

**Hidalgo County Head Start Program
Policies and Procedures**

System/Service Area: Administration	Subject: Reporting Child Health and Safety Incidents
Related Regulation(s): 1302.102(d)(1)(ii); ACF-IM-HS-22-07	
Related Forms: Employee statements, interview notes, video	Related Reports: Incident Report
PC Approval: 10/19/2022	Board Approval: 11/01/2022
PC Revision:	Board Revision:

Policy:

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program (HCHSP) places the utmost priority on child health and safety and is committed to continuous quality improvement and will continue provide support and guidance in preventing incidents that jeopardize children’s safety. HCHSP places the utmost priority on child health and safety. Preventing significant incidents that affect children’s health and safety in HCHSP is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, and contractor’s responsibility. HCHSP is committed to continuous quality improvement and will continue to provide support and guidance in preventing incidents that jeopardize children’s safety.

Time Frame: Immediately upon incident occurrence

Person(s)

Responsible: All Staff
Center Manager or (designee)
Compliance/Monitoring Director
Assistant Program Director
Administrator for Human Resources
Executive Director

Procedure:

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program is required to submit reports to the Office of Head Start (OHS) Program Specialist assigned to the Program, immediately or as soon as practicable, any “significant incidents” affecting the health and safety of children enrolled in Head Start.

Immediately or as soon as practicable refers to without delay, but no later than seven calendar days following the incident. Failure to report a significant incident within seven calendar days from the time of the incident will result in the Program receiving a monitoring finding, which may include a deficiency determination.

A “significant incident” is considered to be any incident that results in serious injury or harm to a child, violates Head Start Standards of Conduct **1302.90(c)**, or results in a child being left alone, unsupervised or released to an unauthorized adult. Significant incidents include:

- **Child injuries that require either hospitalization or emergency room medical treatment**, such as a broken bone; a severe sprain; chipped or cracked teeth; head trauma; deep cuts; contusions or laceration; or animal bites.
- **Inappropriate discipline**, which is any type of conduct used to instill fear or humiliate rather than to educate a child, such as poking or pinching a child; making fun of or laughing about a child; using/withholding food or an activity as a punishment or reward; or isolating a child.
- **Potential child abuse and maltreatment**, such as grabbing, shoving, shaking, swatting, or dragging a child; spanking or any other type of corporal or physical punishment; binding, tying, or taping a child; terrorizing a child with threats or menacing acts; or any form of sexual contact.

- **Lack of supervision** while in the care or under the supervision of program staff, which includes leaving a child alone anywhere on the grounds of a Head Start facility (e.g., in a classroom, bathroom, on a playground), as well as outside the facility in a parking lot, on a nearby street, or on a bus or another program-approved transportation or excursion.
- **Unauthorized release** where a child is released from a Head Start facility, bus, or other approved program transportation to a person without the permission or authorization of a parent or legal guardian and whose identity had not been verified by photo identification.

Reporting Procedure:

- Persons involved in or observing the reportable incident **must immediately** notify the Center Manager or person in charge of the facility (designee) and, report incident to Child Care Licensing.
- The Center Manager or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the child in question regarding the incident immediately or as soon as practicable.
- Program staff will provide support as necessary to child and family to ensure mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health.
- Center Manager or designee **will immediately** notify the Compliance/Monitoring Director, who will secure all the supporting documentation/information regarding the incident (center where incident occurred; child's name; staff member involved; incident in detail) and submit the report to the Assistant Program Director.
- The Compliance/Monitoring Director will request from the MIS department the video playback of the incident wherever cameras are available.
- The Assistant Program Director and Administrator for Human Resources will investigate the incident, interview all persons involved, and gather all pertinent documentation needed to determine the root of the problem, and make an informed decision for corrective action, to include, but not limited to, additional staff development.
- The Assistant Program Director will submit a written report to the Executive Director to determine whether the incident meets the requirements of reporting the incident to the OHS Program Specialist assigned to the Program. If the incident meets the requirements of the Reporting Health and Safety Incidents Policy, the Executive Director will report to the assigned OHS Program Specialist within seven (7) calendar days.
- The Executive Director will notify the Policy Council and the Grantee Board (Commissioners' Court) of the incident.