

Commitment to Head Start/Early Head Start Code of Ethics

As a condition of employment with Southern Ute Montessori Head Start/Early Head Start I accept and embrace the following standards of ethical behavior which are based on the core values of integrity, decency and fairness in our early childhood environment:

**“I pledge to care for every child entrusted to me with love,
understanding and respect.”**

Head Start/Early Head Start employees see beyond the present conditions of children. They know very well that appearance, behavior, language and social factors are not in themselves reliable predictors of the future of that child.

**“I am committed to providing high quality care and education
in accordance with proven early childhood philosophy
goals and objectives.”**

Our paramount responsibility is to provide safe, healthy, nurturing and responsible settings for children. We are committed to support children’s development, respect individual differences, help children learn to live and work cooperatively and promote health, self-awareness, competence, self-worth and resiliency.

**“I will protect and promote each child’s well-being,
mental capability and social competency.”**

Maintaining balance and harmony between physical, emotional, mental and social development is a major challenge. Literacy and numeracy are important but they are no more important than good health care and nutrition and developing a sense of appropriate social behavior. While specific teaching styles may differ from classroom to classroom, the spontaneous nurturing of children must always be protected. Hugging, holding, rocking, rubbing and patting backs are still acceptable and important ways of expressing care and concern for the child.

**“I agree to reach out to each child and family attempting
to enhance their quality of life by recognizing their
unique needs.”**

Reaching out is going beyond basic competence. It is focusing our effort so that each child, each day is attended to in a personal, constructive way. A word of praise, eye contact, a hug, assistance with a task, encouragement and listening. At the end of the day we ask ourselves “Did I miss any child today?”

“I respect the parents as the prime educator of their children and will endeavor to strengthen the bond among all family members.”

Children grow better in families. Families grow better when they are provided a supportive environment, a sense of dignity and an opportunity to participate as a unit in something that is significant. Building a relationship of trust based on mutual respect and helping parents develop their parenting skills has been a strength of Head Start since the beginning.

“I promise to conserve and protect the property and resources entrusted to me.”

This means more than classroom furniture. It even means more than our responsibility to children and families. You have the opportunity to contribute to a work environment that fosters the well-being of co-workers. And you have the good name of the agency in your hands. The ‘real self’ is what ethics is all about. It takes honesty, integrity, fair dealing and respect for others at every level to sustain a positive image. Reputation is what people think we are. Character is what we are. Character will always overwhelm reputation.

“I accept the responsibility of involving the community in all aspects of nurturing its future leaders.”

Head Start has an ethical responsibility to remind communities that what Abraham Lincoln said long ago is still true....“Children are people who are going to carry on what you have started...They will assume control of your cities, states and nation...The fate of humanity is in their hands.”

“I will continue to improve my personal growth and skills as an early childhood professional through relevant training.”

Our concern is for the future. If our children are going to be prepared for tomorrow, we must be at our best today. Part of what being at our best means is being open to new ideas, ability to listen to suggestions, always learning, always growing.

“I dedicate myself to maintaining high professional standards, safeguarding confidentiality and performing with intelligence, commitment and enthusiasm.”

This last statement serves to summarize all the others. It calls on each of us to ensure that our program is based on the most current knowledge of early childhood development and education. It insists on respect for families.

If a person is not thrilled by the freshness and creativity of a young child...if he/she is not fascinated by the developing child and interested in the child’s constant questioning and the mile a minute pace of a busy place...if one is uncomfortable

when little children express their emotion (anger, sadness, joy)...if one is not willing to be totally immersed and involved...then the Head Start Code of Ethics strongly suggests to that person that they find employment elsewhere.

As a Southern Ute Montessori Head Start/Early Head Start employee, I accept and embrace this code of ethics and commit to striving each day to support these principles through my words and actions.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Please email this completed form to hr@sucap.org – a signature is requested during orientation.

Sources:

A Code of Ethics for Head Start Employees, National Head Start Association, 1985
Code of Ethical Conduct, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989
Our Children—Our Trust by Gerald Hastings