

Welcome and thank you for choosing Penquis Head Start! We would like to make the transition as easy and positive as possible for your family and we understand that you may have questions. Here is some information on what you can expect:

For Your 3-5-Year-Old Child:

- Each day as your child arrives at the center, they will be greeted by the teachers. Your child will have a special place to put their belongings such as a back pack, jacket, etc. You will sign your child in and out of the center.
- Your child's safety is our first priority. Our teachers implement Active Supervision strategies to keep every child safe and well-supervised at all times. Children must stay with an adult at all times. Please help us keep your child safe by holding their hand when walking into the building.
- Classroom time will include many fun and developmentally appropriate activities every day. Children will have opportunities to participate in a variety of learning centers throughout the classroom.

Learning centers may include:

- Sand & water tables
- Music & movement
- Blocks & building
- Dolls, housekeeping & dramatic play
- Art & easel-painting
- Math & Science
- Play dough and modeling clay
- Books & story time
- Table toys
- Classrooms will have a daily "Morning Meeting". This is relaxed time when the children and teachers sit together to discuss the day. They may talk about the weather, the day's activities, and the books and toys that will be shared in the classroom that day. Most classrooms have a daily job chart, and children have the opportunity to be a "helper" such as a door holder, line leader, table setter, and weather reporter.
- Each day, the teachers will take the children outside to play on the playground or go for a walk in the neighborhood.
- Each day, the teachers and children will eat a nutritious, family-style meal together. Over time, the children will learn how to set and clear the table, pour milk, scoop food onto their plate, and use utensils. We provide the food for these meals.
- Each afternoon, children will have the opportunity to rest for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. Children will be provided with a rest mat or cot and sheet. Children who choose not to rest will be provided with alternate quiet activities to work on such as books or puzzles.
- Every classroom will focus on health and safety. Teachers help children learn how to wash their hands, brush their teeth, use the toilet, cover their coughs and sneezes, and use a tissue to blow their nose. Please do not worry if your child cannot currently perform any of these tasks. It is a learning process!
- The classroom curriculum will be posted every week so you will know what is scheduled to take place each day.
- During the course of the year, developmental screenings in the areas of education, hearing, vision, and nutrition will be provided for your child in an effort to ensure that your individual child's strengths are built upon and that appropriate supports are provided, as needed.

- As a parent, you are welcome at the center. We have an open-door policy, and we encourage parents to visit the classroom and talk to the teachers. *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Public Health requirements there may be times we need to limit the number of non-staff adults in classrooms for the safety of children and staff. Please talk to center staff if you have any questions.

For Your Family:

At Penquis Head Start, we know that being a parent is the most important and rewarding job in the world, but at times it can also be the most challenging. We respect the wonderful differences that make every family unique and special. We know that every family's needs are different. Please let us know how we can best support your family.



- Penquis staff has access to many resources for your whole family. We can provide information and support to families who have questions about budgeting and finances, employment, education, healthy food and lifestyle choices, housing, and much more.
- Penquis staff can also help your family connect with other community supports such as WIC, LIHEAP (fuel assistance), Community Care, Lynx Transportation, etc.
- We understand how important health and well-being is to every family. Our staff can help your family find a provider for health care, dental care, and counseling. Staff will also assist your family in obtaining and tracking your children's immunizations, medical, and dental care and will partner with your family around any follow up needed.
- It is important for your child to attend school each day for optimal learning and school readiness. If challenges arise that interfere with regular attendance, please reach out to staff for support in problem solving and exploring possible resources.

Things You Can Do to Help Your Child Get Ready for Head Start:

- **Talk with your child.** You can help make your child's transition a little easier by telling them what to expect, talking to them about their new teachers, and even showing them where the center is.
- **Read to your child.** It is the single most important thing you can do to help your child succeed in school. Make reading together part of your daily routine.
- **Encourage healthy habits.** Research shows that regular sleeping times, healthy eating habits, and physical exercise are critical for student success.
- **Monitor television viewing, computer use, and video game playing.** Set limits on time spent watching TV, using the computer, and playing video games.
- **Praise your child.** Provide consistent, encouraging words to help motivate young children.

Children Who Are Physically Healthy Are Ready to Learn:

- **Current Physical Exam:** Please be sure your child is on track with well-child visits and immunizations, an up to date physical exam will be required for our records.
 - **Lead and Anemia:** blood test results will be required to be on file for our records (test results after age two). Please obtain blood testing from your pediatrician, if there is no record of testing at age two or over. Our centers may offer on-site screenings for those without prior blood testing.
- **Current Dental Exam:** Oral Health is important for overall health and wellness, if your child has not had an exam with a dentist, please schedule an appointment today. A dental exam and cleaning or fluoride application will be required for our records. Staff can help you find a provider if you need assistance.

We look forward to partnering with you and your family!

