



[www.holycrossheadstart.org](http://www.holycrossheadstart.org)



Helping children and families succeed



from preschool through life

Parent Handbook

# WELCOME

## To Our Head Start Family

### A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Families are an important part of the success of our school. We would like to take this moment and welcome you into ours! As we build our relationships together, please feel free to share any new ideas or concerns. We value the need for close communication between families, children, teachers and the administration.

We encourage all parents to actively participate in the centers.

It is our goal to provide your child with a safe, nurturing environment that promotes learning, cooperation and fun.

Sincerely,

*Cortland Purks*



## Holy Cross Head Start Centers

### **Holy Cross School (Main Center)**

*Katharine Robinson, Center Director*  
150 Maryland St. Buffalo, NY 14201  
(716) 852-8373

### **Central School**

*Amy Rosen, Center Director*  
89 Military Rd. Buffalo, NY 14207  
(716) 875-1506

### **Dewitt School**

*Jennifer DiGiulio, Center Director*  
368 Dewitt Street Buffalo, NY 14213  
(716) 424-0571

### **North Buffalo School**

*Monica Roman, Center Director*  
203 Sanders Rd. Buffalo, NY 14216  
(716) 464-7771

### **Northwest School**

*Kathryn Cipollone, Center Director*  
155 Lawn Ave. Buffalo, NY 14207  
(716) 877-5022

### **Sheridan-Parkside School**

*Tara Wilson, Center Director*  
169 Sheridan Parkside Ton., NY 14150  
(716) 876-0100

## Leadership Team

Cortland Purks  
*Executive Director*

Katherine Adamczak  
*Director of Program Operations*

Angela Rizzo  
*Office/Human Resources Manager*

Kristin Gruber  
*Director of Center Operations*

Janice Crews-Dearing  
*Chief Financial Officer*

Chris Tedesco  
*Health Coordinator*

Merry Wokasien  
*Facilities Manager*

Rosa Wooley  
*Social Services Coordinator*

Amy Rosen  
Jennifer DiGiulio  
Kathryn Cipollone  
Katharine Robinson  
Tara Wilson  
Monica Roman  
*Center Directors*

Chloe Morgan  
*Mental Health/Disabilities Coordinator*

Lindsay Kilijanski  
*Education Coordinator*

Ruth Padin  
*Nutrition Coordinator*

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” ~ Andrew Carnegie

## What is Head Start?

Head Start is a comprehensive school readiness program, helping children and families succeed—from preschool through life. It is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services. Holy Cross Head Start offers a pre-kindergarten school experience for 3 and 4-year-old children, centered on literacy, math, and social skills.

The Head Start philosophy is a holistic approach to working with our families. This approach addresses all of the individual's needs: physical, emotional, social, cognitive and occupational. Our staff link families with community services that help them reach their goals, such as employment and education. We help families find services that include health, mental health, disabilities, and family services.

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Full Day , Monday through Friday

10 month classes

Before and after care services are available at each center

#### Our Head Start Services Provide:

- ◇ Kindergarten readiness skills
- ◇ Opportunities to practice social skills
- ◇ Vision, hearing, height, weight and blood pressure screenings
- ◇ Nutritious meals & snacks, served family style
- ◇ Tooth brushing/oral health education
- ◇ Family support in time of crisis
- ◇ Developmentally appropriate activities
- ◇ Loving, nurturing environments
- ◇ Qualified staff & certified teachers
- ◇ Individualized plans for your family
- ◇ Referrals & support for special concerns
- ◇ Educational opportunities for parents
- ◇ Opportunities for parents to have input and make program decisions
- ◇ Literacy rich curriculums



## Education

Holy Cross is dedicated to providing an exemplary early childhood program and committed to fostering the continued growth and development of each child on a cognitive, physical, emotional, and social level. Since children learn best through active involvement, Holy Cross Head Start provides an enriched, stimulating, and safe environment that encourages exploration and experimentation. Children are guided to question, hypothesize, problem solve, and express themselves creatively. Teachers at Holy Cross respect and understand the uniqueness of each child. In our Holy Cross classrooms you will find a balance between structure and play.

School readiness is foundational across early childhood programs. It means children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for learning later in life. Physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development are all essential ingredients of school readiness.

Holy Cross Head Start has established school readiness goals that are appropriate for the ages and development of children according to the following Early Learning Outcomes Framework Domains: Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development.

Implementing and measuring progress toward school readiness goals helps programs individualize for each child and ensure that children know and can do what is needed to be ready for kindergarten.

\*Holy Cross Head Start follows NYS day care regulations,  
for more information please visit [ocfs.ny.gov](http://ocfs.ny.gov).

### A TYPICAL DAY IN THE HEAD START CLASSROOM

Arrival: children are greeted by teachers

Toileting, washing hands

Breakfast

Brushing teeth

Large group activity (stories, games, music)

Exploring/play time in learning centers

Gross Motor & outdoor play

Small group/one-on-one instruction

Lunch

Afternoon rest time

Closing activity/stories

Departure



### CANDY IN SCHOOL

Under our guidelines from our CACFP sponsor, we are not able to serve the children food prepared outside of our kitchens. This means that candy and sweets are not permitted to be served at Holy Cross Head Start. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday or a holiday in school, please contact your child's teacher to arrange an alternate activity.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our staff is trained in the utilization of positive behavioral management strategies. Our teachers use a proactive approach with clear behavior expectations that are developmentally appropriate.

### HOLIDAYS

Holidays will be celebrated with relevant activities based on the cultural make-up of an individual classroom.

### CLOTHING

All children need an extra set of clothing that can be kept at school for use in case of accidents. The clothes should be those that you can spare and should be labeled with the child's name.

In addition, children need to be dressed appropriately for the weather as the children take walks and play outdoors.

Also, any child that is still potty training, will need to provide disposable training pants and plenty of underwear and change of clothes as accidents will happen.

### ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and promptness in coming to school is important for your child's growth and development. Please see that he/she comes to school on a regular basis and on time.

If your child does miss school, please call and send a note to your Case Manager stating the nature of the absence.

If a child is absent two or more days and we have not heard from you, a phone call or home visit will be made to identify and assess your family needs, to provide assistance, and to ensure regular attendance.



### USE OF BATHROOM FACILITIES

All bathrooms may be used by both boys and girls. Children are always supervised by HCHS staff who give assistance, as needed, in the hallway and bathroom. State day care licensing laws do not mandate doors on toilet stalls. Adults are not permitted to use children's bathrooms. Adult bathrooms are provided at each center.

## Child Safety and Behavioral Health Policy

We encourage consistent communication between teachers and parents regarding their child's successes and challenges at school. Setting reasonable limits on a child's behavior gives children the security of knowing exactly what is expected. Our program utilizes a preventative approach to discipline including positive behavioral management strategies outlined in our Creative Curriculum and Second Step Social-Emotional Curriculum. As staff create a developmentally appropriate environment, they will set reasonable limits, redirect unacceptable behavior, and nurture positive relationships and interactions. Our program refrains from any use of corporal or unusual punishment/violation of personal rights.

Classroom rules are intended to protect the rights of all students and staff and promote a safe learning environment. At Holy Cross Head Start, parents at times are needed to help support teachers when a child presents with behavioral challenges. The behavior of a child must not interfere with his/her safety or that of other children or adults in the classroom. When a child's behavior poses imminent danger to the physical well-being of her/himself or others, interventions may be used, which could include:

- Parent conference, inter-agency referrals, recommendations for referrals to outside agencies, an individual support plan, developed with input from parent/guardian and staff. A parent/guardian may be asked to pick up the child if the child cannot respond to adult interventions. Adjustment of hours, or days of attendance, to meet the child's ability to comply with safety requirements.



### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency, it is necessary that the school staff be able to contact you or another emergency contact person, *immediately*.

Please see that the school has the following information:

1. Your home/work telephone/cell number and email address.
2. Name, address, and telephone number(s) of those persons designated by you as emergency contacts. (Several alternate contacts should be provided).
3. An emergency medical consent form must be on file for each enrolled child before he/she enters the program.

Please inform your Case Manager of any changes in your phone number and/or address as well as any changes of the emergency contact person's address and phone number. **Parents should request changes to the emergency contacts in writing or in person.**

**Children will not be released to anyone other than those authorized by the parent/guardian.** If you have any questions, please call your child's center.

## Health

Holy Cross Head Start takes pride in the quality of comprehensive services offered. Staff would like to inform all the families we serve about the health requirements, guidelines and opportunities.

1. Every child must have an annual physical exam and dental exam on file to attend Head Start.
2. An immunization record is required before your child can enter the program. Every child needs at least one dose of each immunization as required by New York State.
3. Our staff must be informed of any health and/or nutrition issues your child has (i.e. seizures, asthma, heart murmur, food allergies, etc.).
4. Documentation from your child's doctor is required for any allergy (i.e.: soap, certain foods, etc.) prior to the child starting school.
5. Parents must keep an ill child home from school.
6. Please inform us if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease. Our health staff will send home notices if your child was exposed to anything contagious at school.
7. Children at all centers will be checked several times during the school year for head lice. A child with head lice/nits can not be readmitted to school until he/she is lice/nit free and has been reexamined by our staff.

**Please review this chart with your child to prepare him/her for the screenings we perform:**

SCREENINGS	HOW TO EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR CHILD
VISION	You are going to have your eyes checked at school to make sure that you can see fine. You will be asked to look into a camera or point at shapes. It will be a fun game and it will not hurt.
HEARING	You are going to have your ears checked at school to make sure that you can hear fine. There will be an earplug put in your ear and you might hear some beeps. This is a fun game and will not hurt.
HEIGHT/ WEIGHT	You are going to have your height and weight checked at school. This will tell us how much you weigh and how tall you are. You will be asked to take your shoes off and to step on a scale. This will not hurt.
BLOOD PRESSURE	You are going to have your blood pressure taken at school. The staff will see how your heart is working. A wrap will be put around your arm then a ball will be squeezed which makes a dial move like a clock. Your arm will feel like its getting a hug. This will not hurt.
HAND WASH- ING	You are going to be asked to wash and dry your hands while you are at school. This will help keep the germs away and stop you from getting sick.
TOOTH BRUSHING	You are going to brush your teeth while you are at school. Your teacher will put a little toothpaste on a cup. You will put the toothpaste on your own toothbrush and brush your teeth. You will then be asked to rinse out your mouth. This helps keep your teeth and mouth healthy.

### MEDICATION

IF YOUR CHILD WILL NEED TO RECEIVE MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CASE MANAGER FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND GUIDELINES ON HOLY CROSS HEAD START PROCEDURES AS PER DAY CARE REGULATIONS. DUE TO THE NEW ELIJAH'S LAW, IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY ALLERGY, INCLUDING A FOOD ALLERGY, YOUR DOCTOR WILL NEED TO COMPLETE THE INDIVIDUAL ALLERGY & ANAPHYLAXIS EMERGENCY PLAN.



### ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

An incident report will be filled out by the staff member (s) that witnessed any accident and/or injury.

### SAFETY

A safety check is completed daily at every site. Playground checks are done prior to children playing on the playgrounds.

### SMOKING



Smoking is not permitted in any of the Head Start centers, or on building property, at any time.

### SCREENINGS

The following screenings should be completed during your child's physical exam.

1. Vision
2. Hearing
3. Height & weight
4. Lead test\*
5. Speech & language
6. Developmental/motor
7. PPD/Tuberculosis test\*
8. Sickle cell (trait or disease)\*
9. Iron/anemia test (Hematocrit/hemoglobin)\*
10. Behavior
11. Blood pressure

\*Be sure to have your doctor do these. Holy Cross Head Start staff will contact each family throughout the school year to follow up on health issues, needs, and missing screenings.



### OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO HEALTH

Holy Cross Head Start is committed to helping our children and families take an active part in their own good health. A healthy child begins with a healthy parent, so we offer a variety of workshops and trainings based on your requests. Please join the Health Services Advisory Committee that is scheduled quarterly. Call the Health Coordinator at 875-1506 ext. 417 if you would like more information on these meetings.

## Communicable Diseases

Holy Cross Head Start would like to assist each family to keep each child healthy and safe. If your child is feeling unwell, please notify your Case Manager. Therefore, we would like to provide you with the following information, including when to keep your child home and when a doctor's note is needed for your child to return to school. These are subject to change based on Erie County, CDC or OCFS guidance. Also anytime your child misses 3 or more days of school because of any medical reason, a doctors note will be needed to return

<b>If your child develops:</b>	<b>Then keep him/her home until:</b>
<i>Chicken pox – Immunization required</i>	6 days after rash breaks out or when lesions are scabbed over.
<i>Diphtheria</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Conjunctivitis/pink eye</i>	Doctor's note needed for return. Child should have received antibiotic treatment (24 hours for bacterial conjunctivitis) and there is no discharge from the eyes.
<i>Fifth disease</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Hand, foot and mouth syndrome (Coxsackie virus)</i>	Child can attend school if he/she feels well enough to participate.
<i>Head lice</i>	Child can return when he/she is lice/nit free and has been reexamined by <u>our</u> staff.
<i>Hepatitis (A, B or C)</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Impetigo</i>	Child can return with a Doctor's note and 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment.
<i>Meningitis</i>	Child can return when the health department indicates that is safe.
<i>Molluscum Contagiosum</i>	Does not require exclusion or covering of lesions.
<i>MRSA</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Pertussis</i>	Child can return with a Doctor's note and 5 days after the start of antibiotic treatment.
<i>Pinworms</i>	Child can return to school with a Doctor's note after treatment has started.
<i>Pneumonia</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Ringworm</i>	Child can return to school with a Doctor's note after treatment has started.
<i>Roseola</i>	Child can attend school if he/she feels well enough to participate.
<i>Rubella (German measles)</i>	Doctor's note needed for return six days after rash appears.
<i>RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)</i>	Doctor's note needed for return.
<i>Scabies</i>	Doctor's note needed for return. Keep child home until treatment is completed.
<i>Strep Throat and Scarlet fever</i>	Child can return with doctor's note and 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has started.
<i>Tuberculosis</i>	Doctor's note needed to return or documentation from the local Health Department.
<i>Asthma or Reactive Airway Disease (RAD)</i>	Doctors note needed to return.
<i>Influenza diagnosis</i>	Doctors note needed to return.
<i>Measles</i>	Doctors note needed to return.
<i>Mumps</i>	Doctors note needed to return.

**If your child develops the following symptoms and/or injuries, please refer to these**

<i>Broken bones/casts</i>	Doctor's note needed, detailing restrictions and care. Individual Health Care plan is needed.
<i>Stitches/staples/glue</i>	Doctor's note needed, detailing restrictions and care. Individual Health Care Plan is needed.
<i>Cold or flu symptoms</i>	Child can attend school as long as he/she feels well enough to attend.
<i>Diarrhea</i>	Child can attend school when diarrhea has stopped.
<i>Due to a medical condition</i>	Doctor's note needed to return.
<i>Emergency Room Visit</i>	Doctor's note needed, detailing restrictions.
<i>Hospitalization/surgery/ prolonged absence</i>	Doctor's note needed to return.
<i>Rash or unusual spots</i>	Doctor's note needed to return.
<i>Fever</i>	Child can attend school after the fever has been gone for 24 hours without fever reducing medicines.
<i>Vomiting</i>	Child can attend school when vomiting has stopped for 24 hours. A doctor's note may be required if symptoms persist.
COVID-19	Doctor's note with no restrictions or the Erie County Department of Health attestation signed by parent stating quarantine is complete and child is fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicines.



**Cavity Free Kids**



Cavity Free Kids is an Oral Health Program created by Washington Dental Service Foundation. Holy Cross Head Start Inc. has received a grant and is the local HUB for Erie County for this program..

The goal is to increase oral health awareness in our children, families and community and increase the awareness on how having good oral health leads to ones over all good healthy state. Knowledge is a powerful tool to decrease the amount off dental caries in our children. The children at Holy Cross Head Start will brush their teeth daily. They will receive oral health education through the Cavity Free Kids curriculum by performing dental educational experiments, crafts and other activities. They will build a solid foundation for developing good oral health habits for the rest of their lives.

## Parent Involvement

Holy Cross Head Start depends a great deal on the needs and input of families, so please do not hesitate to contact any of our staff. All parents are invited to participate in any of the staff trainings. For more information contact your Case Manager.

### ***Parent involvement means different things to different people:***

- Volunteering in the classroom, office and/or kitchen
- Becoming a paid substitute
- Attending center and agency events
- Working on projects at home (ask your child's teacher about specific projects)
- Attending monthly parent activities
- Becoming involved in parent activities such as workshops and/or parent trainings
- Evaluating the program and helping us to revise our program plan
- Serving as an officer of your center's Parent Committee
- Becoming a member of the Policy Council, making decisions that affect how the program operates

### **PARENT COMMITTEE**

- Each center has a Head Start Parent Committee which meets monthly to plan center level activities and discuss items that are occurring within their center.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in all areas of Head Start, and there are many committees you'll have the option to join. When on a committee, please try your best to attend each meeting. You are encouraged to attend the social events as well as the information sharing sessions.
- Some centers have a parent room which is situated in an area away from the classrooms and office. Please feel free to spend time there working on projects, waiting for your child, having a cup of coffee, or just chatting. This room is set up for your convenience and privacy.
- The Holy Cross Policy Council meets monthly throughout the year. Policy Council is comprised of parent representatives from each center and members of the community. Ask your Case Manager how you can participate.



### CALLING ALL DADS AND MALE ROLE MODELS!

Holy Cross Head Start families come in all shapes and sizes. There are so many dedicated men and women in the lives of the children in our program. We recognize the importance of positive male role models in our children's lives.

A special program emphasis is to develop more father/male involvement through targeted communication with the men in our children's lives and father/child special activities throughout the year.



#### *Children with involved fathers/father figures...*

- ◆ Are more likely to do well in school
- ◆ Have healthy self-esteem
- ◆ Are less likely to have separation anxiety
- ◆ Demonstrate greater ability to take initiative and have better self-control
- ◆ Are better problem solvers
- ◆ Have fewer behavior problems

### VOLUNTEERS

Parents are the primary educators of their children. It is important that what is taught in the classroom is carried over into the home and vice versa, so that we continue to meet the developmental needs of the children. We strongly encourage you to become a volunteer in the classroom or the kitchen so you can see what your child is learning first hand.

An annual physical exam and TB screening are required for parent volunteers. Precautions such as these are taken for the health, safety, and welfare of your children. We suggest that you begin to obtain these services as soon as possible so you can get started. Your Case Manager is able to provide a list of health providers/clinics for parents needing physicals/tuberculin tests.

Holy Cross Head Start reserves the right to require a doctor's note if a classroom visitor displays any signs/symptoms of a communicable disease.

### PAID SUBSTITUTE PROGRAM

Subs work when a staff member is absent. To be a sub, you need proof of a high school diploma or GED, a Tuberculin test (PPD) or a chest-X ray, a physical exam and 20 hours of volunteer time in the classroom or kitchen. You must attend a sub orientation training prior to your 20 hours of volunteer work. After meeting with the Nutrition and/or Education Coordinator and filling out the appropriate paperwork, you can be called to work for an absent food service worker or classroom staff and be paid!

### Parent/Volunteer Code of Conduct

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, HCHS expects all parents to adhere to all rules of conduct that protect the interests and safety of all children, families, staff and the organization.

It is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable by our agency. However, the following are infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action/legal intervention up to and including termination from participation in Holy Cross Head Start Program:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Foul language, verbal and physical abuse, violent verbal/physical threats
- Arriving at school under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the school
- Fighting or threatening violence in the school or on the school grounds, including the parking lot
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms in the school



## Nutrition

- Children attending Holy Cross Head Start will receive meals and snacks that provide 1/2—2/3 of their daily nutritional needs. Please do not feed your child before school. If your child is late and hasn't eaten, he/she will be offered breakfast/lunch.
- Meals are served family style. Parents are welcome to join their child for a meal at any time.
- We are a participant of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We must follow specific menu requirements.
- If your child is on a special diet due to religious reasons, a note from the parent/guardian is needed stating what it is we should eliminate. Appropriate menu substitutions will be made.
- If your child is on a special diet due to medical reasons (an allergy to certain foods) a doctor's note is needed prior to the child starting school. The note should state the food the child cannot have and a substitute. For instance if your child is lactose intolerant, the note should state what can be substituted for the milk.



### Holy Cross Head Start Partners with Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings



The Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings (EWPHCCS) program is an education and policy, systems and environmental change intervention funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). The program aims to improve the nutrition and physical activity behaviors of preschool age children and their parents/caregivers by using educational strategies and skill building activities to promote healthy behavior change. The program also builds supports with-

in the child care environment by including teachers and care providers in lessons, encouraging positive role-modeling, and facilitating classroom and center-level reinforcement of nutrition and physical activity messages. EWPHCCS targets families with children ages 3-5 years old who participate in or are eligible for SNAP and are enrolled in child care centers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

## Mental Health & Disabilities

The Mental Health and Disabilities Services Area is focused on the overall social, emotional, physical, and cognitive wellness of children and families in our Head Start program. This includes the early detection of mental health and/or behavioral needs of children, speech/language, fine and gross motor, sensory, education and other related concerns. Teachers are comprehensively trained in early detection, proactive interventions, managing challenging behaviors and disability services for preschoolers. All classroom teachers are trained in the Second Step Early Learning Curriculum to enhance social and emotional awareness for children and families in the classroom and at home.

All children in the program are screened with the Ages and Stages: Social and Emotional Questionnaire for social and emotional development during their first month in our program. Children are also provided comprehensive screenings such as speech, hearing, and vision to determine if further follow up and evaluation is needed. If a parent suspects that their child has a delay in any area, they can request a referral with their Head Start teacher or with the MH/Disabilities Coordinator. Children ages 0-2 are referred for evaluations through Erie County Early Intervention Services. Children ages 3-5 are referred to the Committee on Preschool Special Education, in the child's school district. Evaluations are completed to determine if the child qualifies for services. The Mental Health & Disabilities Coordinator provides support throughout the CPSE process as well as advocates for the family and child's needs. Special education service providers/therapists typically work directly with identified children in our centers and collaborate with the head start staff.

The Mental Health & Disabilities Coordinator can provide assistance with behavioral concerns in the home and at school, parenting skills, and referrals to community and private mental health providers for children and families. Holy Cross Head Start collaborates with a variety of mental health agencies within the community to provide mental health resources and support. Information on Gifted and Talented evaluations for Kindergarten are also provided to families.



### CONFIDENTIALITY

Please note that all family records are confidential and kept by Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. in locked paper and/or computer files. Parents may make a request to review their own child/family's information at any time.

## Family Development

Social Services is an integral part of the Head Start program. We engage with families to build positive relationships as they enhance their strengths and address challenges. Case Managers can assist in many ways, such as providing referrals for clothing, food, shelter, emergency assistance and more. Holy Cross will provide the support and resources that a family needs as they create and achieve their own goals. Holy Cross Head Start provides educational workshops, job readiness assistance, outreach and advocacy to promote educational advancement, economic mobility, and other aspects of family well-being.

### HOME VISITS

As part of our program, Teachers and Case Managers will be contacting you to schedule a home visit prior to school opening and just before school ends.



### CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING

Under New York State Social Services Law 8413: we are Mandated Reporters and are required to report when we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before us, in our professional or official capacity, may be an abused or maltreated child. Erie County Child Protection Services follows up on all reports and determines if abuse or neglect occurred, not Head Start!



## Other Important Information

### SNOW DAYS/EMERGENCY CLOSURES

In the event of a possible snow day or emergency school closure, Holy Cross Head Start will broadcast the emergency school closings on WGR/TV NEWS 2, WIVB/TV NEWS 4 and WKBW/TV NEWS 7

#### FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Instructions for fire drills are posted in the classrooms. Staff, parents, volunteers, etc. are required to follow directions and leave the building quickly and calmly with the children during these drills.



## Pedestrian Safety

Here are some facts you should know:

- ◆ Preschool children are quick and often unaware of danger. Each year, many children are injured or killed when they suddenly dart into the path of a car.
- ◆ Most preschoolers are injured near their home or on their own street
- ◆ Most crashes involving preschool children happen between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
- ◆ Most crashes involving preschoolers occur in fair and warm weather.
- ◆ Twice as many preschool boys are injured than preschool girls.

This is how you can prevent these tragedies:

**Supervise preschoolers at all times.** Preschoolers should not be allowed to cross the street alone. Teach them who can help them cross the street safely.

**Teach by explaining.** Explain to your child the safe way to cross a street. Say: “When I cross a street, I always stop at the curb. I look right for traffic coming that way. Then I look left again. When it is clear, I cross the street, and keep looking left and right.”

**Teach by example.** When you cross a street with your child always:

- ◆ Stop at the curb.
- ◆ Look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT for traffic in all directions.
- ◆ Cross when it is clear.
- ◆ Keep looking for cars as you cross.

**Encourage your child.** As you both safely cross the street together, praise the child for copying your safe actions or words. Practice what you teach at all times.



## GETTING TO SCHOOL AND COMING HOME SAFELY

For the safety of your child, you must remain with your child when you arrive at the center until the classroom session begins. We urge you to pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. Children find it stressful to wait for a late parent, and supervision of a child hinders the teacher's classroom preparation responsibilities.

If you know ahead of time that you will be late picking up your child from the center, you must call your Case Manager If you send someone who is not listed as a "pick up person" in our records to pick up your child, we will not release your child to that individual. Also, for the safety of your child we will not release him or her to anyone under the age of 16 years old.

If a child has not been picked up by an authorized person 15 minutes after the close of his or her classroom, the home phone number and/or emergency phone number will be contacted. If your child is not picked up, and we have exhausted all attempts to contact an authorized pick up person within **one** hour after dismissal, Child Protective Services (CPS) will be called by a Holy Cross staff member.

Unless either parent has been granted sole custody or has secured an Order of Protection, both parents have a legal right to pick up the child.



## COMMUNITY COMPLAINT ABOUT THE PROGRAM

1. Should a parent or community member have a concern about the Head Start program, they need to address the matter with the appropriate center staff and/or ask the appropriate coordinator any questions about program procedure regarding the concern. If they are not satisfied with the result, the concern should be put in writing to the Executive Director.
2. Should the parent or community member have a concern about the Head Start program that is associated with total program (and not a particular center), the concern should be put in writing to the Executive Director.
3. After receiving a written complaint, the Executive Director will schedule a meeting with the complainant at a mutually agreed upon time and place to discuss the matter.
4. Depending on the concern, the Executive Director may call another meeting with the complainant and include the appropriate coordinator and/or center staff to discuss the matter and to respond to the concern with a team effort.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Adverse childhood experiences (also known as ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, such as neglect and/or violence. ACEs are strongly related to brain development and a wide range of health problems throughout a person's lifetime.

ACEs may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, living in poverty, parental mental illness, discrimination, substance use disorder or incarceration.

Research has shown that:

When families experience historical and systemic racism or living in poverty for generations, the effects of ACEs can add up over time.

ACEs are very common in every population group.

ACEs can have a significant impact on a child's ability to succeed in school, causing a negative impact on their mental health and general well-being.

Adults who have experienced ACEs may have higher rates of negative health outcomes, including depression, obesity, substance abuse, anxiety, smoking and early death.

### **Resilience and Protective Factors**

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges and hardship. Parental and child resilience have been shown to reduce the negative impacts of ACEs.

Protective Factors that may boost child or parent resilience may include:

Supportive and caring relationships and social connections

Programs that understand a person's background and culture

A healthy lifestyle, which may include regular exercise, mindfulness, getting sufficient sleep and eating a healthy and nutritious diet

Economic support/stability for families

Quality childcare and education in early life

An individual who has experienced ACEs may benefit from a wide array of community-based services. More information on ACEs and resources on what services may be available can be found on-line at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cwcs/aces.php>

## Naptime agreement

According to NYS Day Care Regulation, 418-1.7, “appropriate sleep, rest and quiet periods which are responsive to individual and group needs must be provided so that children can sit quietly, lie down to rest, or begin or continue their night’s sleep. For children unable to nap, time and space must be provided for quiet play. Children must not be forced to rest for long periods of time.”

Children who are enrolled in an all day preschool program will be offered appropriate rest and quiet periods that are responsive to individual and group needs. Should there be children who do not fall asleep; one staff person will take these children to a designated area in the classroom to participate in table games or other quiet activities. The remaining staff person(s) will supervise the napping children, sending other children who awaken to the game table area.

In accordance with NYS Day Care Regulation, 418-1.3, the following procedures will be followed:

- Mats or cots will be placed so that they are at least two feet apart from each other
- Children will be located in a safe area where there is no draft and where children will not be stepped on or be blocking a safe egress.
- Staff will be positioned throughout the room so that all children can be visibly looked after

## Thank You

We appreciate you choosing Holy Cross Head Start as your child’s early childhood program. We value your opinion and your voice, and we’re here for your whole family, so please don’t hesitate to speak with your Center Director if there is anything more we can do for you!





[www.holycrossheadstart.org](http://www.holycrossheadstart.org)