



Early Head Start
Home Based
Parent Handbook Supplement

Welcome

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Early Head Start home based program. We are excited that your family has enrolled into the program and we are looking forward to working together with you and child(ren).

Early Head Start home based program serves pregnant women and children from birth through age three providing comprehensive, individualized early education experiences to enhance a child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive development, and school readiness. Pre-natal support and education is also provided. The program strives to support parents as their child's first teacher, as well as for parents to meet their own goals, including economic independence.

Easterseals will provide Early Head Start Home Based services in the South Suburbs & South Chicago. The Home Based program serves pregnant and parenting teens, families that qualify based upon income guidelines, families that are homeless and children with disabilities.

In this parent handbook you will find more information about the program as well as important contact information.

Easterseals Home Based

Powerful research evidence tells us that the period from birth to age three is critical to healthy growth and development and to later success in school and life. The home based program provides early childhood experiences in the family's home.

The purpose of Early Head Start Home Based:

- To promote positive parent-child relationships
- To promote school readiness with goals that focus on children's physical, social emotional, cognitive and language development.
- To support parents as their children's first and most important teacher
- To promote family well-being including health and safety

What services can you expect from the Home Based Program:

- Quality early education in and out the home.
- Weekly 90 minutes home/Virtual visits
- Bi-weekly 2 hour Socializations (Family Fun Time) in an Easterseals location or virtually
- Ongoing child development screening
- Family support
- Parent education, including parent-child activities comprehensive health services, including services for pregnant women, assistance with immunization tracking and dental screening.
- Nutrition education
- Mental health services and referrals
- Ongoing support for parents through partnership development focusing on family and individual goals, referral to agencies in community to meet specific needs and peer support groups.

Home Visits

While enrolled in the home based program you will work closely with your Home Based Educator (HBE). A Home Based Educator is specifically trained in early childhood development and will assist and support you to form your child/family goals and to complete those goals.

Your Home Based Educator will provide weekly 90 minute visits totaling 46 visits a year. During the home/virtual visit the Home Based Educator should split the 90 minute visit between the child-parent activity and the family well-being portion. Home/virtual visits should be scheduled Monday - Thursday (no home/virtual visits on Fridays). The home based program wants to develop an educational routine which should happen the same day and time every week if possible. The Home Based Educator will work with families to choose a day of the week and time that would work best for the family as well as the development of the child. During the 90 minute visit you will:

- Receive information in the areas of cognitive, language, fine & large motor skills and emotional development
- Have the opportunity to discuss any parenting concerns
- Strengthen the family's knowledge on health and nutrition issues
- Observe the Home Based Educator demonstrate activities to support your child's learning while you are playing together
- Parent will have the opportunity to practice new activities with your child and receive feedback from the Home Based Educator on ways to expand your child's development through play

Home Based for Pregnant Woman

Taking care of your child starts in the womb by providing yourself with the best health care possible from the very beginning. Your Home Based Educator will provide and coordinate prenatal educational experience and will monitor prenatal and post- partum care. Pregnant women will have bi-weekly home/virtual visits for

45- 90 minutes (once the baby is born the home/virtual visits will be 90 minutes weekly). Home/Virtual visits should be scheduled Monday - Thursday (no home/virtual visits on Fridays). Two weeks after delivery an Easterseals nurse or the Health Manager, with the Home Based Educator, will conduct a home/virtual visit with the mother and child for a well-baby checkup.

Home Based Educator will discuss the following topics:

- Normal fetal development including the risk of smoking and drinking alcohol
- What to expect during labor and delivery
- Healthy pregnancy and preparation for the baby's arrival
- Nutrition education
- Breastfeeding education
- Support groups with other families
- Selection of a pediatrician

Cancellation Policy

We want to make sure that we are keeping every scheduled home/virtual visit. There can be circumstances where we need to reschedule an appointment or need to cancel. We will make sure that this will happen 24 hours in advance. All canceled visits must be made up. The Home Based Educator will ask to reschedule the home/virtual visit the same week or for the following week depending on the availability of the family. In case of an emergency it may happen that we need to cancel an appointment last minute.

If you need to cancel an appointment, we ask you to cancel at least 24 hours in advance by calling your Home Based Educator. If you can't reach your Home Based Educator, please call the home based coordinator (708)330-4541 or (872) 213-5272. We understand that in a case of an emergency or sickness, it may not be possible to cancel 24 hours in advance.

In person home visits and socializations cannot take place if your child or family members in the household are ill (possible virtual visit can take place if family/child feels up to it). You need to cancel in person home visit or socialization when your child has any of the symptoms stated below:

- Fever: temperature above 101°F
- Diarrhea: stool runs out of the diaper or child cannot get to the bathroom in time
- Vomiting: more than once in the last 24 hours
- Rash: with fever
- Infectious conjunctivitis/pink-eye until 24 hours after treatment begins
- Covid-19 Symptoms (Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea)

In person home visits and socializations can take place again when symptoms are gone, quarantine for 14 days or a health provider determines that your child or family members are well enough.

Child Health

A healthy child is a child ready for learning. It is very important to make sure that your child receives all their examinations, screenings, vaccinations and immunizations. All families enrolled into the home based program are responsible for making sure their child(ren) are up to date with immunizations. Your Home Based Educator will support the family with health. Home Based Educators will check in with you regularly to see if your child receives ongoing health care.

Parents enrolled in the home based program should provide:

- The last physical exam
- Updated immunization records
- The last dental exam (when child is 1 years old or older)

If you have difficulty obtaining a copy of your child's exam, please notify your Home Based Educator who will work with you to get one.

Occasionally you may receive a notice that your child will need to be screened. Early Head Start is required to track height, weight, hearing, vision, nutrition, anemia, developmental and speech/language screenings. Parents should review the results for your child and follow up with any necessary referrals or appointments as requested by Early Head Start. Your Home Based Educator will assist you with this.

Socialization

Easterseals home based program will provide group socialization twice a month for 2 hours per session. The program will provide 22 socializations for the program year. Parents will meet other Early Head Start Families from your neighborhood at Easterseals remote location or virtually for socialization. The socialization provides an opportunity for you and your child to enjoy activities in a group setting. Your child has an opportunity to play in small groups with other children of their age. You as a parent can meet other parents, discuss topics and exchange experiences. Your Home Based Educator will develop lesson plans and parent engagement activities centered around child/family goals for the group.

Socialization Facts:

- Socializations will take place twice a month
- The socialization will last 2 hours
- Healthy snacks are part of the fun (if on location)
- Children will be able to interact with other children their age
- Parents will have the opportunity to develop friendships with other parents and broaden their system of social support

Transition

Once a child is enrolled into the Home based program, transition planning begins regardless of the age of the child. Transition planning is an ongoing process. Transition planning helps families, Home Based Educator, community services providers and local school staff make the transition process as smooth as possible. Transition planning happens in many ways: through informal discussion, scheduled meetings, transition fairs, and other events.

The formal transition period starts when your child reaches 2 ½ years old. The Home Based Educator will discuss options with the family and help them gather information about transition in their communities. Listed below are the steps needed for completing a transition:

Transition Steps:

- Home Based Educator will host a transition planning meeting and develop a timeline of activities
- Home Based Educator will assist parent to know and understand options
- Home Based Educator will review the child's development with parents
- Home Based Educator will provide the family with a transition checklist
- Home Based Educator will assist the family in acquiring all documents on the checklist if necessary
- Home Based Educator will have all required screenings completed
- Home Based Educator will have an exit interview with the family to finalize the exit and transition