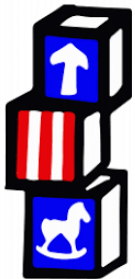


Head Start & Early Head Start



...a fun place to
play and learn!



School Handbook 2022-2023

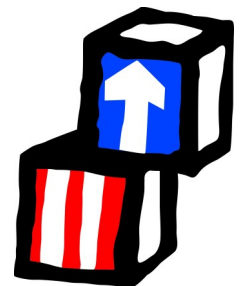


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****School Partnerships may follow their own policies and procedures****

***All Early Childhood Policies are available upon request.**

**-Supervision Policy (Classroom & Outdoor)
-Sick/Short Term Exclusion**

**-Health Emergency
-Attendance**

If you have a complaint or grievance regarding our program, a Parent/Community Member Grievance form is available upon request.

COVID-19 Updates

NENCAP Early Head Start and Head Start Programs consider your health, well being and safety our top priority. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic changes may be made to ensure the health and safety of you and your child(ren). Below you will see a basic guideline of these changes and updates:

**Guidance may change in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and our local health departments. **

- ♦ Classrooms will implement physical distancing strategies to ensure children and staff remain 3 feet apart, as much as possible.
- ♦ Parent drop-off and pick-up procedures may be modified to practice safe health practices.
- ♦ Sick children and families will be required to stay home and return when symptom free for 24 hours with no symptom reducing medication.
- ♦ Temperatures will be taken upon arrival on children and as needed.
- ♦ Cleaning and disinfecting practices continue to be amplified in each center to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- ♦ Healthy hand hygiene will continue to be followed by both staff and students.
- ♦ Meals will be served family style and eaten in classrooms. Toothbrushing will be practiced each morning after breakfast.
- ♦ Home visits, parent-teacher conferences, and applications will be held in person.
- ♦ Personal protective equipment may be used by staff.

My Rights as a Preschool Parent

1. To be welcomed in the classroom, and always treated with respect and dignity.
2. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start.
3. To expect guidance for my child from teachers, and staff which will help their individual development.
4. To be informed about all community resources pertaining to: health, education, and family well-being.
5. To attend family engagement activities offered by the program.
6. To review my child's file, ask for copies of records, and if any information is incorrect, I may make a written statement to be filed in my child's file as part of the permanent record during the school year & three years after enrollment.
7. To help develop skills which will improve daily living for me and my family.
8. To learn about the program & operation; including budget, level of education and experience of staff positions. And take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and the operations of the program.

My Responsibilities as a Preschool Parent

1. To provide transportation to ensure regular attendance.
2. To learn as much about the program and participate in family engagement/school readiness activities.
3. To guide my child with positive discipline, which is both loving and protective.
4. To maintain a bedtime routine that ensures my child receives 10-12 hours of sleep.
5. To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life/my child's life.
6. To work with the teacher, staff, and other parents in a team effort to enhance the Head Start program.
7. To take part in major policy decisions. And provide parent leadership, to explain the program to other parents and encourage participation.
8. To take part in Home Visits/Parent Teacher Conferences to discuss ways in which I can help my child's development at home in relation to school experiences.
9. To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education & recreation for my family. And increase my knowledge about child development.
10. To offer constructive criticism to the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and share in evaluating it.
11. To ensure program confidentiality regarding children, families, and staff.



PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:

Home Visits & Parent/Teacher Conferences



Head Start recognizes parents as their child's first and most important teacher. We encourage intentional strategies to engage parents in their children's learning/development, and support parent-child relationships.

- *Home Visits allow parents and staff to build relationships and have two-way communication. They provide staff with a greater insight into your child's unique interests and strengths.
- *Teachers and Family Service Workers will offer activities that support parent-child relationships and promote child development to promote school readiness. There will be **2 Home Visits and 2 Parent/Teacher Conferences throughout the year.**
- *The first Home Visit must be completed before a child can attend school.
- *Discussion during these visits may include: health information, developmental screenings, child & family strengths and skills, attendance, resources/referrals and any questions or concerns you may have.

Family Educational Opportunities—Ready Rosie

Parents will be provided with many opportunities throughout the school year to:

- Attend Family Engagements: These events are planned by the Parent Committee with the assistance of the Family Service Worker. They may be hosted throughout the year, participation is highly encouraged.
- Ready Rosie is an early education tool used by Head Start/Early Head Start to deepen Family Engagement efforts. The Ready Rosie video library demonstrates ways that families can create a foundation of routines and healthy habits that provide a positive home environment for brains and bodies to grow and learn.
- Participate in Ready Rosie videos which are sent home weekly by the teacher/FSW. These videos will enhance your child/family learning at home.
- Ready Rosie is also used for our Parent Curriculum Workshops hosted by the FSW.

Fatherhood

Head Start is part of a nationwide fatherhood initiative to support and encourage positive male role models in the lives of all children. Studies have found that children who have a positive male influence in their life have fewer behavior problems, increased cognitive skills and are more curious and confident. We encourage Fathers or Father Figures to utilize their talents, skills, and knowledge by volunteering in the classroom, and being an active participant in Home Visits/Parent Teacher Conferences.

Volunteer:

- Your involvement in our program adds an assortment of learning opportunities for all children. The Early Head Start/Head Start programs are required to provide "matching dollars" through volunteer time or donated materials, called In-Kind. We encourage and welcome parent & community volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering or donating please contact your child's Teacher or Family Service Worker. We must generate over \$1 million per year to keep the program in our communities.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular attendance is necessary for children and families to benefit from the services that Head Start/Early Head Start provide. It is very important to keep the staff at your center notified as to the reason why your child will not be attending, each day. An 85% attendance level is required.

Contact your center if there is a family emergency that may cause extended absence.

Families will:

- *Arrive at their scheduled class time and no earlier than 15 minutes for HS and 5 minutes for EHS.
- *Supervise the child to and from the classroom (including the parking area).
- *Sign the child in and out following the attendance procedure.
- *Release the child to the classroom staff upon arrival and accept responsibility for the child from the classroom staff upon dismissal.

It is important to arrive on time daily to not disrupt the classroom's routine.

The Program will:

- *Encourage regular attendance of all children.
- *Not release a child to any unauthorized person, a person unknown to the staff will be asked to provide photo identification.
- *Provide support services for children with attendance problems; below 85%.
- *Make every effort to accommodate children with special needs and their families.
- *Document attendance and attendance strategies in the programs recordkeeping system.
- *The Full Attendance Policy can be found on our website nencap.org. Search "Head Start"

*Weather related closings will follow the local school districts. Please be aware of how your center communicates when school will be closed due to weather.



CLASSROOM:

Daily Activities

While all classrooms have a unique schedule that works best for their program, you will find that all Head Start Classrooms will likely have these components.

Arrival/Dismissal: Parents and Children will be greeted in a welcoming way. At the end of the day, children will recall concepts/events from their day to share with their family at home.

Free Choice Time (Centers): Research has shown that children learn best through play. At Head Start we spend a generous amount of time on play. There are many areas of interest that the children may choose to play in: Blocks, Art, Dramatic Play, Science, Writing, Library, Manipulative, Sand/Water are some common ones you may find in your child's classroom. Children choose an area to play in, but are free to move about the classroom to new areas at their discretion.

Large/Small Group Time: Children may experience things as Music & Movement, Read a louds, gross motor, or specific activities related to a study they are exploring. Through small group activities, teachers are able to focus on specific preschool concepts.

Meal Time: Children are provided healthy options for breakfast, lunch and snack at specific times during their day. Children are still learning, many social skills are displayed at meal times, as well as exploring our 5 senses.

Rest Time: Children will have the opportunity to rest/nap in a calm and quiet space. Children are not required to sleep during this time, however it is an opportunity for them to calm their bodies. Full day programs will include a rest time.

Outdoor Play: Children will go outdoors most days. These activities promote large motor skills as well as coordination. Please dress your child according to the weather conditions. See more specific Outdoor Play information on page 11.

Transitions: Children will learn to move from one activity to the next activity while learning a variety of concepts.

Individualization: Children are individuals with different rates and paths of growth and development. Activities will be modified or extended to meet children where they are and in a way that best promotes their development of specific skills and concepts.



CLASSROOM:

Personal Belongings:

We ask that children bring a small blanket for rest time as well as an extra set of clothing (Summer and Winter), in case of spills, toilet accidents, messy artwork, etc. These items will be left at preschool in a designated area. All items should be labeled with your child's name. If we have to change their clothes at school, we will fill out *A Change of Clothing Form*, this will inform you of what happened. Each child will have a cubby/coat locker where they may place coats/backpacks. All cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Any notes or items from the teacher will also be located in their cubby. Please do not send toys, money, or food to school. The program is not responsible for any lost items.

Be Sure to Check your Child's Cubby/Locker and Backpack Daily!!

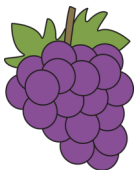


School Supplies:

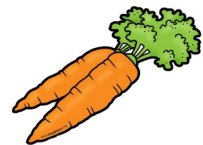
All supplies such as crayons, paper, pencils, diapers/pull-ups, wipes and infant formula/meals will be provided for children enrolled in center-based programs at *no cost* to the family.

Walking Field Trips/Classroom Visitors

During your first Home Visit, forms are signed giving your permission for your child to participate in walking field trips. Throughout the year, staff will be sending home notes, weekly newsletters or monthly calendars informing you of upcoming classroom activities. Classroom visitors may be scheduled to attend your child's classroom. These opportunities provide educational enrichment and are usually based upon the study at that time. Please be sure to send your child to school in tennis shoes on days they have scheduled a walking field trip.



Meals:



Our program will provide a nutritional meal/meals for each child during the day. The children will be served well-balanced meals and learn positive nutritional habits. A menu will be sent home each month in your child's folder. Many of our center's contract lunch from outside caterers, it is important that you contact the staff as soon as possible, if your child will be arriving late/not coming. We need to be sure the correct amount of food has been ordered for all the children on that day.

Food and Beverages will not be used as a reward, punishment, or as a bribe

CLASSROOM:

Birthdays:

Birthdays are not formally celebrated at school. If you would like to do something special to recognize your child's birthday, see examples listed below:

- *Spend time at school with your child
- *Join them for mealtime
- *Read a favorite book to the class
- *Share an activity with the class
- *Donate a book, write your child's name on the inside cover with the date it was donated

All other activities must be pre-approved by staff/Area Managers.

Please remember, it is not necessary to send anything to the classroom.



Celebration Position Statement:

Our program recognizes that parents are the most important teacher in their child's life. We believe that parents should teach their child about their culture, values and faith based beliefs. We have a welcoming program environment that incorporates the unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic background of the families in our program and community.

Celebrate Milestones: Child's first steps, learning to whistle, tying shoelaces, etc.

Celebrate Points of Learning: colors, numbers, shapes, days of the week, child's favorites.

Celebrate Children and Families: the birth of a sibling, family member visiting, moving to a new house.

Celebrate Events in the World: (natural and unnatural), the first snowflake, puddles, seasons, presidential visit. Let's celebrate wonder.

Drills:

We take many precautions to keep children safe while at preschool. Practicing Safety Drills is something that happens often at preschool. Staff and children will be well prepared should an emergency arise. Each month, staff and students will practice a Fire Drill. A Tornado Drill will be practiced monthly between the months of March and October. Emergency Evacuation Drills will be practiced twice a year.

***In the event of an emergency, staff will implement their site specific Safety Emergency Procedures Plan. As a parent, it is important that you provide current contact information. Please communicate if changes need to be made. A copy of the Emergency Procedures Plan is available in each Center, feel free to contact staff if you would like to view it.**

CLASSROOM:

Outdoor Procedure:

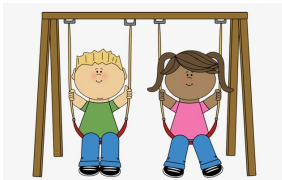
Children will go outside daily unless the temperature/wind chill is 20 degrees or below, or the heat index is 90 degrees or above. Sunscreen (at least SPF 15) and insect repellent (no more than 30% DEET) will be applied on children two months of age and older, in the months of May-September. Spray sunscreen is NOT allowed. Bug spray must only be applied ONCE a day. When applying both, apply sunscreen first, then bug spray.

*Approved Sunscreen: Equate Baby Broad Spectrum Lotion SPF 50.

*Approved Bug Spray: Bug Ban Natural Insect Repellent.

***These items will be provided for your child.**

Health experts agree on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in an indoor setting. If your child is well enough to be at school, they are well enough to go outside. If a parent provides a note from a physician that requires their child to stay inside, the note will be honored. **The note must specify the number of days and can not exceed two.** Special circumstances will be discussed on an individual basis.



Children should be dressed properly for indoor and outdoor play. Play clothes and tennis shoes are recommended for children in our programs. Water, dirt, paint/glue, food and other "messy" items are a regular part of our days. Tennis shoes allow all children to run, jump, and play safely without sliding or tripping on the floor.

Please provide a coat, hat/mittens, and boots for your child. If you do not have these items, let staff know. Staff understand that sometimes things get lost, so we will try to keep extras on hand for those times when items are not available. Our program depends on children arriving with the appropriate clothing for a full, active day, both indoors and out.





HEALTH:



Health Screens and Assessments

All children enrolled in preschool must receive the following screens. All screenings are valid for one calendar year, unless otherwise stated.

- Dental Examination
- Growth Assessment
- Developmental Screens
- Physical Examination
- Lead Screening
- Hemoglobin Screening
- Vision Screening
- Blood Pressure Screening
- Hearing Screening

*For the protection of all children, if parents have a Refusal of Immunizations in place, child can not attend school if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease in school. The Health Services Director will determine the length of exclusion.

Oral Health:

Our programs support preventative oral care such as: cleaning, fluoride and varnish. It is important for all members of the family to practice good oral health. The following communities do not have fluoride in their water supply and should discuss this with their dentist. *Niobrara *Norfolk *Stanton *Wisner *Dakota City

Mental Health Services:

With permission from the parents, a mental health professional will observe the classroom as needed. Information received from professionals, parents, and teachers will help to determine if a further evaluation for individual services is needed. These services may assist children to build positive relationships, and work collaboratively with families and program staff to provide services to meet the child/family's need. All mental health services are kept confidential.

Disability Services for Children:

Our programs are committed to serving children who have specific health or developmental needs. Staff work together with schools to utilize all services offered. Staff will work daily with the child to reach the goals listed on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Children with identified diagnosis participate in classroom activities. If a concern is observed, parents will be notified. Staff and parents will decide if further evaluation is needed. Referrals may be made at any point during the school year, please talk more with your child's teachers if you have concerns.

HEALTH:

Health Emergency for a Medical Condition (Medical Action Plan)

Early Head Start/Head Start staff will make every effort to minimize triggers and prevent an attack or episode of the individual's medical condition.

Early Head Start/Head Start staff at the school where the child will be attending will be trained to provide emergency treatment and/or medication to the child in accordance with the child's Medical Action Plan.

Child Abuse and Neglect Procedure:

All adults are mandatory reporters

In compliance with Nebraska Revised Statute 28-711 Reporting Law, when any person has reasonable cause to believe that a person is being subjected to conditions that would result in neglect or abuse, he/she is required by law to report such incidents to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 1-800-652-1999 or proper law enforcement agency (police/sheriff department). It is the primary goal of the program to provide and ensure a safe environment for all children. Child abuse exists in every level of society. There are four recognized and defined forms of child abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental injury, which may include severe beatings, burns, strangulation, or human bites.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life-food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- **Sexual Molestation:** The exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult, as in rape, incest, fondling of genitals, or exhibitionism.
- **Emotional Abuse:** A behavior that places unreasonable demands on a child to perform above his or her capabilities and does so in an excessive or aggressive manner. Examples include constant teasing, belittling, verbal attacks, and a lack of love, support, or guidance.

**It is important that parents know that it is against Nebraska law and considered child neglect to leave a child, six years of age or younger, alone in a vehicle. Please let staff know if you require assistance with other siblings. Staff are required, by law to report to the authorities if children are not properly restrained in a car seat.*

***Staff can neither confirm or deny any child abuse or neglect cases reported by our program.**

In the event of a suicide threat made by a child, staff will first contact the Mental Health consultant; the parent will be notified and referred to the Nebraska Family Hotline (Available 24/7) 1-888-866-8660. Comprehensive background checks including sex offender and criminal are completed on staff upon hire and as required by Head Start Performance Standards. Partnerships may perform background checks on parent volunteers per school policy. Parents and volunteers will never be left alone with children at any time. All information is confidential. If a parent, volunteer, or visitor appears on the Sex Offender Registry or as a perpetrator of sexual abuse against a child or vulnerable adult, schools will enforce their local city ordinance. For the safety of your child, the Nebraska Sex Offender Registry can be found on the website: www.nsp.state.ne.us

ILLNESS:

Please call your center if your child will not be at school due to illness

Sick-Short Term Exclusion Policy (Summary)

Policy ID: NENCAP HS-P05

- * *The Daily Visual Health Check* will be used by parents and staff as a resource to check for symptoms or illness. Children may be excluded for any condition spread through the intestinal tract, the respiratory system, direct contact, excessive drainage, etc.
- * Any child showing symptoms from the *Daily Visual Health Check* may be excluded from the center at the discretion of the designated staff person.
- * If a child is ill or in distress, they should remain at home until they are symptom free.
- * If a child is absent due to illness for 3 days or more, a doctor's note must be required before the child can return to class.
- * **The complete Policy is located on the agency website www.nencap.org Search "Head Start".**

Daily Visual Health Check

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • Fever at or above 100.4 F (tympanic-ear) or 99F (axillary-armpit) | • Stomachache |
| • Respiratory: cough, sneezing, wheezing, runny nose, shortness of breath | • Urine problems |
| • Unusual skin color, spots or rashes | • Eye drainage, ear pain |
| • Swelling or bruises | • Mouth sores with drooling |
| • Sores or cuts | • Vomiting |
| • Diarrhea | • Headache |
| | • Ear drainage, ear pain. |

Ecto-Parasites (Head Lice, Scabies, Fleas, Bed bugs)

Please follow the guidelines below:

- Head Lice: The child must be nit free to return to class.
- Scabies: The child must receive medical treatment and have a doctor's note before returning to class.
- Fleas: The child must be flea free to return to class.
- Bed Bugs: The child must be bed bug free to return to class.

ILLNESS:

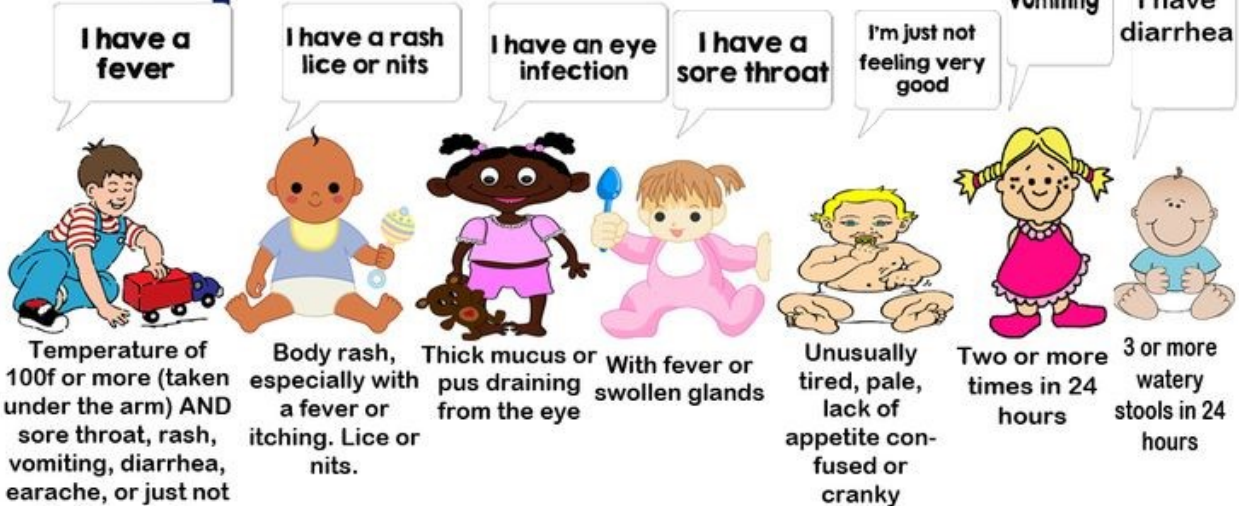
Communicable Diseases:

If a child has a suspected or physician confirmed communicable disease or in the event of a community outbreak, the appropriate staff will notify our advisory group immediately. This group may choose to close the center for a short time.

Communicable diseases that must be reported:

- ♦ Chickenpox
- ♦ Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye
- ♦ Diphtheria
- ♦ Pinworm
- ♦ Fifth Disease
- ♦ Hepatitis A
- ♦ Herpes Simplex Type 1
- ♦ Impetigo
- ♦ Influenza
- ♦ COVID-19
- ♦ Bacterial and Viral Meningitis
- ♦ Measles
- ♦ Mumps
- ♦ Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease
- ♦ Pertussis
- ♦ Polio
- ♦ Ringworm
- ♦ Rubella
- ♦ Strep Infection
- ♦ Staph Infection-non MRSA
- ♦ E.coli
- ♦ Shigella
- ♦ Tuberculosis
- ♦ RSV
- ♦ MRSA
- ♦ Suspected food or water-borne clusters or outbreaks.

Keep Me Home If...



When your child is sick:

1- Have plans for back up childcare.
2. Tell your caregiver what is wrong with your child, even if your child stays home.

It is a good idea to have a plan in place should your child become ill at school.
And be sure to update your contact information often so staff can reach you.

Civil Rights Information

Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

As stated above, all protected bases do not apply to all programs, “the first six protected bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex are the six protected bases for applicants and recipients of the Child Nutrition Programs.”

HEAD START LOCATIONS:

Early Head Start:

- *Dakota City Siouxland Family Center*
1401 Pine Street
Dakota City, NE 68731
(402) 494-1282

Head Start Centers:

- *Norfolk Head Start*
301 E. Omaha Avenue
Norfolk, NE 68702
(402) 371-8030
- *Wayne Head Start*
1210 E. 7th Street
Wayne, NE 68787
(402) 375-2913
- *South Sioux City Head Start*
2120 Dakota Avenue
South Sioux City, NE 68776
(402) 494-6755
- *Dakota City Siouxland Family Center*
1401 Pine Street
Dakota City, NE 68731
(402) 494-1282

Head Start Partnerships:

- *Walthill — Little Blujays*
Little & Main Streets
Walthill, NE 68067
(402) 846-5452
- *Wisner-Pilger School*
801 18th Street
Wisner, NE 68791
(402) 529-6465
- *Niobrara Schools*
247 N Highway 12
Niobrara, NE 68760
(402) 857-3323
- *Norfolk — Little Panthers Preschool*
2500 W. Norfolk Avenue
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-8030
- *Stanton — Lil' Stangs Preschool*
507 7th Street
Stanton, NE 68779
(402) 439-2255



- *NENCAP Central Office*
603 Earl Street
Pender, NE 68047
(402) 385-6300

