

**Head Start Community Program of Morris County, Inc.
POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

A child may only be released to or visited by a custodial parent/guardian or other individual authorized by custodial parent/guardian. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of every child's legal guardian as well as additional persons authorized to take a child under care out of the facility are maintained during the enrollment process, along with documentation of any custody issues/court orders.

If there is an extenuating circumstance (e.g., the parent/guardian or other authorized person is not able to pick up the child), another individual may pick up a child from Head Start if they are authorized to do so by the parent/guardian in an authenticated communication such as a witnessed phone conversation in which the caller provides pre-specified identifying information or writing with pre-specified identifying information. The telephone authorization should be confirmed with a return call to the parent/guardian. A photo ID will be required to identify a person for whom the parent/guardian has given authorization to pick up their child. If a previously unauthorized individual drops off the child, he or she will not be authorized to pick up the child without first being added to the authorization record.

If the parent/guardian or other authorized individual fails to pick up a child at the time of closing, the child will remain supervised at all times by Head Start staff. Every attempt will be made to contact authorized persons to pick up child. If no authorized person has arrived to pick up the child and staff members cannot

continue to supervise the child at Head Start, a staff member shall contact the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

If a parent/guardian or other authorized individual appears to be impaired or otherwise incapable of bringing the child home safely, staff members will not release the child to the individual. Staff members will attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternate person previously authorized by the parent/guardian. If no authorized person is available to pick up the child and staff members cannot continue to supervise the child at Head Start, a staff member shall contact the State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

Should an unauthorized individual arrive without Head Start receiving prior communication from the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. If the information provided by the parent/guardian does not match the information and identification of the unauthorized individual, the child will not be permitted to leave the facility. If it is determined that the parent/guardian is unaware of the individual's attempt to pick up the child, or if the parent/guardian does not authorize the individual to take the child from the facility, information from the individual will be documented and the individual asked to leave. If the individual does not leave and his or her behavior is concerning to the staff or if the child is abducted by force, the police will be contacted immediately with a detailed description of the individual and any other obtainable information such as a license plate number.