

Mental Health Recovery Plan

POLICY:

Each Head Start classroom will have an emergency/disaster preparedness plan in the event of fire, earthquake, severe storm, or other natural disaster. They will practice safety drills for fire, natural disasters, bus evacuation, and pedestrian safety. (*also see: Crisis Management Manual*)

This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1304.22(a); 1304.53; 1310.21

RATIONALE:

Ensure that social services and mental health support are available to all students and staff in the Head Start setting and integrate this support into other Head Start programs.

Staff and students who function well socially and emotionally are apt to perform better academically. Part of Head Starts educational mission is to promote social and emotional functioning as an important component of school readiness.

PROCEDURE:

Activities include, but not limited to:

1. Engage in behavioral health promotion to enhance day-to-day mental and behavioral functioning and promote resilience following crisis, emergencies or disasters.
2. Teachers will plan learning activities, discussions and demonstrations that will increase children's knowledge and prepare them to respond safely in an emergency situation. These activities, discussions and demonstrations will be included and documented in the lesson plans.
3. Develop, disseminate and utilize wellness information from newsletters, staff bulletins, handouts, program activities, behavioral health educational, and guidance materials.
4. Child & Family Wellness Coordinator and/or Mental Health Consultant will utilize Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and/or Psychological First Aid (PFA).
 - A. MHFA is similar to Red Cross First Aid in that the goal is to quickly triage, put a "bandage" on an injury, and then refer for professional intervention. MHFA provides lay/community individuals to identify risk factors, warning signs, and symptoms for a range of mental health problems, including comorbidity with substance use disorders. It provides understanding of the impact and prevalence of mental health problems; and provides an overview of common support and treatment resources for those with a mental health problem.
 - B. PFA is an evidence-informed approach that is built on the concept of human resilience. PFA aims to reduce stress symptoms and assist in a healthy recovery following a traumatic event, natural disaster, public health emergency, or even a personal crisis. Its interventions provided in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to assist victims and/or responders become emotionally and psychologically stabilized after the event.
5. Secure mental health services for children and staff members, as needed.