



PARENT HANDBOOK



CENTER DIRECTORY

Center _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Web site: www.eastmoaa.org →Head Start→Parent Information

HOURS

Regular Head Start (core time)

Tuesday through Friday from _____ to _____.

Children arrival times: _____ to _____

Full-Day Head Start (extended hours before/after core time)

Morning: _____ to _____ Afternoon: _____ to _____

STAFF

Site manager _____

Child's teacher/center aide _____

Family advocate _____

CENTER COMMITTEE

Chairperson _____

Vice Chairperson _____

Secretary/Treasurer _____

POLICY COUNCIL

Representative _____

Alternate _____

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WELCOME!

East Missouri Action Agency staff welcomes you and your family to our Head Start Program. Head Start provides many opportunities for children and their families. We look forward to working as a team with you to best meet the need of your children. This Parent Handbook has been designed to enhance your involvement with Head Start and your parental role as the first and most influential educator of your child.

CENTER POLICIES

Parents are encouraged to get to know their child's teacher and the center staff when they drop-off and pick up their children. Feel free to ask questions, to share observations about your child and to let staff know about changes as they occur in your child's world.

1. Children will be released from the center only to the parent(s)/guardian and persons included on the 'Release-To List.'
2. If staff do not know a person, they will immediately ask for the visitor's name and purpose of visit for safety of the children and staff. They may be asked to show proof of identity.
3. Head Start provides a smoke-free environment for our children. Smoking is permitted in designated areas only.
4. Adult's beverages are allowed in designated areas only, never in the children's presence.

HOURS OF OPERATION

All parents are to bring their children Tuesday through Friday during the core time (as indicated on the front page) since this is the time in which many of the Head Start specific educational activities occur. If the parent(s)/guardian do not meet the Full-Day criteria (see the following page), their child(ren) must be picked up by the end of the core time each day. For parents who meet the Full-Day criteria, their child(ren) can attend during the extended hours.

CLOSED DATES FOR PROGRAM YEAR

Head Start center will be closed on the following holidays:

*Labor Day *Columbus Day *Veterans Day *Thanksgiving Day *Friday after Thanksgiving
*Martin Luther King Day *Presidents Day *Good Friday

Head Start centers will be closed for the Christmas/New Year's break from _____ to _____. Classes will resume on January ____

Spring Break: Classes will be cancelled the week of Spring Break which is _____.

Last day of classes: The last day of classes is scheduled for early May. The closing date depends on how often the center closes due to inclement weather during the year. Make-up days will be held at the end of the year.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Regular Head Start policy. For the Regular Head Start day, children must be picked up at the end of the scheduled core time. If this does not occur, after every attempt has been made to reach the parent and emergency contacts, staff may contact the Family Support Division for child abandonment.

Full-Day Head Start late fee policy. Because our staff members are guaranteed a regular work week and have set hours to work, a late pick-up fee will apply per child as follows:

Five dollars (\$5.00) for the first 15 minutes late and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. Late pick-up fees will need to be paid by the following week. If you are unable to remain current on fees, we will transfer your child to Regular Head Start.

GENERAL FULL DAY INFORMATION

Note that there are two possibilities for enrollment, each with different criteria.

Option #1: Regular Head Start. This option is open to those who have a daytime caregiver present in the home.

Option #2: Full-Day Head Start. This option will be available to those families who meet the criteria listed below.

Head Start Full-Day Criteria

Enrollment for Full-Day classroom placement is determined by the following criteria:

- Parent/guardian has difficulty caring for the child due to a disability/medical condition or any special need identified by the family that justifies Full-Day care.
- OR There is **no caregiver present** in the home due to parent(s)/guardian(s):
- Working.
 - In job training.
 - Going to school (college or vocational classes).
 - Enrolled in the Career Assistance Program (CAP).

Information on the application signed by a parent/guardian, verify that they have met the above requirements for Full-Day attendance. Changes in criteria status will be documented on a Change-of-Status form and maintained in the family file.

Change in Employment/Education

If a parent/guardian loses a job or drops out of school, we will give them up to 20 working days to find other employment. During this job search time, we will continue to provide Full-Day Head Start. If employment is not obtained after that time, their child will be placed on the Regular Head Start schedule. If a Regular Head Start parent meets the Full-Day Head Start criteria, their child will be able to attend Full-Day Head Start.

Full-Day Fee

To help offset the Full-Day expense, parent/guardians who meet the Full-Day criteria must apply for state-paid child care reimbursement through the Family Support Division. If a parent/guardian fails to apply for vendor services within the first 30 days of enrollment in Full-Day services, their child will be placed in the Regular Head Start program. We will accept the FSD determined co-pay for parents who qualify for state-paid child care Tuesday through Friday. Head Start will cover this expense for children who do not qualify. A ten dollar (\$10.00) fee is set for Monday services as this is considered a non-Head Start day. If parent/guardian(s) do not qualify for state-paid reimbursement, they will be required to pay this \$10.00/child amount each Monday that their child attends.

Expiration of State-Paid Subsidies

If a child is approved for state-paid subsidies through a certain expiration date, **parents must re-apply prior to the date their subsidy expires.** If they are denied or the subsidy expires, they will need to pay for Mondays attended. It is the parent/guardians responsibility to watch the date when the subsidy runs out.

MONDAY CHILD CARE SERVICE

Although Head Start services are not provided on Monday, East Missouri Action Agency has chosen to offer Monday non-Head Start child care services on an as needed basis. **This will be available to all enrolled Head Start children for a \$10.00 fee per child.** This fee amount applies regardless of how many hours the child attends. Monday hours of operation will follow the same schedule as set for Tuesday-Friday service.

Payment is to be made in full on Mondays of each week. If payment has not been made by the child's pick-up time on Monday of the following week, payment of the past due and current amount due must be paid in full in order for the child to remain at the center on Mondays.

If a parent/guardian decides to pay for their child care in advance, **we will not be giving reimbursement if they prepay** and then drop their child(ren).

FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Volunteering

1. The Head Start Program depends on community support for 20% of operating costs. This support ensures that our Head Start program keeps its federal funding. Parents, other family members and members of the community can support children and help with in-kind by doing the following:
 - a. Volunteering in the classroom
 - b. Going on field trips
 - c. Attending local parent and cluster meetings
 - d. Serving on Policy Council
 - e. Helping in the kitchen
 - f. Assisting with health services
 - g. Help make classroom materials at home
 - h. Participating in family advocate and teacher visits made in the home
2. All *regular* volunteers (those who work 8 hrs/week or more) must receive a TB test, and agree to a criminal record check and a child abuse and neglect screening. In addition, those counted in the child/staff ratio must have a physical. Those who participate in food preparation activities must also be immunized against Hepatitis A.
3. Due to state licensing laws, no children under three or over five-years-old may be brought to the center, except for special events.

Support your child

Provide in-kind

Family Contacts

1. Head Start families receive several visits from staff. These visits are a very important part of the Head Start Program since they help ensure that we work as an effective team to meet the needs of your children. Thus it is important to keep the appointments. Staff do the following:
 - a. Assist parents in developing healthy self concepts so that they feel capable of meeting the many challenges of raising their children.
 - b. Assist families in identifying strengths and needs, as well as family and community resources.
 - c. Provide health information and educational opportunities.
 - d. Make referrals to community services.
2. Families who move during the school year need to contact a family advocate to make Head Start aware of the new address. Moving may affect a child's enrollment status.
3. Families also need to **contact a family advocate when any important family information changes** including: phone numbers, emergency contacts, custody, etc.
4. **Child Abuse and Neglect Law:** As with all professionals working with families, such as medical and school personnel, Head Start staff are mandated child abuse reporters. *However, our goal is to help families to reduce stresses in their lives so that your children have the positive childhood that you wish for them to have.*

EDUCATION

1. Head Start is a family-based, social-emotional literacy program.
2. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences, using *Creative Curriculum*, designed to foster social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth, including literacy and numeracy.
3. **Children participate in daily outdoor activities** except in extreme weather. Dress your child appropriately for either cold (above 32°) or warm weather (except when there are heat alerts).
4. Children learn about their community through field trips and special visitors. You and your family are an important source of expertise—a new baby, pets, music or other hobbies, your job, etc.
5. Our program uses *Conscious Discipline* strategies to encourage children to express their feelings, to develop self-confidence and the ability to get along with others.
6. Teachers meet with parents for two Education Home Visits and two Parent/Teacher Conferences each year to share information about your child's progress and for you to address any concerns you may have.
 - a. Home visits are an opportunity for your child's teacher to learn more about your child's world.
 - b. Conferences at Head Start enable you to learn more about your child's Head Start world.
7. Teachers, with input from families, assess each child's growth by making entries in the child's portfolio which are then shared with parents. Based on a child's current knowledge and abilities, activities are planned to further each child's development.



NUTRITION

1. The nutrition program is designed to help meet your child's daily nutritional needs. Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Breakfast is offered to children that are brought to school after the meal is served to ensure that all children have the opportunity to have breakfast. Children receive breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. All children are encouraged to taste the different foods, but food is never used as punishment or reward. Parent input and feedback is used during menu development. Parents are provided with center menus, ideas for nutrition activities, and information about food assistance programs.
2. Staff is trained on how to create a pleasant meal atmosphere, which develops acceptance to a variety of foods and creates positive attitudes toward eating. Nutrition activities for children are conducted in the classroom on a weekly basis. Parent education covering a variety of nutrition topics is provided through formal workshops/trainings, newsletters and informational handouts.
3. Head Start requires that all meals and snacks be served family style. Meal time is viewed as an opportunity for learning and developing good health habits, socialization skills, self-help skills, decision-making skills and communication skills.
4. Head Start has a low fat, sugar and salt policy. This is to help promote dental health and healthy food choices. We ask that you do not bring high fat, sugar or salt treats to the classroom, as we are not allowed to serve them. Although all donations will be accepted, (exception—not edible homemade food) items that do not follow the above guidelines will be divided and sent home so parents can use them at their discretion.
5. A Medical Food Substitution Record Form must be completed by a physician for any enrolled child who has a food allergy or who is on a special or restricted diet.
6. Head Start centers are inspected by the County Health Inspector on a regular basis. The Health Department strictly prohibits the use of home-prepared and home-canned foods. Any volunteer who will be handling food must have a T.B. test, physical, and be immunized against Hepatitis A.



HEALTH

1. All enrolled Head Start children receive a complete health screening including a medical examination, lead screening, height and weight measurements, vision screening, hearing test and Hematocrits. All children will have a dental screening. A dental examination by a licensed dentist is required within 90 days of enrollment. Follow-up is the parent's responsibility. Head Start will work with parents on resources.
2. Due to state licensing regulations, physicals are due within 30 days of enrollment or children will be unable to attend.
3. Immunizations must be up-to-date and must remain updated throughout the year.
4. After all other resources haven been exhausted, Head Start may pay for medial and dental expenses for enrolled Head Start children.



ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is an important part of the Head Start Program. **Parents should contact the center when their child will be absent, stating reason for absence.** Children with excessive absences may be dropped from enrollment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/SNOW DAYS

Head Start is committed to being available for the children and families as often as possible. Sometimes due to bad weather it is necessary to close a Head Start center. With the safety of the children in mind, center staff will make the decision whether or not to close based on the best information available at the time. Cancellations will be made over local radio/television stations.



DISCIPLINE

The Head Start staff "use positive methods of child guidance" (P.S. 1304.52(h)(iv)). Head Start Performance Standards (P.S.) do not tolerate any type of physical discipline nor verbal abuse at the Head Start centers. *Most children are challenging at some time—some more than others. We do not exclude even those children who frustrate parents and others the most.* Head Start encourages parents to practice positive discipline techniques in the home. Research (and parents' gut feelings) have shown that children do better when they receive encouragement, hugs and lots of positive attention along with firm, kind, consistent discipline. See the next page for helpful strategies—the approach that is used in EMAA Head Start classrooms.

Insert
“Ways to change your child’s behavior (and your own)”

SERVICES TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Our Head Start program is enriched by serving a wide variety of children, including those with disabilities. Thus, EMAA Head Start works with families and staff to help **all** children develop their full potential. When families, supported by staff, feel that their child might benefit from disabilities services, their knowledge and feelings will be respected, supported and followed-up. The needs of these children will be met in the most natural environment possible in ways most similar to that of typically developing children. In addition, appropriate support services are provided for children with a disability in the classroom setting and/or through the school and other interagency collaborations. The process for determining a disability is as follows:

Screening

- a. Parents fill out a "Parent Questionnaire" during an early visit with a staff member. You know your child best. Any additional observations you have are appreciated!
- b. Children receive health screenings (described on the previous page) and developmental screenings. Developmental screenings include a brief look at your child's development using the DIAL-3.
- c. Teachers observe each child.
- d. Once screenings are complete, the classroom team holds a 'Family/Child Staffing' and reviews all of the screening information. This information is then shared with you. If your child needs any follow-up staff will then meet with you to determine how you would like this to be done.

Follow-Up

One follow-up may be to have the school evaluate your child to see if there are services they could help provide. If so, you will communicate with the school, such as by writing the school a letter, telling them that this is what you want to happen. The staff will help you, and will send the school the screening information (as authorized by you during your child's final enrollment).

If the school finds that your child would benefit from further assessment, they will give you Procedural Safeguards. Feel free to ask Head Start staff how these are designed for your protection.

ACCESSIBILITY

Our program takes seriously our responsibility to be accessible to all persons. If there is anything that we can do to better meet your needs, please let us know.



MENTAL HEALTH

Head Start staff work together with parents regarding all aspects of their children's well-being, including their behavior and mental health. Parent information, observations of their child and concerns about their child's well-being is very valuable in our working as a team to meet your child's needs. Head Start provides mental health services to families who feel the need for behavior guidance or addressing other mental health concerns. Parents are able to discuss concerns during home visits with teaching staff or family advocates—or any other time. Family advocates can put families in contact with our Healthy Living Counselor to provide support and intervention for mental health concerns regarding their children and/or family.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You are welcome to see any information in your child's file. All information remains confidential unless you give your written permission for someone else to look at it, or the records are subpoenaed.

WHEN A CHILD IS TOO SICK TO ATTEND

Most children with mild illnesses can safely attend child care. However, a child may be too sick to attend if:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities.
- The staff can not adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
- The child has any of the following symptoms unless a health provider determines that the child is well enough to attend and that the illness is not contagious:
 1. Fever (above 100° F. axillary—under arm—or above 101° F. orally) accompanied by behavior change and other signs or symptoms of illness (i.e., the child looks and acts sick).
 2. Signs or symptoms of possibly severe illness (e.g., persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing lethargy).
 3. Diarrhea: Changes from the child's usual stool pattern - increased frequency of stools, looser/watery stools, stool runs out of the diaper, or child can not get to the bathroom in time.
 4. Vomiting more than once in the previous 24 hours.
 5. Rash with a fever or behavior change.
- The child has any of the following diagnoses from a health provider (until treated and/or no longer contagious):
 1. Infectious conjunctivitis/pink eye (with eye discharge) - until 24 hours after treatment started.
 2. Scabies, head lice or other infestation - until 24 hours after treatment and free of nits.
 3. Impetigo - until 24 hours after treatment started.
 4. Strep throat, scarlet fever, or other strep infection - until 24 hours after treatment started and the child is free of fever.
 5. Pertussis - until five days after treatment started.
 6. Tuberculosis (TB) - until a health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious
 7. Chicken pox - until six days after start of rash or all sores have crusted over
 8. Mumps - until nine days after start of symptoms (swelling of "cheeks").
 9. Hepatitis A - until seven days after start of symptoms (e.g., jaundice).
 10. Measles - until six days after start of rash.
 11. Rubella (German measles) - until six days after start of rash.
 12. Oral herpes (if child is drooling or lesions can not be covered) - until lesions heal.
 13. Shingles (if lesions can not be covered) - until lesions are dry.

WAYS EMAA HEAD START PROMOTES FAMILY LITERACY

Ask us about these!

Interactive Literacy between parents & children	Parenting Education	Adult Education	Head Start activities which promote literacy learning
<p>Encourage parents to.... discuss daily/weekly events, including looking at Head Start calendar. take child to library. help with sign in. take children shopping – read labels. discuss <i>Parent Child Magazine</i> articles with child. talk with child about daily activities and food. brain storm with children to find ideas on solutions to problems. discuss Head Start menus.</p> <p>Encourage.... putting magnetic letters on the refrigerator! making up stories at home. reading child’s stories which comes home from Head Start after taking trips, making books with pictures to tell and re-tell event. having child re-tell a story. drawing together and explaining pictures. reading environmental print to child. singing songs together with spelling such as B-I-N-G-O teaching child rhymes. telling family stories. reading signs while in cars, and other traveling activities. talking during family-style meals. pointing out letters in words. meeting with other parents and their children to go to library or engage in other literacy activities. family input and participation in Weekly Plans at center.</p>	<p>Provide parent education through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Resource Area • home visits • parent/teacher conferences • newsletters • parent meetings • pamphlets and other handouts about parenting and parenting resources • parent bulletin board • Magic Moments activities • <i>Parent & Child</i> magazine – referring to articles • lending library parenting books • parenting classes • notes sent home • IEP meetings • referrals to Parents As Teachers • Health service advisory committee meetings • Policy Council meetings <p>Parent Meetings/ Cluster.... tour child’s school (kindergarten) – parent/teacher teas have special speakers on education, health, disabilities and nutrition have parent classes on positive discipline share ideas and information with parents and have parents share among themselves have joint activities with Parents As Teachers</p>	<p>Assist setting goals:</p> <p>Family Partnership Agreements.</p> <p>Use parents’ expertise in assisting their peers in adult education goals.</p> <p>Highlight achievements of parents in newsletter.</p> <p>Let parents know about adult education possibilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • home visits • parent/ teacher conferences • newsletters • parent meetings • pamphlets • parent bulletin board. 	<p>Reading words on.... child’s dictation (story) computer games name tags menus nutrition posters cooking activities with recipe cards classroom rules rhymes and song posters classroom safety daily attendance books and other materials in all Interest Areas the story child told about his or her picture environmental print posters labeling things of importance to children in center visual aids with classroom activities labeling- name recognition post pictures and word messages Word Wall: Encourage children and their parents to bring in familiar words to put on wall.</p> <p>Writing opportunities include.... daily sign in. writing centers dramatic play with writing opportunities. writing materials in all areas encouraging scribble-writing. journal writing</p>

<p>Parents.... volunteer and read in the classroom. contribute toward gathering outcomes.</p> <p>Parents and child together.... look for words around town. talk about words, numbers and where foods come from while grocery shopping. read books and fill out homework sheets. select books from Lending Library. participate in joint literacy activities at parent meetings. work on outcomes. identify and put on name tags when arriving. sing and say rhymes, some of which are silly! set family table. prepare meals.</p> <p>Head Start staff... provide training for parents on making reading fun. offer parents the opportunity to purchase inexpensive books through Scholastic book orders to help build home libraries. send home newsletters with ideas of literacy activities parents and children can do together. offer incentive programs which encourage parent and child interactions. send home notes of thanks and encouragement. promote child seeing parents and siblings read. encourage families who show efforts with literacy activities.</p>	<p>Help parents to learn about.... basic food and health needs of their children. good eating habits. encouraging positive reinforcement when child does good job. 'New Beginnings' helps parents get their child ready to begin the school year. buying literacy books and toys for gifts. utilizing time with kids such as driving or shopping (talk with kids). promoting literacy by playing board games information they ask for to help them further their child's literacy. website addresses concerning development and growth. the value of going to the library. the importance of recognizing a few letters in child's name. volunteering in classroom. Lending/Resource Library: parents can check out learning materials, books, games, puzzles, etc. ways to interact during reading to child. different learning areas in the home.</p> <p>Enhance parents knowledge about their child's health and development through... providing screening information. going over DIAL findings filling out health form provide growth/nutritional guides on child development. measure and weigh kids/send parents results. giving developmental benchmarks to parents.</p>	<p>Encourage continued education for parents such as GED, college and other education opportunities:</p> <p>Help parents learn how to apply for grants for education.</p> <p>Connect parents with limited English to interpreters. Supply books in their language.</p> <p>Provide employment and training resources and referrals.</p> <p>Refer to EMAA for employment training</p> <p>Refer parents to community educational resources.</p> <p>Get parents involved in the community.</p>	<p>Encourage language opportunities through... give verbal directions with discussion for children to know expectations interaction with peers open-ended questions conversations at family-style meals talking to child small and large group discussion song and rhymes field trips lots of family interaction at center role playing imagination – pretend play</p> <p>Encourage alphabet knowledge through.... singing song with spelling. spelling child's name out loud</p> <p>'Reading' books is encouraged through.... Library area. letting children read to each other child directed play with reading props. reading to small groups of children Lending Library Story Time Book Review--share homework sheet and book with class making class books choices in classroom, all of which includes books.</p> <p>Enhance literacy goals through.... review portfolios regularly. Child Staffing focusing on literacy goals opportunities to read/write encouraged in all settings.</p>
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Pedestrian Safety Training for Parents: Do's and Don'ts

To ensure that your child remains safe when outdoors, read and follow these simple Pedestrian Safety tips. These rules help by teaching your child the rules right from the start.

Teach your child....

1. Do not cross the street alone if you're younger than 10 years old.
2. Do stop at the curb before crossing the street.
3. Don't run, across the street, walk.
4. Do cross at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
5. Do look left, right, and left again before crossing.
6. Do walk facing traffic.
7. Make sure drivers see you before crossing in front of them.
8. Do not play in driveways, streets, parking lots or unfenced yards by the street.
9. Wear white clothing or reflectors when walking at night.
10. Cross at least 10 feet in front of a school bus.



For more information visit: <http://www.usa.safekids.org/>

Say this each time you cross the street—holding your child's hand:

***Stop, look and listen before you cross the street
Use your eyes, use your ears—then use your feet.***



**Buckle up for safety....
everybody buckle up!**

AGREEMENT FORM SIGNED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

AUTHORIZATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

If required for the above named child, I hereby authorize Head Start staff:

1. To administer basic first aid to my child in the classroom should injury occur.
2. To call emergency medical personnel to transport my child to the nearest emergency medical facility.
3. To obtain medical aid from my child's physician, hospital emergency room staff or emergency technicians if they are unable to contact me or another legal guardian.

I authorize the emergency doctors (and whomever they may designate as their assistants) to perform necessary emergency treatment and/or procedures they deem therapeutically necessary for the above named child.

I understand that Head Start will make every effort to contact me in case of emergency and that when reached, my presence with my child is necessary.

I agree:

	YES	NO
1. My child will attend Head Start regularly.		
2. I will participate in the required home visits during the program year at my convenience.		
3. I will make every attempt to attend parent meetings and activities.		
4. Any picture taken of my child may be used in newspapers, displays, web pages, bulletin boards, or other types of educational publications.		

I give my permission for my child to have the following screenings:

Height and weight	Blood pressure	Mental health observation
Vision	Hearing	Speech
Developmental	Hematocrit/hemoglobin	Dental exam
Lead test		

SCHOOL TRANSITION/SCREENING INFORMATION

By signing this form, I authorize Head Start to release any or all of my child's file to the public school that he or she may attend during or after Head Start and that Head Start may obtain my child's screening information from public school.

AGREEMENT REGARDING LICENSING

- a) I have received a copy of this facility's policies pertaining to child care practices (this Parent Handbook).
- b) I have been informed that a copy of Missouri licensing rules for child care centers is available at this facility for review as well as on Head Start's web site (www.eastmoaa.org →Head Start→Parent Information).
- c) The provider and I have agreed on a plan for continuing communication regarding my child's development, behavior and individual needs.
- d) I agree to keep the facility updated on any changes of information on the application for enrollment form.
- e) When my child is ill, I understand and agree that s/he may not be accepted for care or remain in care.
- f) I understand that the facility will contact or notify me about any medical emergency, accident, injury, or at risk situation.
- g) I understand that short, unscheduled walks may be taken without notifying me.

Exceptions/Explanations (to above items or other considerations, i.e. religious or ethnic holidays, etc.):