

# UAB EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

## PARENT HANDBOOK



Revised: 7/21/09

# ***THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:***

Name:

Address:

## ***PROGRAM INFORMATION***

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

UAB Early Head Start Program  
933 19th Street South  
Birmingham, AL 35294

MAILING ADDRESS:

CH19 Room 118  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294

Office phone: (205) 934-5736

Fax: (205) 975-8097

Family Partner: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

UAB EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM  
PARENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the UAB Early Head Start Program. Ours is a federally funded, non-profit organization serving eligible families with children birth – 3 years of age.

We provide comprehensive Early Head Start services to approximately eighty-eight eligible families living in Jefferson, Walker and St. Clair counties in Alabama through a home-based program.

This handbook is designed to give you a lot of information about our program and to answer questions you may have. Please feel free to call me or go to your Family Partner with any questions, ideas or comments.

Sincerely,

Fred Biasini, Ph.D. Director

## MISSION STATEMENT

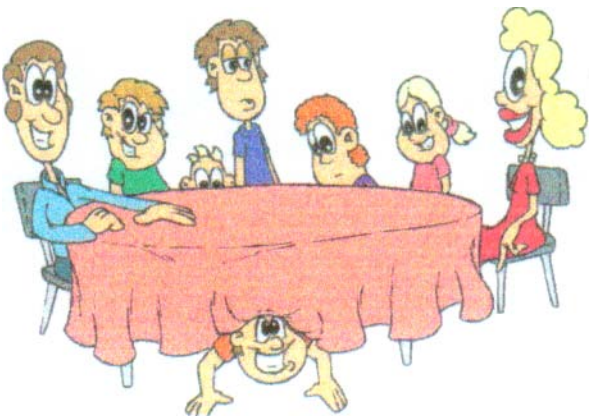
***The mission of the UAB Early Head Start Program is to form partnerships with families to support child development and family goals. Through continuous staff development and in collaboration with the community, we strive to enhance opportunities for families.***

### **WE FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND OFFER:**

- \* WEEKLY HOME-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
- \* CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES
- \* MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES
- \* HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES
- \* SOCIALIZATION ACTIVITIES

### **WE CAN ASSIST FAMILIES IN IDENTIFYING AND OBTAINING OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES SUCH AS:**

- \* ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES
- \* VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- \* DAY CARE SERVICES
- \* SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES
- \* PARENT TRAINING

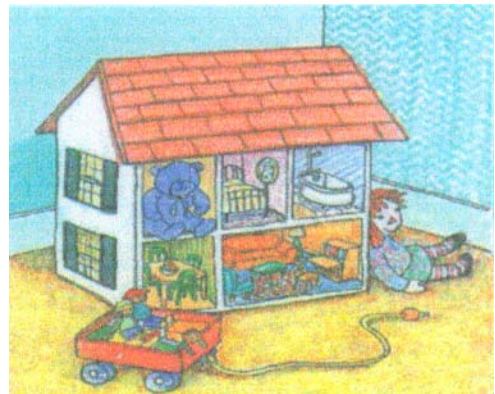


## WHAT DOES HOME-BASED MEAN?

The basic philosophy of the Home Based Program is that children's parent(s)/guardians are their *first* and *best* teachers. Therefore, our program's goal is to support your role as parent or guardian.

In the Home Base Program, the focus is primarily on you, the parent(s)/guardians. You are the primary person(s) in the child's development, and your home is the central facility. Your Family Partner is involved in assisting the family in determining and developing strengths and identifying needs. Your Family Partner provides one home visit per week per family lasting a minimum of an hour and a half, on a regularly scheduled day and time. You and your Family Partner form a partnership and work closely together to address your concerns. Together you develop activities to use with your child to foster readiness skill, language development, physical growth and good health and safety practices, as well as problem solving skills, a positive self-image and a sense of self-worth.

Home visits are not conducted with baby-sitters or temporary care givers.



## **RECRUITMENT/ ENROLLMENT/APPLICATION**

Information regarding the UAB Early Head Start Program is distributed via word of mouth, brochures and pamphlets to area Health Departments, the Department of Human Resources, area drug treatment facilities including Olivia's House and Pearson Hall, and any other community partners that serve families with very young children. In St. Clair County, The Children's Place continues to be a valuable community partner, referring families to our program and participating in a yearly joint socialization with shared families. The brochures and pamphlets instruct interested families to call the main office number for more information and/or to inquire about services. Additionally, staff members periodically inform/update personnel at potential referral agencies so that they can refer appropriate families to our program for services.

When a family is interested in receiving UAB Early Head Start Program services, they are asked to complete a UAB Early Head Start Program Recruitment Form and provide documentation of their family's income. Additionally, a copy of each family member's social security card and Medicaid card is needed, as well as a copy of the birth certificate for each child under the age of three. Upon completion, the Recruitment Form is reviewed by the Program Manager to verify that the family qualifies for services. Upon verification, a Priority Checklist is completed by either the Program or Office Manager to assess where the family will be placed on the waiting list (once the program is at full enrollment).

When openings become available, families are selected from the waiting list based on a priority rating. The primary caregiver is then contacted to determine if the family is still interested in participating in the UAB Early Head Start Program. If interested, an appointment is scheduled for the family to come in to the UAB Early Head Start Program office to complete the enrollment process- At that time, families will be asked to bring any documentation that has not already been provided in the application process (which may be proof of income, birth certificates, Medicaid and social security cards.)

During this time, families will also have an opportunity to meet several staff members while they complete additional paperwork. In addition to demographic and consent forms, the following measures may also be completed: Quality of Life, Family Environment Scale, Family Resource Scale, Perline Self Mastery, and Perceived Stress questionnaire. During this time, the developmental screening can be completed with each focus child and families will receive a copy of the Parent Handbook.

## SOCIALIZATIONS

In a home-based program, parent(s) and children join together several times during the month to meet other families in the program. Each socialization lasts for about two hours. Group socializations allow children and parents to interact with others, using age appropriate activities; to participate in group discussions on such topics as safety, nutrition and parenting; and to develop new skills through arts and crafts. The four monthly socializations in Jefferson County take place in the UAB Early Head Start Program playroom. You are assigned to a socialization based on your family partners. An additional socialization is held at the Prescott Community Center in Cook Springs to accommodate our St. Clair County families. All socializations are generally held at 11:00 a.m. In addition, we have a yearly Meal of Thanks in November, a Winter Carnival in December and a Transition Socialization in July.

## PARENTING CLASSES

At Early Head Start we recognize parents and guardians as the children's most important teachers. We also recognize how hard a job parenting can be. That is why we offer an opportunity for parents and guardians to meet together to talk about the challenges of raising children and to get tips and to learn tools to deal with these challenges.

**Jefferson County** parenting meetings:

**When:** Thursdays at 10:00 before your scheduled socialization.

**Where:** UAB Early Head Start Program playroom

**St. Clair County** parenting meetings take place as part of socialization meetings.

**Where:** Prescott Community Center in Cook Springs

**Walker County** parenting meetings take place at 9:00 a.m. right before PIPA meetings.

## FATHERS

At the UAB Early Head Start Program, we value the roles our fathers play in the lives of their children. Fathers are welcome and encouraged to participate in all aspects of our program, including home visits, socializations, Policy Council, Parents In Partnership Association and as volunteers.

## **PIPA**

PIPA stands for Parents In Partnership Association. Every parent (mother and father) in the UAB Early Head Start Program is an active member. PIPA meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the UABEHSP playroom. PIPA is designed to get the parents prepared to be advocates for their children in the school system. In addition, PIPA decides on activities for families during the school year. PIPA is the parents' voice in the program.

## **POLICY COUNCIL**

Policy Council is a group that works in partnership with key management staff of the UAB Early Head Start Program. This group is made up of Community Representatives and parents of children enrolled in the program. More than half of the Council's members must be parents of currently enrolled children. Parents are elected each year and serve one-year terms. No parent may serve more than three one-year terms.





# MONTHLY CALENDAR AND NEWSLETTER

Please read and save the Monthly Calendar and the Newsletter. The calendar will be mailed to you at the beginning of each month and will contain important dates such as Parent Committee meetings, Policy Council meetings and socializations. In addition to these dates, the newsletter will contain valuable information about our Early Head Start Program as well as games you can play with your children, articles on health and tips on safety in the home. Frequently, there will be a special section called "Families Sharing with Families" in which you can submit your favorite recipes or helpful hints you would like to share with other families

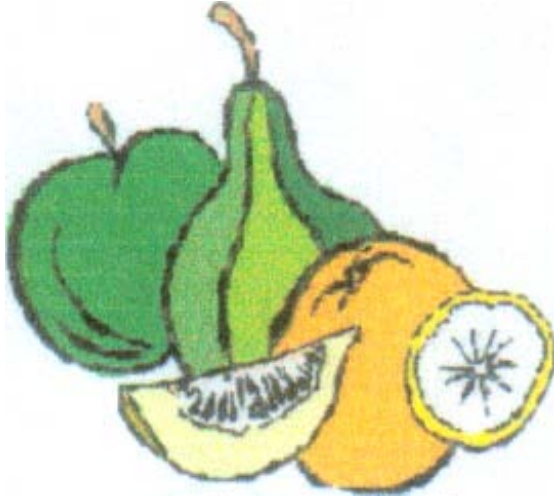


# HEALTH

Early Head Start emphasizes the importance of early identification of health problems, which, if undetected, or untreated, might cause learning difficulties. We want to ensure that **every** child has access to comprehensive health care services through local pediatricians, health departments and dental clinics.

We work, closely with the child's primary physician to monitor such areas as immunization, growth and development, vision and hearing screenings. We also work closely with community providers of Dental and Nutrition to ensure the child's well being.



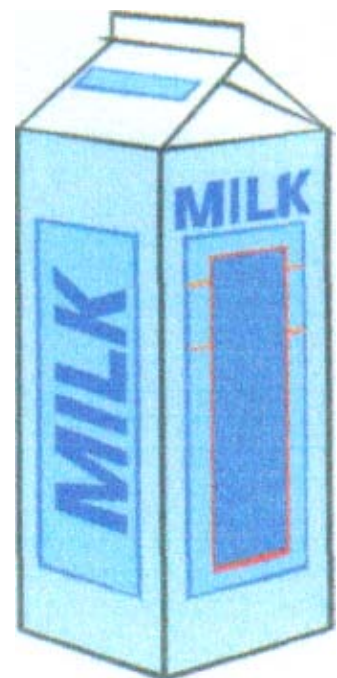


## NUTRITION

**The Nutrition Service area of Early Head Start is concerned with making sure the nutritional needs of the child are met. The UAB Early Head Start program Health Coordinator will work closely with a Registered Dietitian, your Family Partner and your child's primary physician to assist you with the following:**

- \* Any instructions from the child's physician relating to special diet and feeding
- \* Breast milk
- \* Formula type
- \* Schedule for introducing solid foods and new foods
- \* Food consistency
- \* Food likes and dislikes
- \* Food allergies
- \* Introduction of cups and utensils

At socializations, we try to introduce new foods to families and to encourage nutritious eating habits.



## **MENTAL HEALTH**

Children grow and develop rapidly during the infant and toddler years. Early Head Start is concerned with the total development of each child. The Mental Health portion of Early Head Start focuses on the promotion of each child's positive self-worth, respect for individual differences, and the ability to play, love, learn, and work within the home, school and other environments. These all fit together to form the foundation of a mentally healthy person.

The overall goal of Early Head Start is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children. Our staff works toward this goal by following these objectives:

- Enhancing the understanding by staff and parents of child growth and development.
- Supporting Mental Health activities by staff and parents which are matched to children's needs and abilities.
- Assisting all children in the program with their emotional, cognitive, and social development.
- Providing services to maximize the full potential of children with disabilities or special needs.
- Ensuring the prevention and early identification of problems that may interfere with a child's development.
- Serving as a link for staff and parents in obtaining and/or providing counseling and other resources.

Children develop best when cared for by a strong, confident parent(s) or guardian(s). Therefore, the UAB Early Head Start program is also concerned with supporting your Mental Health needs. Our Family Support Coordinator is available at all times to answer questions and to provide referrals for any who are interested.

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

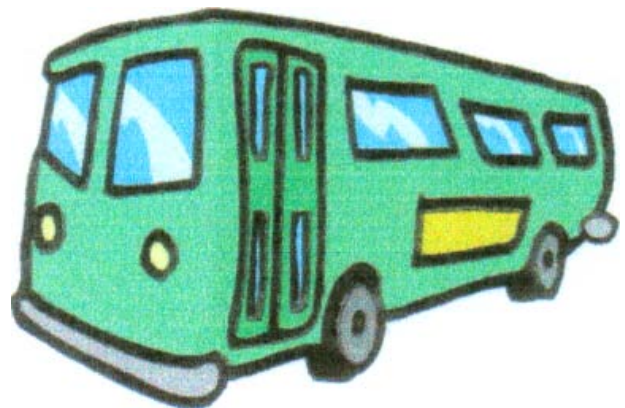
We always want our children to be safe; therefore, we offer tips that you can share with them on a regular basis to help them remember:

- Do not cross the street alone if you're younger than 10 years.
- Stop at the curb before crossing the street.
- Walk, don't run, across the street.
- Cross at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing.
- Walk facing traffic.
- Make sure drivers see you before crossing in front of them.
- Do not play in driveways, streets, parking lots or unfenced yards by the street.
- Wear white clothing or reflectors when walking at night.
- Cross at least 10 feet in front of school bus.



# TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided to UAB Early Head Start Program families on an "as needed" basis for Policy Council/Parent Committee meetings, socializations, developmental assessments and other necessary appointments. This includes bus tokens and taxi fares.



## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

Children of all abilities grow up together as participating members of our community and society. Our Early Head Start Program and nationally Head Start has an open enrollment policy for all children, including children with disabilities. Our program believes that all children should have the opportunity to develop skills, to appreciate similarities, and to understand and accept individual differences. To achieve these goals, our Early Head Start Program provides the following services to families and children with disabilities:

- \* Assist families in meeting the needs of their children
- \* Help to identify children in the program who may have special needs and could benefit from Early Intervention services. Make referrals to appropriate agencies.
- \* Build a collaborative partnership with specialists, parents, and service providers to plan and coordinate services for children's development.
- \* Build connections with families in the community.
- \* Work with families and the Alabama Early Intervention (AEIS) or Local Education Agencies (LEA) to develop children's Individualized Family Service Plans (ISFP) or Individualized Education Programs (IEP).
- \* Provide resources and educational support for families
- \* Assist families with the transition process from Part C services with Early Intervention to Part B Preschool services.



## **STAFF DIRECTORY**

Fred Biasini, Ph.D. – Program Director

Dalia Abrams – Mental Health/Parenting Coordinator

Daphne Arnold – Health Coordinator

Robin Burkett – Administrative Assistant/Health Assistant

LaTanya Dawson – Parent Involvement Coordinator/Family Partner

Vanessa Ephraim – Family Partner

Renee Fisher – Family Partner

Vikki Forte – Family Partner Team Leader

Kristi Guest, Ph.D. – Disabilities Coordinator

Eleanor McFall – Family Partner

Carmenlita Morris – Office Service Specialist

Cassandra Munoz – Family Partner (Bi-lingual)

Jane Reilly – Program Administrator/Family Partner/Soc. Coordinator

Pamela Robinson – Family Partner

Kimberly Sharkins – Education Coordinator/Walker County Coordinator





# APPENDICES



