

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC. (RMDC)
HEAD START
RELEASING CHILDREN AND LATE PICK UP POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

POLICY: RMDC Head Start ensures the safety of all Head Start children. It is the expectation that the Head Start child's parent(s)/guardian(s) ensures pick up of their child promptly at the end of class. This Policy does not apply to Law Enforcement Officials and/or Department of Family Services (DFS) Child Protection Workers who present their identification badge (ID) credentials. Head Start staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to comply with the following Releasing Children and Late Pick up Procedure.

PROCEDURE:

Releasing Children:

- **Children will only be “released to” primary, secondary, and/or those contacts that have “release to” next to their name on the ChildPlus Report 1520 (1520). If contact only has “emergency contact” next to their name, do not release child to them.**
- Head Start staff will ask for photo ID if they are unfamiliar with the pick-up person.
- Head Start follows court documents such as Parenting Plans, Orders of Protection, and Department of Family Service's guardian/custody papers/letters.
- If there are no court orders limiting a birth parent's time with the child (Parenting Plan, Order of Protection, DFS papers) and the parent's name is on the child's birth certificate, Head Start will release the child to the parent after seeing a photo ID.
- At time of intake, a Family Advocate will retain a copy of child's birth certificate. If parent(s)/guardian(s) do not have a copy of the Birth Certificate and the child has Medicaid, Head Start Family Advocate will have parent(s)/guardian(s) sign an Office of Public Assistance (OPA) Release of Information (ROI). Parent(s)/guardian(s) goes to OPA with the ROI and photo ID to pick up a copy of certificate of live birth and returns copy to Head Start office to be placed in child's file in the Head Start office.

Late Pick up Protocol for RMDC Head Start classroom staff if a child is not picked up promptly at the end of class:

- Head Start classroom staff will remain with the Head Start child until child is picked up.
- **5 minutes** after class ends classroom staff calls primary and secondary contacts on 1520 and leaves a message if contact(s) do not answer.
- **10 minutes** after class ends classroom staff recalls primary and secondary contacts, all “release to” person(s) listed on 1520 and leaves a message if contact(s) do not answer.
- **15 minutes** after class ends classroom staff recalls primary, secondary, “release to”, and calls “emergency only” contacts and leaves a message if contact(s) do not answer. Staff calls Head Start Main Office at (406) 457-7308. Head Start office staff will make contact with available RMDC Head Start Education Coordinators, Program Operations Manager, FCP Manager, or Director for support. Manager on duty will report to the site and remain with classroom staff until the child is picked up.
- **30 minutes** after class ends classroom staff completes a Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Form and calls Division of Child & Family Services, Centralized Services (1-866-820-5437) to make a report.

If the bus arrives at the child's drop off and there is not an authorized "release to" person, the bus and office staff will do the following:

- Bus staff reports situation immediately to the Head Start Main Office, 457-7308 via bus radio or cell phone. A note is left at the child's drop-off location with the time Head Start attempted to drop off the child and bus then continues on route with the child.
- Head Start office staff immediately calls primary and secondary contacts on 1520 and leaves a message if contact(s) do not answer.
- Office staff updates bus staff regarding where to meet authorized pick-up person along the route or directs bus staff to bring child to Head Start Main Office, 200 S. Cruse Ave., Helena.
- If an authorized "release to" person cannot be contacted, the child is brought back to Head Start Main Office and office staff calls emergency contact and makes contact with available RMDC Head Start Education Coordinators, Program Operations Manager, FCP Manager, or Director for support. Manager on duty reports to Head Start Main Office and remains with bus staff until child is picked up.
- Bus staff completes a Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Form and calls Division of Child & Family Services, Centralized Services (1-866-820-5437) to make a report.