains. (SEE Assessments for additional information).

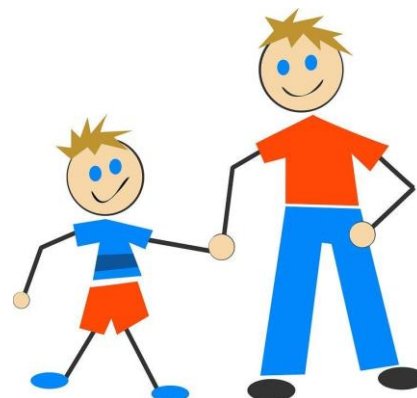
Insurance Policy

All SIUE Head Start children are covered by medical benefit coverage when participating in SIUE Head Start Program activities at the centers and during all field trips/group socializations. SIUE Head Start parents/guardians and children are also covered by SIUE when being transported in university vehicles by authorized staff.

Male Involvement

The SIUE Head Start Program strongly encourages the participation of fathers and other significant male figures in our program. Every child need and benefit from a positive male role model in his/her life. Male role models can be a dad, stepdad, uncle, big brother, grandpa, or other positive males in the child's life. Research-based benefits of positive male involvement include:

- Displaying lower levels of disruptive behavior, acting out, depression, and telling lies
- Being responsive and obeying parents/guardians
- Being kinder to others
- Demonstrating fewer behavior problems in young boys
- Indicating happier, more confident behavior, and willingness to try new things
- Staying away from drugs and alcohol as children grow older
- Experiencing less violence in and out of the home
- Performing better academically
- Reflecting lower rates of poverty later in life



Male role models need to be involved in parent meetings, Center Committees, and Policy Council. The SIUE Head Start Program encourages male role models to volunteer in the classroom and participate on field trips and at home-based socializations. Be sure to look for and become involved in special male activities at your SIUE Head Start center.

Medication Policy

Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss their child's medication schedule with their child's doctor and to arrange their child's medication schedule so that all medications are given when their child is at home. The only exception to this policy is if through a doctor's prescription, a child needs to be given medication while in attendance at a SIUE Head Start center.



For any SIUE Head Start staff person to give medications to a child, the child's doctor must complete the *Dispensing Medication Packet* and return it before the medication can be provided to the child. *Dispensing*

Medication Packets are available at all SIUE Head Start centers.

Mission Statement



The mission of the SIUE Head Start Program is to provide quality individualized comprehensive services that empower children, families, and staff from diverse backgrounds in order to achieve success.

Outdoor Instruction and Play

All children need daily outside time. Outdoor time encourages children to use their large muscles and provides an excellent opportunity for heart and lung development. Children receiving on-site services will daily play outside as recommended by the Department of Children and Family Services, the SIUE Head Start Program's licensing agent. Outdoor play times are scheduled by the center coordinator to ensure playground equipment sanitation between groups of children. Additionally, the play schedule will ensure classrooms do not share the play space. Classrooms will utilize additional outdoor spacing

to support enhanced safety protocols. Children need to be dressed in clothing appropriate for the weather. On warm days, children need to be dressed in lightweight loose clothing. Tennis shoes are recommended, and children are not allowed to wear “flip flop” sandals to school as they pose a safety risk when children run and play, causing them to trip or fall. On cold days, children need to be dressed in layers of clothing. Every day during cold weather hats, mittens, and coats should be sent to school with your child. The Center Coordinator will use the Early Childhood Environment Rating-Scale (ECERS) outdoor play policy to determine if outside play is developmentally appropriate. In Illinois, the term “weather permitting” means temperatures between 25 and 90 degrees, taking into consideration the wind chill. For example, if the temperature is 30 degrees, but 18 degrees with the wind chill factored in, it is not expected that children will have outdoor playtime.



If your family needs help obtaining a coat, hat, mittens or gloves for your child, please contact your designated Family Advocate.

Parent Center Committees/Parent Meetings

All parents/guardians who have children enrolled in the SIUE Head Start Program, including Expectant Families, are members of Parent Center Committees. The Head Start Program Performance Standards list the following responsibilities of Parent Center Committees:

- Elect the center’s Policy Council representative and alternate at the first Parent Center Committee Meeting (September)
- Elect the following three officers for their respective center or program option: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Recording Secretary
- Conduct monthly Parent Center Committee Meetings
- Assist Teachers, Home Visitors, Center Coordinators and all other persons responsible for the development and operation of every component of program operation
- Work closely with classroom Teachers, Home Visitors and all other component staff to carry out the daily activities of the program
- Plan, conduct, and participate in informal, as well as formal, programs and activities for center and home-based parents/guardians

Parent Engagement

The SIUE Head Start Program believes that when a family understands and supports the skills and abilities of their child, their child is more likely to reach his/her full potential. The program also believes that it is the family's and the community's responsibility to build upon their child's skills and abilities. We encourage parents/guardians and communities to:



- Acknowledge that the parent/guardian is the child's first teacher and are the primary influence in the child's life
- Spend more time each day with their child than do SIUE Head Start staff members
- Know their child better than anyone else
- Reinforce what the child learns at school or during home visits
- Be a positive natural link between their teachers and their child
- Know their community and how their community affects their child

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents/guardians are invited to partner with their child's teacher during the Parent/Teacher Conference. As your child's first teacher and primary influence, you will be asked to offer your observations and to assist in setting goals regarding your child's next learning steps. Teachers will share observations and assessments of your child's current development. Appointments for Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for the parent/guardian's convenience.

Pedestrian Safety Policy

As more pre-school age children are being transported to/from school programs and on school-sponsored field trips, all SIUE Head Start parents/guardians and children receive transportation and pedestrian safety training. In order to ensure the safety of everyone, parents/guardians need to adhere to established traffic patterns (often using orange cones) in center parking lots and assist staff in instructing common sense transportation and pedestrian safety practices.



Pest Control Policy

The SIUE Head Start Program is committed to providing a safe environment for all children in the care of the program. The program strives to minimize the exposure of children and staff members to pesticides and includes a variety of non-chemical, as well as limited, chemical methods to prevent and eradicate pests. While pesticides may be used to remediate infestations of pests that may be found in the facility and its surrounding grounds, only the least toxic products are considered and are used in combination with non-chemical methods. A full copy of the SIUE Head Start Program's Pest Control Policy is included in your child's enrollment packet.



Policy Council

The SIUE Head Start Policy Council is composed of SIUE Head Start parents/guardians from each center or collaboration and representatives from the community. Parent Center Committees elect parent/guardian representatives and alternates to the Policy Council. Parent Center Committees provide support for the individual(s) that they have elected to represent their center in the Policy Council. This support is provided in two ways-- the Parent Center Committee shares with their center's Policy Council representative(s) their ideas, questions, and concerns which are then discussed during Policy Council meetings **and** the Policy Council representative(s) reports the information, which was discussed during the Policy Council meeting, back to the Parent Center Committee members during their following meeting.

Policy Council: Responsibilities:

The SIUE Head Start Policy Council is responsible for:

- Serving as a link to the Parent Center Committees, grantee agency governing bodies, public/private organizations, and the communities they serve
- Assisting Parent Center Committees in communicating with parents/guardians the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all SIUE Head Start parents/guardians
- Assisting Parent Center Committees in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents/guardians
- Encouraging parents/guardians to participate in their child's school experience and program implementation
- Assists in recruiting volunteer services from parents/guardians, community residents, and community organizations to meet identified needs



Protecting Children

All SIUE Head Start staff members are required by law to call the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) if they suspect a child has been purposefully hurt or is being neglected. Parents/guardians will not be informed if a staff member feels the need to contact DCFS. If our program needs to make a report to DCFS, we want to continue to work with you and your child. Making a report to DCFS will never affect your child's connection to the SIUE Head Start Program. The same is true about any involvement with law enforcement.

Program Options

The SIUE Head Start Program provides comprehensive services through managed center-based, home-based, and community collaborations program options. The managed center-based program option includes:



Head Start Sessions:

- Eligible children ages 3- five years of age
- Operate 6.5 hours/day from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
- Five days per week, Monday through Friday
- Managed centers are located throughout St. Clair County

OR

Early Head Start Sessions:

- Eligible children ages 6 weeks – three years of age
- Operates 6.5 hours/day from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
- Five days per week, Monday through Friday
- Managed centers are located throughout St. Clair County

Head Start full-day program option operates nine months Early Head Start full-day program option operates 12 months

To participate in the full-day program option parents/guardians must provide documentation of working full-time, participating in an education/training program full time, or a combination of the two.

In the Home-Based program option, children six weeks to five years of age receive comprehensive services through weekly home visits and monthly group socializations.

The SIUE Head Start program may also provide comprehensive services through collaborations within St. Clair County.

Recruitment

SIUE Head Start staff members recruit throughout the program year and one of our most effective recruiting methods is through word-of-mouth from parents! Please refer friends and family members to the SIUE Head Start Program. The SIUE Head Start Program recruits and serves children and their families who reside throughout in St. Clair County.



Referrals

The SIUE Head Start Program helps to identify and connect families with community resources. Resources look different for each family, as every family has unique cultural backgrounds and needs. The most effective way for the program to make referrals for your family is through consistent, two-way, open and honest communication. Confidentiality is always a priority.

Rest Time



Per Department of Children and Family Services regulations, all children in attendance for five or more hours are provided with the opportunity to rest or nap. Infants and toddlers will be allowed to rest or sleep according to their individual patterns as determined in consultation with their parents/guardians. The SIUE Head Start Program provides cribs, cots and bedding.

Screening

To individualize your child's programming, staff will collaborate with you to complete a developmental and social-emotional screening within the first 45 days of enrollment using Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3rd edition and Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional 2nd edition.

Speech and Language Enrichment and Therapy

Children's communication skills will be screened using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3rd edition. If evaluations are recommended, a staff member will offer resources to you including an option for a speech and language evaluation and determination for speech and language therapy eligibility.

Specialized Services

The SIUE Head Start Program is committed to ensuring that children who have specialized needs receive the services they need. To determine if a child is eligible to receive specialized services, center staff members and parents complete several screenings. Once initial screenings are completed, children who may need additional screenings/evaluations are referred to the SIUE Specialized Services Program Coordinator for review. Only with the parent/guardian's consent, the child is referred to the Local Education Agency (LEA), or the Local Early Intervention Agency (LEIA) for further testing. Once all screening and testing information is assessed (within 60 days), parents/guardians and all involved personnel participate in an Individualized Education Plan/ Individualized Family Services Plan (IEP/IFSP) conference to discuss what specialized services will benefit the child's development and growth. Only with parent/guardian written consent, specialized services will be determined and provided to the child.

Smoke-Free Zone

Illinois state law mandates that smoking is prohibited on each campus of a State-supported institution of higher education. This includes all SIUE Head Start center property. Smoking is not allowed in the classrooms, offices, during group activities, parent meetings, or any program sponsored event.



Staff Qualifications

The SIUE Head Start Program honors the importance of early childhood education and encourages the pursuit of educational excellence. Staff members at all levels are highly qualified at the time of hire and are offered the opportunity to participate in continual professional development and certification programs. Professional development days are built into the program calendar, and the third Wednesday of each month is designated as an early dismissal day to support continuous staff growth and development.

Telling Our Story



Parents and children are the faces of SIUE Head Start. There are many stories of success that need to be shared, not only in our local community, but also at the state, regional, and national level. To support continued funding of all SIUE Head Start programs, parents/guardians need to take advantage of the opportunities to share their child's and family's stories of success.

Toys from Home

The SIUE Head Start Program provides developmentally appropriate materials and activities. Children are asked not to bring toys and other items from home.

Transportation to Parent Center Meetings

The attendance of parents/guardians at their child's Parent Center Meetings is important to maintain program operations and to continually improve the quality of services provided. If a parent/guardian needs transportation to attend a Parent Center meeting, Family Engagement and Support Services staff can provide transportation services.



Transitions

One of the primary goals of the SIUE Head Start Program is to ensure that your child possesses the attitudes, skills, and knowledge for a smooth and successful transition from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to a kindergarten, as well as into subsequent grades. One of the responsibilities of all SIUE Early Head Start staff members is to support you and your child in making the transition from Early Head Start to Head Start or another quality preschool program. If possible, the program encourages you to visit a Head Start prior to the transition. SIUE Head Start staff members support you and your child in the transition from Head Start to the kindergarten programs in your local community. Parents/guardians are notified of events such as Kindergarten Round Up in their nearby school district and staff inform parents/guardians of educational opportunities that are available throughout the community for preschool-aged children.

Volunteering

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities that help the SIUE Head Start program operate effectively. Beyond meeting the mandated in-kind level, the SIUE Head Start Program wants parents/guardians to know the value of volunteer efforts and to volunteer in a way they feel comfortable. There are many ways for parents/guardians with all levels of skill and time to support their child and the SIUE Head Start Program. Volunteering in the program is a good way to learn skills and gain knowledge that may offer experiences needed for future employment. Below are listed just some of the ways parents/guardians can volunteer:

- Classroom Volunteer – reading, facilitating a small group activity, sharing a special skill
- Field trips
- Office assistance
- Recruiting
- Participation in Parent Center Committees or Policy Council
- Supporting and promoting all SIUE Head Start activities

Please talk to your designated Family Advocate about how you would like to volunteer!

Wellness

The SIUE Head Start program contracts with a team of mental health professionals to provide comprehensive mental health services to children and families. These services include a visit to each classroom by a mental health consultant to ensure that a healthy social emotional environment exists for all children.



Raising children can be a challenging but rewarding job. Your mental wellness is equally important to your child's wellbeing. Don't hesitate to let your center staff know if you need additional support and they will connect you to your center's mental health team member.