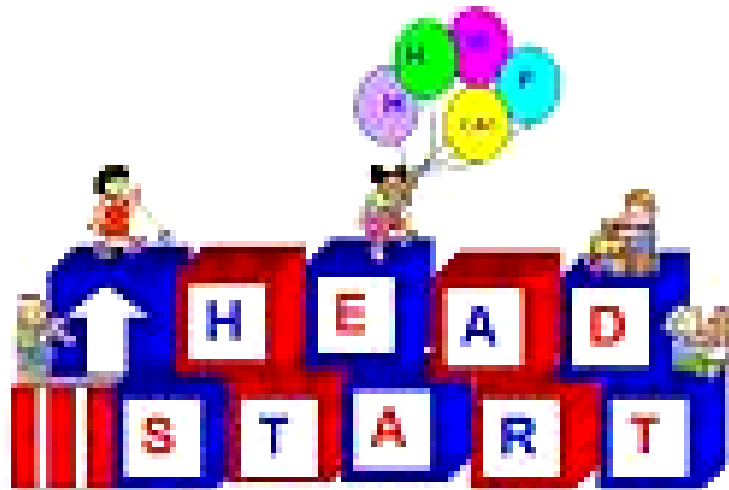


**Greater East Texas Community Action Program, Inc.**

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**Head Start  
Child Development Center  
Parent Handbook**



*Nacogdoches, Crockett, Trinity, Groveton, Huntsville,  
San Jacinto, Kennard, Etoile and Central Heights*

## **Welcome to our Program!**

Welcome! Our staff is looking forward to working with both you and your child during the Program Year.

Below you will find information that will assist you in becoming better acquainted with the Greater East Texas Community Action Program (GETCAP) Head Start. If you have any suggestions, questions, comments, or concerns with any of the policies and procedures, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, your Caseworker, Social Service Specialist, or the Education Coordinator. Parents will be notified prior to the effective date of any changes to our policies and procedures. Providing our children with the best quality services will take the cooperation of parents, staff, and community partners. Parents are encouraged to visit the center at any time during the centers hours of operation to observe their child, the center's operations, and program activities without having to secure prior approval. Before a child can be considered for enrollment all required documentation must be submitted.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the GETCAP Head Start is to provide comprehensive services to improve the quality of life for children and families.

### **Hours**

The center is open five days a week from 7:45a.m. until 3:45 p.m.(Monday-Thursday) and 7:45a.m. until 2 p.m. on Fridays with the exception of holidays and in service days "please see attached calendar". GETCAP Head Start is licensed to care for children whose ages are 6 weeks through five (5) years of age. There is no fee for this service.



### **What is Head Start?**

Greater East Texas Community Action Program began sponsoring Nacogdoches Head Start in 1968 under the Economic Opportunity Act, "War on Poverty".

The program was designed to provide pre-school children from economically and socially disadvantaged families with a "head start" on their formal education.

This was to be achieved by implementing a comprehensive child development program that provides for the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth of children. The program has been successful in closing the gap between children from low-income families and children from higher income brackets as they enter public school systems.

GETCAP Head Start is a community-based program providing educational, medical, dental, nutritional, and social services to the children who are enrolled. The program for three and four-year-olds is funded to operate nine months out of the year (August-May). The Early Head Start program is funded to operate year-round and serves low income, at-risk, infants, toddlers and their families.

Head Start involves the parents and families of these children in a variety of activities in and related to the center and provides a Literacy Program to address parents' educational objectives.

GETCAP Head Start is funded by the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF); a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, United States Government. The Head Start provides comprehensive services to 680 children in Nacogdoches, Groveton, Crockett, Trinity, Huntsville and Coldspring. There are also Head Start classes located in the Nacogdoches, Crockett, Coldspring, Kennard, Etoile, Groveton, and Central Heights school districts. Early Head Start program is located in Nacogdoches and Crockett only.

The programs are "center-based", in which children spend at least six hours daily in the center for a total learning experience.

Ten percent (10 %) of the available enrollment slots are made available for children with special needs.

Ninety percent (90 %) of available enrollment slots are reserved for children whose family incomes are at or below the guidelines established by ACYF each year.

### **Confidentiality**

Information is gathered so that Head Start can completely understand the needs for your child/family and work together to meet those needs. All information obtained from you is completely confidential. Except for your local school district, records will only be

sent to another agency with written permission from the parent/guardian. At the end of your child/ren's enrollment in the Head Start program, records are locked and maintained for 1 year, then destroyed.

### **Department of Family & Protective Services**

[www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us)

Representative for Nacogdoches: Scott Sadler. He is housed in the Lufkin office:

1210 Chestnut

**Lufkin ,Texas 75901**

and his work number is

(936)676-0146

A copy of our most recent childcare services licensing report is posted in each center.

Parents are welcome to review any of our policies and procedures and Texas Day Care Minimum Standards at any time.



## Centers

**Sponsoring Agency:**  
**Greater East Texas Community  
Action Program Office;**  
114 W. Hospital, Nacogdoches, TX  
75961  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 631938,  
Nacogdoches, TX 75963-1938  
(936) 564-2491 FAX (936) 564-0302

**Nacogdoches County**  
**Charlotte Weaver Stokes Complex**  
Center: 1902 Old Tyler Road,  
Nacogdoches, TX 75964  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 631938,  
Nacogdoches, TX 75963  
(936) 564-1142 FAX (936) 564-1558

**Nacogdoches Early Head Start**  
Center: 1902 Old Tyler Road,  
Nacogdoches, TX 75964  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 631939  
Nacogdoches, TX 75963  
(936) 462-8411

**Central Heights ISD**

**Etoile ISD**

## **Houston County**

**Crockett Head Start**  
Center: 435 Texas Street  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 822,  
Crockett, TX 75835  
(936) 544-2109 Fax: (936) 544-5058

**Crockett Early Head Start**  
Center: 435 Texas Street  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 822,  
Crockett, TX 75835  
(936) 544-8995 Fax: (936) 544-7023

## **Kennard ISD & Crockett ISD**

### **Trinity County**

**Trinity Head Start**  
Center: 808 MLK  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 15, Trinity,  
TX 75862  
(936) 594-2929 Fax: (936) 594-2651

### **Groveton ISD**

### **Walker County**

**Huntsville Head Start**  
Center: 125 FM 980  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 719  
Huntsville, TX 77342  
(936) 291-9190 Fax: (936) 291-9244

### **San Jacinto County**

**San Jacinto County Head Start**  
**Center: 941 Slade Street**  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10  
Coldspring, TX 77331  
(936) 653-3336 Fax: (936) 653-4980

San Jacinto ISD

## Grievance Procedure

If a parent or community member feels a Head Start staff person has treated them unfairly or in a disrespectful manner, he/she may implement the following grievance procedure.

Complaints should be first brought to the individual staff person with whom the parent or community member has an issue (e.g. classroom teacher, bus driver, etc.). Parent complaints should be referred to the Case worker if the complaint does not involve the Case

worker. If the complaint involves the Case worker, the complaint should be referred to the Social Services Specialist.

If the parent or community member is dissatisfied with the recommended resolution of the issue, the following steps should be taken:

1. Present, in writing, the reason and circumstances surrounding the specific incident to the Social Services Specialist. The Social Services Specialist will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of written notification.
2. If unresolved in Step One, the complaint can then be sent to the Head Start Director. The Head Start Director will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of written notification.
3. If unresolved in Step Two, the complaint can be sent to the Head Start Policy Council. The Policy Council will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the parent or community member.
4. If unresolved in Step three, the complaint can then be sent to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of action.
5. If unresolved in step four, the complaint can then be sent to the Executive Board. The Executive Board will attempt to resolve the grievance. The Executive Director and the Executive Board will have the final say.



(SUBJECT TO VARIATIONS IN EACH CLASSROOM AND CENTER)

7:45	Earliest time child can be dropped off
7:45 – 8:30	Greetings, Limited Center Activities, Restroom, & Wash hands
8:30 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – 9:20	Group Time
9:20 – 10:30	Choice Time & Small Groups
10:20 – 10:30	Clean-up & Restroom
10:30 – 11:15	Outside Play
11:15 – 11:30	Read Aloud/Prepare for Lunch, Restroom & Wash hands
11:30 – 12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 1:30	Tooth brushing/Quiet Time, Restroom & Wash hands
1:30 – 1:45	Clean-up/Music & Movement/Group Time, Restroom & Wash hands
1:45 – 2:15	Snack time

2:15 – 2:45 Time	Limited Choice
2:45 – 3:00	Read Aloud, Restroom & Wash hands
3:00 – 3:30	Outside play
3:30 – 3:45 (inside) /Departure	Combine classes

**Schedule Subject to Change**

***ALL CHILDREN MUST BE PICKED UP BY 3:45 P.M. (Monday-Thursday) and by 2p.m. Friday EACH DAY!***

**Parent Committee and Policy Group Participation**

You will have an opportunity to serve in the following capacities:

1. Parent Committee: This committee is set up at the local center level and is composed of all parents with children enrolled in the Head Start (HS)/Early Head Start (EHS) Program. As a Head Start/EHS parent you automatically become a member of this committee.
2. Head Start Policy Council: This group is set up at the agency level and is composed of at least 51% parents, plus community representatives. The parents are elected from the local parent groups.
3. Board of Directors: This is the grantee agency for the operation of the Head Start Program. The agency has an 18-member Board of Directors, including one member from the Policy Council.

4. Parent Nutrition Committee – Parents will serve on the Parent Nutrition Committee to assist in reviewing and commenting on the nutrition service program.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

You are encouraged to volunteer or visit the center at any time to show support to the Head Start Program and your child. This will give you a better understanding of what the program is doing for your child(ren) and the kinds of home assistance that will be required to better meet his/her needs. Your participation will also show your depth of concern for his/her education. Additionally, this will provide the staff the opportunity to know you better and an opportunity to learn from you.

Recognizing that some parents are unable to physically volunteer in the center, opportunities will also be provided for you to take part in volunteer activities outside of the center. More information on the volunteer program may be obtained from the Director, the Social Services Coordinator or The Executive Assistance.

**Special Services**

GETCAP Head Start makes it possible for children with special needs to be identified early in the program year. Each child is screened in the areas of speech and language, cognitive and hearing skills, motor skills and social emotional development.

GETCAP Head Start, Community Partners, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and Local Education Agencies (LEA) affirm the right of all children to a free and appropriate education regardless of type or severity of disability as indicated by the IFSP/IEP. The duties and responsibilities of each party are to ensure that children, who live in the ECI/LEAs district, whether served by Head Start or jointly by the LEA and Head Start, will receive all services as required by the IEP.

1. Head Start staff will complete a variety screenings for each child within 45 days of enrollment.
2. If a child's screening results in a referral, the Caseworker will obtain a parental consent form to enable the child to receive a formal evaluation.
3. After evaluation, if child is found to need further services, an IFSP/IEP meeting will be scheduled to determine placement and services that are needed.
4. Local Education Agencies and ECI will employ certified staff to provide services to children who are found eligible for special services, and as needed training to Head Start staff will be provided.

### **Severe Weather Conditions**

Head Start/EHS classes abide by the public districts decision to keep schools open or to close them. Please tune into your local radio or television broadcast. If your local school district cancels school, then your Head Start/EHS classes will also be cancelled.

### **Change of Contact Information**

If you plan to move, please inform your caseworker of your new address. Also, please keep your caseworker informed of changes to your current telephone number, emergency contact numbers, or if you would like to change any other information (such as persons authorized to pick up your child). We will be communicating with our parents via e-mail, text messaging, Remind 101, Facebook, etc

### **Attendance**

The Head Start/EHS program believes in the benefits of regular attendance. For children and families, regular attendance helps to establish a pattern that will assist the family in meeting their obligations when they are enrolled in the public school system and later in life. Young children are at their best when following a routine and know what to expect.

If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call your caseworker or send a note as soon as possible. If your child rides the bus, let the center know by 1:00 p.m. if your child will not be riding. If your child is able to return on the next regular day, please send a note so that the staff will know what happened. If your child misses school and we have not heard from you, a staff member will contact you.

If your child is out 3 times, parent must meet with the caseworker. Continual absenteeism without a documented reason may result in your child being dropped from the program. We do not wish to drop any child from the program; however, there is a waiting list of children who would like to attend school and who are willing to attend sessions on a regular basis.

### **Release of Children**

Children are released only to persons authorized by written permission from the parents. Parents should provide the center staff with a listing of authorized adults. Before the child is released, the designated person will be required to show a picture I.D. No child will be released to an unauthorized person.

Any person picking up a child in an impaired condition (ill or under the influence of drugs or alcohol) will be encouraged to allow us to find alternative transportation.

### **Child Custody Issues**

It is the intent to meet the needs of children, especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as a divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to the center staff and will remain strictly confidential.

The center cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up, unless the center has been furnished with legally filed, executed and current documents. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to the center. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

### **Transportation**

**\*Early Head Start DOES NOT provide Transportation\***

*Head Start Transportation is very limited. Transportation to the Head Start center is provided only to those children with no transportation, or transportation issues. No bus services will be provided for children with adequate means of transportation. Families that are found with adequate transportation will be denied bus services or dropped from the bus route.*

Children designated to ride the bus must ride everyday, unless issues permit.



Written permission is obtained from parents/guardians for a child to participate in water activities and field trips. A notification will be sent out to parents if animals are or will be present at the center.



## Meals

Nutritional needs and requirements are met by serving a variety of healthy foods, which are adequate in all nutrients. Meals are funded by USDA. USDA guidelines are followed to ensure each child gets 2/3 of the daily requirements (breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack).

Children are not to bring food from home. No homemade or home baked foods can be allowed due to health concerns.

### Policy for Children Requiring Medically Based Diets or Special Dietary Requirements

1. Children who have certified medical or special dietary needs will be served appropriate substitutions. This includes children with food intolerance(s).

2. The parent/guardian of the child must provide a licensed medical authority's signed statement that includes the following:

- The medical or special dietary need that restricts the child's diet.
- The major life activity affected by the disability.
- The foods that must not be served to the child.
- The foods that must be substituted.

3. The special diet Instruction Form and Notification to parent Form will be used to obtain specific special diet information needed from the child's medical doctor, as stated in the policy on special diets.



Breast feeding mothers have the right and are encouraged to come to the program setting to feed their children when possible. The program will provide a comfortable place with a seat that enables a mother to breastfeed her child.

### Clothing and Individual Supplies

Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. Many of your child's favorite activities may tend to be a little messy. Clothing and shoes should be easy for children to take off and put on during toileting. The children go outside every day (unless it is raining), so dress them accordingly. Closed-toed shoes are **required** for safety reasons. Please no boots because they are very slick on the bottom.

You will need to provide the center with a complete change of clothes (with name printed on each item) and a towel for naptime.

### Bringing Items from Home

Please check with your child's teacher first before sending or bringing objects to the center.

The center does not allow toys of violence like guns, swords, or violent action figures. Also, children will not be allowed to bring cosmetics, candy, or gum to the center. The program will not be liable for theft or damage to child's clothing or jewelry.

### Field Trips

Occasionally, educational field trips are taken during the year. You will be notified regarding field trips by posted notice at least two days prior to the field trip. You are invited and encouraged to participate in the field trips with the children.

### Administering Medication

The agency encourages that all medication be administered outside of center operational hours. When medication needs to be administered, the center will only do so with a written permission form. Any medication brought by parents for their child must be:

- 1) in an original container
- 2) labeled with the child's name
- 3) labeled with the date
- 4) include directions to administer the medication
- 5) include the name of the physician prescribing the medication

### Illness

One of the most serious challenges facing group care situations for young children is preventing illness. The staff will strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness. Proper hand washing procedures will be followed and taught to the children.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. We need your support for this. Do not bring ill children to the center and if your child becomes ill at the center, please ensure that the child is picked up immediately.

Classroom Staff will perform a visual check of each child upon arrival, and touch the child to check for fever. This should be done before the parent or guardian leaves so that a child who appears to be ill or injured can be taken home or to the doctor/clinic as

appropriate. This routine should be accomplished in a non-threatening manner (i.e. greeting games can be used).

According to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, children cannot attend the center if one or more of the following conditions exist:

The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities.

The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.

The child has any one of the following:

a. Armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater or temporal temperature of 100.4 or greater.

b. Vomiting (more than one time in last 24 hours).

c. Diarrhea (more than one time in last 24 hours).

d. A sore, red throat, even if no fever is present.

e. An earache.

f. A deep, hacking cough.

g. Severe congestion.

h. Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing (Contact Doctor immediately)

i. An unexplained rash.

j. Complains of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms (Contact Doctor immediately)

k. Thick green drainage from the nose.

l. Red eyes with discharge or crusting.

m. An unusual yellow coloring to the skin or eyes (Contact Doctor

Immediately)

n. Blister opening on the skin that is puss-filled or oozing.

o. Lice or nits (all nits must be removed, refer to Head Lice Policy).

p. Any other symptoms and signs of possible severe illness. Please refer to the Head Start Communicable Disease



### **Health Service Follow-up Policy**

- When health staff members receive physician/dentist recommendations for follow-up services, staff will notify the parents/guardians about the recommended follow-up services and educate the parents/guardians regarding what the follow-up consists of. If necessary a staffing will be held with the family service worker, health staff, and provider to relieve any concerns and complete the education process.
- Parents/guardians will be given one week from the time they are notified
- to make an appointment for the follow-up services.
- If the parents/guardians do not make the appointment in the allotted time, they will be asked to come into the health office to gain assistance with making the appointment. If the parent/guardian refuses to go to the health office and schedule the appointment, a staffing will be held to identify any concerns or barriers the parent may still have about the appointment.
- Health staff and/or the family service worker will coordinate transportation and/or translation services when necessary.
- Parents will bring records of the visit to the health staff the next school day after the appointment.
- If the health staff person does not receive confirmation that the child attended the appointment by the end of the next school day, health staff or family service worker will call or visit the parent.
- If the parent did not show up for the appointment, a staffing will be held to identify any barriers that kept the parent from keeping the appointment.

- A new appointment will be made at the time of the staffing.
- A staff member will accompany the parent to the second appointment.
- If the parent denies the follow-up services, a decline of referral and/or special services form will be completed. If the denied follow-up service is potentially medical neglect, the family will be referred to the local Child Protective Services Agency.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

The center staff and parents are trained annually to identify the signs, symptoms, and methods for prevention of abuse and neglect. If at anytime designated staff/parents suspects abuse and/or neglect child protective services should be notified. The center is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect. This information is discussed at our annual staff training and our annual parent orientation meeting.

To report an emergency, call 911. To report child abuse or neglect, call 1-800-252-5400 or use secure website: <https://www.txabusehotline.org> . Other states may use: (512) 834-3784 to report abuse or neglect that has occurred in Texas.

# Head Start is a Circle of friends



*that care about you!*

## **Discipline and Guidance Policy**

### **Policy**

GETCAP Head Start is committed to providing strategies towards social competence, which includes children developing the ability to self-regulate behavior. GETCAP Head Start staff will ensure the social/emotional well being of children while providing discipline and guidance in developmentally appropriate manners. GETCAP Head Start staff will not use any form of corporal punishment.

### **Procedure**

- Staff will provide a safe, structured environment where children experience success.

- Staff will regularly monitor the classroom arrangement to ensure the promotion of ease of movement, large play spaces, small play spaces and quiet areas.
- Staff will plan the environment to develop pro-social behaviors.
- Staff will be vigilant and proactive in recognizing possible triggers for inappropriate behaviors.
- Staff will be clear and consistent in expectations that are developmentally appropriate.
- Staff will allow children to help create positive classroom environment by setting rules and monitoring rules.
- Staff will praise to recognize appropriate behavior.
- Staff will use opportunities to teach positive social skills through direct teaching and modeling appropriate behavior.
- Staff will adhere to schedules and routines to promote predictability and security for children.

- Staff will be respectful and supportive of cultures, genders, languages, ethnicity, and family composition of all children.
- Staff will interact with children in a positive, friendly, and socially supportive manner modeling pro-social behaviors with each other and the children.
- Staff will provide immediate intervention when behaviors are dangerous to the child or others.
- Staff will redirect children towards positive behaviors when the child's behavior is inappropriate.

Please discuss with your child's teacher specific guidance techniques that work best with your child. Food will not be used as a punishment. You will be notified immediately if your

child's behavior is potentially harmful to himself/herself, other children and/or staff, or property

**There will be limitations on suspension and expulsion due to a child's behavior.**

**Suspensions and/or expulsions will be used only as a last resort in extra ordinary circumstances where there is a safety threat to anyone.**

### **GETCAP Head Start School Readiness Goals**

The curriculum goals address each developmental area of children from birth to five while ensuring developmentally appropriate practices that take into consideration the child's temperament, rate of development, home language, family structure, and ethnic diversity. The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the

environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give children a successful start. All elements work towards the overarching goals:

- *Head Start Children will be healthy and increase their knowledge and skills to make healthy choices.*
- *Head Start children will possess a confident self – identity, the ability to regulate their own behavior and the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships.*
- *Head Start children will develop the curiosity and confidence to identify, address and solve problems in a variety of developmentally appropriate ways.*
- *Head Start children will develop the ability to express their ideas,*

*observations and feelings and understand the ideas, observations and feelings of others.*

- *Head Start children will develop skills and abilities to use reasoning and problem solving to understand, classify, and assimilate information, situations, and concepts.*

GETCAP Head Starts and Early Head Start understand that a child is a complex human being consisting of many attributes and aspects. We will provide opportunities for the child to grow and develop in each of the areas to address the needs of the “whole child”.

The curriculum is governed by a process of planning, implementing, and evaluating. It is individualized and ever changing. By observing and interacting with the children, teachers develop the use of materials, resources and opportunities to foster the learning of each unique individual in their class. The strategies to support children's learning are developed through ongoing observations and assessment of each child. Ongoing observations and assessments provide an overall picture of each child from entry to transition from the program. GETCAP Head Start uses the data from these assessments to analyze the program's effectiveness towards meeting child outcomes. The outcomes data and analysis of the outcomes data is shared with parents, classroom staff, administrators, policy council and governing board. The outcomes data is used the plan purchases, training, monitoring, and continued assessment. It builds on the skills and knowledge that is developmentally appropriate for children

ages birth to five and also based on children's needs and interests.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

The plan outlines the responsibilities of staff members during an incident or emergency and provides guidelines for transition from normal to emergency operations. There are copies available for parents.

The safety of the children & staff is the primary consideration in planning the emergency preparedness plan. This is the policy to maintain the services and operations during any incident or emergency situation while providing for the protection of life, health, and safety for children and staff.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Fire and evacuation drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. The evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. In the event of an emergency situation that requires an evacuation of any GETCAP Head Start building, the caregiver in charge will: take an accurate attendee list, as well as the enrollment information form for each child, account for all children as they aboard and depart vehicles, bring any necessary medications/supplies and emergency records, take a cellular phone if available. Emergency responders, parents, and child care licensing will be notified, via phone, radio, and/or any other available communication. The complete emergency preparedness plan is available for parents upon request. All staff and volunteers are trained annually on emergency procedures and evacuations. The emergency preparedness plan includes procedures

for evacuating young children and children who require assistance. If your child is injured, a trained staff member will provide first aid or if your child's injuries are severe, your child will be taken to designated physician or emergency room.

If relocation is necessary the designated relocation is:

**Exposition Center:  
3805 NW Stallings Dr.  
Nacogdoches, Tx. 75964  
(936) 564-0849**

**C.L. Simon Recreation Center:  
1112 North St.  
Nacogdoches, Tx. 75961  
(936) 559-2960**

**First Baptist Church:  
411 North St  
Nacogdoches, Tx. 75961  
(936) 564-7379**

### ***New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones***

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in public or private school systems. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your child's school or copies may be provided to parents.

### ***What is a gang-free zone?***

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

***How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?***

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

***What is the purpose of gang-free zones?***

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

***The Texas Penal Codes gang-free zones:***

P.C. 71.028> HB 2086 GANG-FREE ZONES: ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND DAYCARE CENTERS MUST PUBLICIZE INFO TO STUDENTS/PARENTS/GUARDIANS  
P.C. 71.028> HB 2086 GANG-FREE ZONES-THE ZONES INCLUDE: WITHIN 1000 FEET OF ANY SCHOOL, YOUTH CENTER OR PLAYGROUND WITHIN 300 FEET OF SHOPPING MALL, MOVIE THEATER, PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL, OR VIDEO ARCADE, OR ANY SCHOOL BUS.