



Institute of Community Services Parent Engagement Newsletter

2025—2026



FROM THE DESK OF OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! I am very excited to welcome you to the Head Start family. We are honored to enter such great relationships with our parents whether your child is returning or new to the program.

Our parents are encouraged to become active participants in the education of their children by giving input on curriculum development, health, nutrition, and mental health education, at ICS. Parents are also invited to participate in training opportunities, and elected parents serve on ICS Policy Council and Board of Directors. At ICS, we are proud of our accomplishments. We serve infants, toddlers, pregnant moms, pre-school children and their families in 14 Mississippi counties.

Partnering with families is always a priority! As always, ICS has high expectations for staff, parents, and children. Your participation and engagement in your child's education, growth, and development enriches the overall ICS program. ICS supports strong healthy families and vibrant communities.

Let us all join together for a very successful year. *Eloise McClinton*

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

Work with your child and his/her teacher to help your child develop strong attendance. Your enthusiasm is a big boost to success.

Talk about it—sing about it—make it an adventure!

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes the night before.
- Share ideas with other parents for getting out the door on time.

Ready—Set GO!

- Develop back-up plans for getting to and from Head Start if something comes up.
- Ask family members, neighbors or other parents to lend a hand if you need help dropping off or picking up your child. Be sure these people are on the pick-up and/or drop-off list.
- Schedule medical appointments late afternoons when Head Start is not in session, if possible.
- If your child seems anxious about going to Head Start, talk to the center director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice. If the problem persists, make sure that Head Start is a good fit for your child.
- Be sure to attend your center's Parent Orientation/Meetings/Trainings, parent activities and check out our website. www.ics-hs.org



ICS HEAD START

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ICS Mission Statement

ICS enriches and strengthens children, families, and communities for future success.

The Institute of Community Services, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer/ provider. No persons shall be discriminated against because of race, religion, color, sex, gender, age, disability, homelessness or national origin.



ADVOCACY: WHAT IS PARENT ADVOCACY?

An advocate is a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person or a cause. The primary goal of parent advocacy is to empower parents to speak out on behalf of their child's needs in the school setting and to build respectful and equal partnerships between schools and parents.

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR PARENT ADVOCACY?

- Parents need to know what their rights are under the law so that they are involved fully in important decisions made on their child's behalf.
- It encourages accountability in the education system.
- Parent Vulnerability: A parent may need a parent advocate to help them speak up, help convey the parent's viewpoint and be sure the communication is two-way and respectful and with the parent, not at the parent.



Leahbergstrome.com/advocacyservices/why-advocate.html

Edited by: Parent Engagement

Build the habit of good attendance.

Early school success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

NON FEDERAL SHARE (IN-KIND)

Head Start operates through federal grants. With these grants, programs only receive 80% of the grant dollars. The program is required to collect the other 20%, which we refer to as Non-Federal Share (In-Kind). Non-Federal Share is collected from donated appropriate services and supplies. We greatly need your help with these contributions. To help your child's EHS/Head Start Preschool with this, please assist your child with all learning materials sent home (or even on car rides) and document time spent on the monthly Volunteer/Parent/Child Interaction form. Return the form to the teacher. This time quickly adds up and can help your preschool reach the assigned Non-Federal Share amounts. We appreciate your help.

Time spent at home supporting your child's learning goals can count toward Non-Federal Share. The following are some things you can do to help:

- Reading to your child
- Counting and measuring activities
- Playing cards or board games
- Cooking or exercising with your child
- Working on a project together
- Singing educational songs
- Practice naming and writing letters of the alphabet
- Naming and drawing shapes
- Talk about words that rhyme (hill-Jill, wall-fall, dish-fish, cat-hat)
- Assist your child with writing his/her name



Do You Think Your Child May Need Special Education Services?

IDEA—The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was passed by Congress and requires that all states and territories provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities from ages 3 to 21, no matter how severe their disabilities are.

This law promises to children with disabilities a “Free Appropriate Public Education” at public expense, that their educational placement is based on an evaluation of each child's own special needs and that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is planned for your child and states the services they will receive.

If you have a child with disabilities be sure they are receiving the special education they deserve. If you need further information, please call your child's Head Start Preschool and we will be glad to help.



DID YOU KNOW? Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward. Missing 10 percent of preschool (one or two days every few weeks) can:

- Make it harder to develop early reading skills.
- Make it harder to get ready for kindergarten and first grade.
- Develop a poor attendance pattern that's hard to break.

High quality preschool programs have many benefits for your child. The routines your child develops in preschool will continue throughout school.