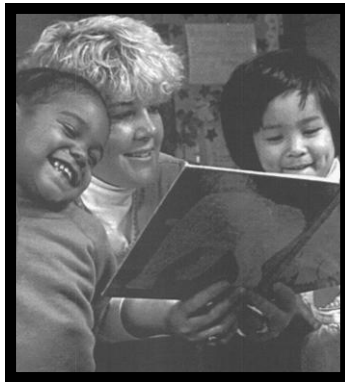


*[Head Start] must support social and emotional development by: (1) encouraging development which enhances each child's strengths by: a) building trust; b) fostering independence; c) encouraging self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations; d) encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others; and e) supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well-being; and*

*(2) planning for routines and transitions so that they occur in a timely and unrushed manner according to each child's needs. (P.S. 1304.21a(3))*

While all children benefit from clear, consistent limits and timely, unrushed routines and transitions, many children with special needs especially are nurtured and grow when these are in place.



*Family Partnerships: Accessing community services and resources. [Head Start] must work collaboratively with all participant parents to identify and continually access, either directly or through referrals, services and resources that are responsive to each family's interests and goals. (Performance Standard. 1304.40 b(1))*

We strive to be responsive to families—we are a part of the bigger picture of a child's life. Parents or guardians provide us with valuable insights about their child—a person they know better than we will ever know! We ask that you participate in our ongoing conversations with them. This may be either in writing or talking with them.

**Head Start #1**  
in  
**American Customer Satisfaction Index**  
—exceeding ratings for  
*Mercedes-Benz and BMW*  
Head Start received the highest score of  
any government agency  
or private company in the 1999  
American Customer Satisfaction Index  
survey.



East Missouri Action Agency, Inc.

## **HEAD START ORIENTATION FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**



Welcome! We look forward to working with you, as part of a team of people that includes parents, to meet the needs of the child or children with whom you are here to work, as well as all of our children. This pamphlet is one step in our communication. Let us know what we can do to help you work most effectively while you are here.

## Performance Standards

Head Start programs are mandated to meet Performance Standards, a set of research-based regulations designed to meet the needs of children and their families. Based on these Performance Standards we develop work service plans to guide our operations. You are welcome to look at a copy of either of these documents. Here are some key ideas with which you will want to be aware.

*The recruitment effort of [Head Start] must include recruiting children who have severe disabilities, including children who have been previously identified as having disabilities. (Performance Standard 1308.5f)*

Head Start has provided an inclusionary setting for children, including those with severe disabilities, since 1973. We must serve at least 10% children with disabilities.



*[Programs] must include provisions for children with disabilities to be included in the full range of activities and services normally provided to all Head Start children and provisions for any modifications necessary to meet the special needs of the children with disabilities. (Performance Standard 1308.4c)*

You play a key role in assisting children to function to their fullest capacity in a typical preschool setting.

*[Programs] must take into account the needs of the children [with disabilities] for small group activities, for modifications of large group activities and for any individual special help. (PS 1308.4d)*

We appreciate your providing individual special help! If you see ways that we can better facilitate small group activities, as well as modifications for large group activities, we welcome your suggestions.

*Training and Technical Assistance. Increasing the abilities of staff to meet the special needs of children with disabilities is an allowable expense. (Performance Standard 1308.4o(7))*

If you are aware of workshops or materials that would be valuable for our staff, let us know. We have a small budget for such expenses. If you have handouts that can be copied for staff, that is also helpful. We also value the time you take to share your expertise. Children benefit from our understanding them.

*Child development and education approach for all children. In order to help children gain the skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, [Head Start's] approach to child development and education must be developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds and learning styles. (Performance Standard 1304.21a(1)(i))*

We refer to the book, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* for guidance. These same practices are recommended by The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children as of 1993.

### Problem Solving

If you are struggling with what feels like different approaches to working effectively with children, let's talk about this. Our



Disabilities Specialist can help. One approach comes from an article from *Young Exceptional Children* entitled "Early Childhood Special Education in the Developmentally Appropriate Classroom: A Framework for Conversation."