

Parent and Child  
Together  
(PACT) for  
West Central Illinois

Home-Based  
Parent Handbook

2019-2020

[www.pactheadstart.com](http://www.pactheadstart.com)



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents .....	2
PACT Philosophy and Mission .....	3
PACT Program.....	4
School Readiness Statement.....	5-6
Rights and Responsibilities as a PACT Parent.....	7
Parent Complaints .....	7
PACT Program Descriptions.....	7
How Parents Can Participate.....	8
Parent Committees .....	8
Policy Council.....	8-9
Health Advisory Committee.....	9
Inkind Contributions .....	9
Mileage Reimbursement .....	9
<b><u>PACT Policies</u></b>	
Absences and Irregular Attendance.....	9
Certified Copy of Birth Certificate.....	9
Cell Phone Policy.....	9-10
Confidentiality.....	10
Child Picture Policy .....	10
Security System.....	10
Video Surveillance Policy.....	10
Firearms/Weapons Policy.....	10
Guidance and Discipline .....	10-11
Fund Raising/Solicitation Policy.....	11
Smoking Policy .....	11
<b><u>Home Based Education</u></b>	
Infant, Toddlers, and Two's Development Screening, ASQ-3 Ages and Stages Questionnaire.....	11
<b><u>Disabilities/Mental Health Services</u></b>	
Disabilities Services .....	12
Mental Health Services .....	12
<b><u>Health</u></b>	
Nutrition Policy.....	12
Health Services .....	12
Parent – HB Teacher Agreement.....	13-14

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## **Our Program Philosophy/Values.....**

### **PACT BELIEVES.....**

Parents are their children's first and most important teacher.

Parents care about their children and will put forth strong efforts to improve their child's well-being.

Parents can and do learn new and better ways of interacting with their children given sufficient information and encouragement.

Resources for health and human services in West Central Illinois are limited and must be delivered without duplication to produce the most effective results.

Involvement of parents and the community in decision-making increases the commitment to the program while enhancing the quality of decision-making.

School Readiness begins with an individualized approach to children's health and safety.

## **Our Mission.....**

**The mission of Parent and Child Together (PACT) for West Central Illinois is to provide a high quality comprehensive program of education, health, and social services to children and their families, developing life-long learners.**



The PACT program works because we believe that. . . .

**Parents are their child's first and most influential teachers. It is hoped that by working together, parents and staff will be better able to help children make the most of school and life experiences.**

How does PACT do this?

1. **Parent Engagement** through Family Events, Advisory Committees, Parent Committees, Policy Council, and through parent initiated activities, including parents' ideas and interest in their child's development and learning. Although parent participation is not mandatory, we believe it is the single most important factor in determining how much benefit your child will receive from our program.
2. **Education** is designed to meet each child's needs through individualized learning experiences. The curriculum includes developmental screening, ongoing assessment, goal setting, individualized activities, and parent involvement. The pre-school education program is delivered in an informal, child-centered setting, emphasizing learning through play.
3. **Health** emphasizes early recognition of health problems as well as preventive health care. Physical and dental exams, vision and hearing testing, and mental health and nutrition activities are all emphasized in this component.
4. **Social Services** are provided to the families of Head Start children through referrals to appropriate community agencies with support services being provided by PACT staff as needed. Staff assist families to achieve educational goals as well as individual family goals.
5. **Special Services:** At least 10% of PACT's total enrollment is reserved for children with special needs. Provisions are made based on the child's needs and the families' wishes.
6. **Transitions Services** assists parents in becoming their child's advocate as they transition into Early Head Start, from the home or other child care setting, and from Early Head Start into Head Start or other setting, and from Head Start to elementary school.

**School Readiness Statement:**

Parent and Child Together (PACT) believes that relationships with families, schools and communities are the foundation for school readiness. Developing those relationships will assist us in creating safe and nurturing experiences which support young children to develop their individual interests, talents and goals to become successful lifelong learners.

**Approaches to Learning**

Children will develop the ability to stay focused, interested and engaged in experiences.

**Social and Emotional Development**

Children will develop social relationships and self regulation.

**Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development**

Children will understand and maintain safe and healthy practices. Children will achieve control of large and small muscles for movement, balance, self care and exploration.

**Language and Literacy**

Children will develop the ability to use and understand English and/or home language.

**Cognition**

Children will use logic and reasoning skills to understand math concepts, scientific exploration and their history, culture and environment.

For enrolled children, with at least 3 reporting periods in a program year, 80% will meet expectations of the listed objectives.

**Objectives**

- 1b Follows limits and expectations
- 11a Attends and engages

**Objectives**

- 3a Balances needs and rights of self and others

**Objectives**

- 4 Demonstrates traveling skills
- 7a Uses fingers and hands

**Objectives**

- 8b Follows directions
- 15a Notices and discriminates rhyme
- 16a Identifies and names letters
- 19a Writes name

**Objectives**

- 20a Counts
- 20b Quantifies

School Readiness Statement:

Parent and Child Together (PACT) believes that relationships with families, schools and communities are the foundation for school readiness. Developing those relationships will assist us in creating safe and nurturing experiences which support young children to develop their individual interests, talents and goals to become successful lifelong learners.

**Family Well Being**

Families will understand and maintain safe and healthy practices, and meet basic economic needs.

**Positive Parent Child Relationships**

Families will understand the elements of positive relationships and have the ability to identify and address the challenges of parenting.

**Families as Life Long Educators Family Engagement in Transitions**

Families will see themselves as their child's first and most important teacher.

**Families as Learners**

Families will identify their strengths and address their needs to support their parenting, career and life goals.

**Family Connections to Peers and Community**

Families will engage with social and service networks to achieve personal growth and enhance community life.

**Families as Advocates and Leaders**

Families will develop and utilize decision making and leadership skills within program, community and state to support children's well being.

**Family Objectives**

Families complete and return weekly goal chart.

Families ensure their child has good attendance.

Families read to their child daily.

**Family Objectives**

Families attend 25% of socializations.

## **MY RIGHTS AS A PACT PARENT**

1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and the operation of the program.
2. To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for me and my family.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom.
4. To choose whether or not I participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start.
6. To always be treated with respect and dignity.
7. To expect guidance for my child from the teachers and staff, which will help his/her total individual development.
8. To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
9. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skill in areas of possible employment.
10. To be informed of community resources concerned with health, education & improvement of family life.

## **MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PACT PARENT**

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
2. To accept the program as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives.
3. To take part as an observer, a volunteer, or a paid employee, and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program.
4. To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parents, and to encourage their full participation.
5. To welcome Teachers and Staff into my home to discuss ways in which Parents can help their children's development at home in relation to school experiences.
6. To work with the Teacher, Staff, and other Parents in a cooperative way.
7. To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
8. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism, and to share in evaluating it.
9. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education, and recreation.
11. To teach my child to show proper respect and correct language to use in the classroom

## **PARENT COMPLAINTS**

PACT Policy Council has established the following procedures to govern the hearing and resolving of parent complaints regarding the PACT Program.

- Step 1: Parent complaints should be remitted to the Teacher currently working with the family and at the Center level. If the complaint is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, parent proceeds to Step 2.
- Step 2: Parent should submit complaint, by contacting the Executive Director or the Assistant Director. Parents should receive a response a week. If complaint is not resolved to parent's satisfaction, complaint proceeds to Step 3.
- Step 3: Parent complaint (in dated and in writing) will be remitted to Policy Council for consideration and resolution. Parent will be notified as to when the committee will consider the complaint and given sufficient opportunity to be present. Complaint will include written documentation of steps taken by staff to resolve complaint prior to Step 3.

## **EARLY HEAD START HOME BASED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The home visits for the Prenatal parents follow an INTENSE schedule (weekly visits from time of enrollment until time of delivery) or a MODERATE schedule (monthly visits during the first three months of pregnancy, visits every other week during the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> months of pregnancy, and weekly from the 7<sup>th</sup> month until time of delivery). The visits are 1 ½ hours unless family needs indicate otherwise.

Home visits for 0-3 families are held weekly in the home for 1 ½ hours. The home based teacher will guide the parent in ways to interact with their child and develop a secure relationship between the parent and child. Twenty-two parent/child “play dates” (socializations) are offered throughout the year. Parents are invited to attend center family events.

## **HOW PARENTS CAN PARTICIPATE IN PACT FOR WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS**

Statistics have shown that children who have experienced the Head Start program have a greater opportunity for lifelong success. It is also known that parental engagement increases the chance for success even more. We offer many avenues for Parent Engagement:

- ✿ Be actively involved in Home Visits and planning goals and activities for children
- ✿ Achieve skills in decision making, group processes and leadership
- ✿ Join parent committees and Policy Council
- ✿ Volunteer in the classroom
- ✿ Apply for a job with PACT
- ✿ Work together with other parents on community problems
- ✿ Do volunteer work at the PACT office or Center Based site
- ✿ Attend Family Events, serve on Parent Committee
- ✿ Make materials for teaching the children

These are just a few of the general ways for you to be involved. Please feel free to talk with your Teacher about volunteering.

### **PARENT COMMITTEES:**

Parent committees are made up of representatives from groups of currently enrolled parents from each program option. Responsibilities of the parent committee include:

- Planning and carrying out program activities & Family Events
- Communication with the Policy Council representative at the committee meetings
- Advise staff in implementing policies/activities.
- Attending planned activities & encouraging other families to participate

### **POLICY COUNCIL**

The Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the PACT program. Policy Council is made up of parents that are elected to represent each Head Start parent group. Any major decisions made by management staff at PACT are subject to input from this group of parents and often the Policy Council group must approve those decisions before they can be implemented.

Parents who are elected to Policy Council must attend meetings once a month in Mt. Sterling. PACT will reimburse parents for mileage and babysitting costs at a rate determined by PACT policies.

Being a Policy Council representative can be a great experience. Members have the opportunity to attend conferences. They learn how a Board or Council operates. The parents on the Council have time to share information and ideas with other parents. All parents have an opportunity to hear Policy Council information from the Policy Council representative at Family Events.

### **HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Committee meets once each year to evaluate services, identify and plan for screening of community health problems, and help plan and advise in areas of difficulty. All Policy Council members are invited to join these meetings.

### **HOME BASED INKIND CONTRIBUTIONS**

The PACT program operates through the support of federal and state funds. In addition, PACT must match certain funds by obtaining inkind contributions from parents and members of the community to show their support of the program. Inkind contributions are services, time, mileage, supplies, etc. donated by parents and the community.

PACT must match 20% of the grant with INKIND. We cannot meet that match without parents contributing weekly. The time you spend in face to face intentional teaching with your child is INKIND for PACT. Please complete the Weekly Goal Chart/Inkind form every week and give them to your child's Teacher.

### **MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**

**Early Head Start Parent Mileage Reimbursement for Attendance to Socializations:** Parents will be reimbursed \$.50 per mile for actual round trip miles traveled from the family's home to their socialization site when attending socialization activities. Only parents driving will receive the mileage reimbursement as the reimbursement is based on actual miles driven.

PACT employees are not to be involved in making any transportation agreements between families. The families must arrange any plans with other families on their own. This reimbursement will help to offset costs of attending socializations such as gas money, since bus transportation is not available for home based.

### **ABSENCES AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE**

Your Home Based Teacher will work with you to establish regularly scheduled home visits that are convenient for your family. It is important for your child's development as well as essential to the overall operation of the program that home visits are kept.

Reasons for missed visits are recorded weekly and the Teacher will work with you to make up missed visits. **If your child has to miss a visit, please notify us as soon as possible by notifying your Teacher or calling 1-800-443-7228.**

### **CERTIFIED COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE**

**Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent or guardian must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child. PACT is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30-day time frame.**

### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

All personal cell phones must be set on vibrate while in PACT facilities or during PACT activities/work hours.

This policy includes cell phones belonging to staff, substitutes, volunteers and parents. Adults will not use their cellphone when they are with the children.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information shared with PACT staff is confidential. A signed release from parents must be obtained before sharing or discussing information with other agencies.

PACT has entered into a written agreement with the Illinois Head Start Association and University of Illinois, Center for Prevention Research and Development, to gather and summarize child outcomes and family outcomes data for Head Start programs in our state. After the data is matched to child, family, and teacher, it is scrubbed of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and then gathered and analyzed. No PII is reported.

### **CHILD PICTURE POLICY**

Parents/families who take pictures of their children at PACT activities may not post any pictures that include other children on any social site such as Face Book, My Space, etc. and may not post them anywhere on the internet or send them via email to anyone else. It is very important to respect the safety and privacy of all families in the program. Anyone who violates this policy will not be allowed to take pictures at PACT activities in the future.

### **SECURITY SYSTEM**

Any person without a pin and security card will have to be buzzed in by staff who monitor each person's entry through the use of security cameras.

### **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE POLICY**

Video surveillance is implemented in PACT classrooms, at entrances to the centers, and on buses to provide a safe and secure environment for children, staff and parents.

Video surveillance cameras are not used in areas where children and staff would have an expectation of privacy, such as the restrooms.

### **FIREARMS/WEAPONS POLICY**

PACT employees and contractual workers, while in pay status and/or on PACT property or at PACT sponsored activities, are prohibited from introducing, possessing, using, buying, or selling unauthorized weapons, firearms, ammunitions, explosives, or items deemed by PACT management to be dangerous.

#### **Parent/visitor policy:**

PACT parents and visitors, while on PACT property or at PACT sponsored activities, are prohibited from possessing unauthorized firearms or other weapons.

Unauthorized means any weapon, even if the owner has a legal state permit to carry the weapon. The following exception applies:

- a. A firearm in the possession of a law enforcement officer on duty who is authorized to possess the firearm by the employing law enforcement agency.
- b. PACT requests officers who are visiting classrooms for the purpose of safety education to refrain from bringing their weapons into the buildings.

### **HEAD START PHILOSOPHY REGARDING GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

The focus of Parent and Child Together (PACT) for Western Central Illinois is on meeting the needs of children and families in ways that reflect the principles of child and family development. This focus is based on a belief that both the early childhood environment and the staff must provide and reinforce limits and realistic expectations that are

consistent, clear and positively defined. The philosophy for guidance and discipline in the agency is based on the belief that children develop self- or inner-control by being given opportunities to learn, understand and follow simple rules.

Children are most secure when they know what is expected of them and when the expectations take into account each child's needs and strengths. Just as children need the security of being loved, they also need secure boundaries and limits that are geared toward the development of self-respect, healthy interpersonal relationships, skills in problem solving and ultimately the ability to make wise decisions for themselves.

The ultimate goal of PACT's Guidance and Discipline Policy is to promote basic human values, such as respect, trust, honesty and caring for others. Every effort is made to provide the child with the type of learning environment which leads to development of inner controls and positive self-discipline.

When challenging behavior occurs, the child will be disciplined appropriately, in a positive manner, to ensure the safety of others. If an unruly child endangers others, the adult will make accommodations for the child away from the group while the child works to regain their composure. Teachers will document challenging behaviors to determine if there are any patterns or daily triggers. In case of severe behavior, the child may be temporarily withdrawn from class until a Family Support Plan meeting can be held.

**NOTE: The following behaviors are prohibited:**

- Corporal punishment- includes hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear.
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, outdoor play, or use of the bathroom.
- Abusive or profane language.
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.

**FUND RAISING/SOLICITATION POLICY**

Parents and staff are not allowed to fund raise for PACT Head Start.

Parents are asked not to solicit funds, supplies, or anything of value from local businesses and/or the community for use by participants of the program. Questions regarding solicitation should be directed to Shanna Edison, PACT Executive Director.

**SMOKING POLICY**

**Smoking is prohibited on property owned, leased, or utilized by Parent and Child Together (PACT) for West Central II. This includes both indoor and outdoor premises, including parking areas. PACT staff or parents who smoke must do so off of PACT leased/owned property and out of children's view.**

PACT encourages an open dialogue between the parent and staff member regarding the use of tobacco on home visits. PACT does encourage parents to refrain from smoking on home visits, however PACT does not feel that it can mandate that parents not be allowed to smoke in their own homes if they so desire. PACT staff will provide parent education on the effects of secondhand smoke on young children.

**INFANT, TODDLERS, AND TWO YEAR OLDS DEVELOPMENT SCREENING**

**ASQ-3 – Ages and Stages Questionnaire**

The Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3): A Child-Monitoring System, Third Edition is the screening tool used with children enrolled in the Early Head Start program. The ASQ-3 screens children systematically over time.

## **DISABILITIES SERVICES**

No less than 10% of PACTs enrollment is reserved for children who have special needs. PACT tries to ensure that children who have special needs receive the full benefit of all components offered.

The Disabilities/Mental Health Services Coordinator is available to help locate resources, make referrals for evaluations, and access professionals.

The Disabilities/Mental Health Coordinator can also help facilitate communication between families and providers, and can attend meetings related to your child's special needs. We are also here to help you learn to advocate for yourself.

Also available for parents and staff is a PACT Lending Library on a broad variety of topics related to disabilities, behavior, and inclusion.

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mental Health is a state of well-being. It is the ability to meet the ordinary demands of every-day life, and it is the ability to cope with normal stresses which life presents. This is true for both children and adults.

This could include sadness, frustration, children's behavioral problems, substance abuse, family relationships, and many other conditions which make life less enjoyable.

PACT has a Mental Health Services Consultant observe every classroom and socialization at least once through the year to observe all of the children and their interactions with staff and other children. The Consultant will be watching for signs of behavior which is not typical for the age of the child. If our consultant notices anything of concern, it will be discussed with your Teacher.

Our Consultant is also available during a family crisis. A parent may contact her Teacher or Family Advocate, and they will help you arrange a phone or personal consultation. For children who require a Behavioral Plan to help him /her to be more productive in the classroom, the consultant may attend and the parent is offered private discussion with the consultant after the meeting if they wish. Our consultant also presents a workshop at every center which involves parents in discussion of what is typical for children's behavior and emotional state.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

### ***SCHOOL READINESS BEGINS WITH HEALTH!***

#### **NUTRITION POLICY**

A snack will be provided at Socializations not at a licensed center unless the group decides lunch is needed. Socializations at licensed sites receive the lunch served at the site.

Because of nutrition, safety of foods being served, and a variety of regulations, PACT prohibits parents from providing any food items at PACT sponsored activities, on or off-site. If your child is an infant, you may provide their formula and baby food. If you are unable to, please talk with your teacher.

#### **HEALTH SERVICES**

All enrolled children are required to be medically screened within 45 days of enrollment following an age appropriate schedule utilized by the EPSDT program of the Illinois Medical Program and by recommendation of your child's health care provider.

Children will be excluded from attending socialization if physical exam, TB Test or Doctor sign-off, current immunizations, and blood lead/ level test are not on file within 30 days of enrollment.



## GROUP SOCIALIZATION ACTIVITIES AND OTHER SERVICES

Socializations are an important part of our Home Based services. Attending socialization will enhance your child's school readiness goals. We hope you take the opportunity to meet and talk with other parents in your area. Your child will have a new environment to build their social, cognitive, language, and motor skills.

### PARENT AGREES TO...

\_\_\_\_ Accompany my child to Socializations twice a month.

My socialization time is: \_\_\_\_\_ Socialization day is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please explain why you might not be able to join us for this play date:**

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**The teacher can give you a yearly schedule of all of the dates for your child's group.**

\_\_\_\_ Work with PACT staff to arrange, keep and accompany my child to appointments needed for required health screenings. I understand that my child cannot attend socializations if he/she does not have up-to-date physical/WBC, Lead, TB, and Immunizations.

\_\_\_\_ Communicate with my HB Teacher any struggles or needs I have for making, keeping and getting needed appointments.

\_\_\_\_ Not send or bring any food, drinks or candy to socializations. Formula or baby food is allowed.

\_\_\_\_ Not bring or send any medication to socialization with my child. If I have medication, I will leave it in my car or ask the teacher where it can be safely stored out of children's reach.

### TEACHER AGREES TO...

\_\_\_\_ Plan activities using your ideas and the Parents as Teachers curriculum for socialization.

\_\_\_\_ Plan activities that support you and & your child engaging in face to face contact

\_\_\_\_ Assist your family with any struggles or needs for making and keeping appointments for health screenings.

\_\_\_\_ Assist you and your child to attend socializations twice a month, including offering transportation.

Parent

Signatures \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place original in child's education file at office site

Teacher will review if attendance falls below 85% or less than 85% of weekly goal charts have been returned.

EHS/HB ED 16