

WASHITA VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START
SAFE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Washita Valley Community Action Council Head Start is responsible for the safety and well being of all enrolled children. This policy states specific guidelines for Head Start regarding the release of children.

- During the enrollment process, parents/guardians are required to complete the Authorization for Release section and the Emergency Contact portion of the enrollment application.
- Washita Valley staff will then release children **only** to persons designated on the enrollment application as authorized to pick up the child.
- Upon arrival and departure, each child will be signed in and out by the parent/guardian or responsible party with a complete signature and the time. This is extremely important for the safety of the children.
- It will be the parent or guardian's responsibility to brief others on the sign in and out procedure when someone other than the parent or guardian will be dropping off or picking up the child. Picture identification will be required if staff are unfamiliar with the individual picking up the child.
- Parents/guardians are required to come to the Head Start center to add another adult to the Authorization for Release.
- Telephone requests to allow another adult other than those listed on the application, to take the child must be made by the parent/guardian. The identity of the parent/guardian will be verified by giving the last four digits of his/her social security number. Picture I.D. will be required before the child is released.
- If a parent has court ordered legal custody and physical custody of a child, a certified copy of the most recent court order is required to be in the child's folder. This will protect the parent, child, and Washita Valley if an unauthorized person attempts to take a child. An up-to-date court order will be required if any changes occur while a child is enrolled in the Head Start program.
- If there is a court order in the child's file, and the unauthorized parent attempts to take the child the staff will follow these procedures.
 - While one staff is explaining our policy and requesting identification, another staff person will contact the police immediately.
 - Staff must not argue with the parent; this may only antagonize the parent.

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Approved by Policy Council 07-19-11
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- **Under no circumstances will a child be released to an unauthorized person.**
- The well-being of all children in our program is of primary importance. It is our responsibility to see that the children are safely supervised at our sites and when arriving or leaving. Washita Valley's policy is that a child will not be released to an adult who appears to be "under the influence" of alcohol or drugs. At least two staff members will confer to determine if this is a concern.
- Staff will offer to provide alternate resources to get the child(ren) home.
- If the person(s) is aggressive or threatening, Washita Valley Head Start staff will call 911 or the police immediately. Children's safety is paramount. Children may need to be quietly removed from the situation.
- If the adult "under the influence" takes the child before the police arrive, the staff will provide to the police a description of the person and a vehicle license plate number.
- Classroom staff will notify their supervisor when an incident occurs.
- Family Service Workers will provide support and/or resources to assist the family.
- Staff will document incidents in the child's file.

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