

Early Head Start Parent Handbook



Home - Based Services



972.348.1700 | 400 E. SPRING VALLEY RD. | RICHARDSON, TX 75081-5101

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Early Head Start Region 10 Education Service Center

Dear Parent(s):

Welcome to Early Head Start! We are excited that you have been selected to receive Early Head Start services for your child.

Early Head Start 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 enable parents to be better caregivers and teachers for their children, as well as assist parents to meet their own goals, including economic independence.

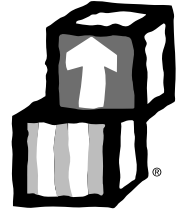
Region 10 ESC Early Head Start serves children and families in the Rockwall, McKinney and Sherman communities. Region 10 ESC and the local school districts are partners in the delivery of Early Head Start services. The Early Head Start program serves pregnant and parenting teens enrolled in the partner school district, families that qualify based upon income guidelines, families that are homeless and children with disabilities. Families are served in either a home-based or center-based setting. Because the program is in partnership with the school district, EHS follows all district rules. In addition, the Early Head Start child development centers are licensed child care centers and must meet the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Centers as well as the federal Head Start Performance Standards.

You will receive a copy of our Parent Handbook, as well as important contacts and emergency information.

Please let the Early Head Start staff or one of us know if you have any questions and how we can best serve you.

Sincerely,
Susan Casone and Myrna Calvert, Program Coordinators

For Parents



What is Early Head Start:

- A federally funded program for pregnant women and children birth through age three
- A **collaborative partnership** between Region 10 Education Service Center and the McKinney, Rockwall and Sherman Independent School Districts serving 160 families (60 families in Sherman, 60 in the McKinney and 40 within the Rockwall communities) living within each school district's boundaries
- A family development program focused on school readiness for children

Why Early Head Start:

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. All children need and deserve early childhood experiences that provide love, warmth and positive learning in a safe environment.

What is the purpose of Early Head Start:

- 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 positive parent-child relationships
- to promote family well-being, including health, safety and increased financial security

What services can you expect from Early Head Start:

- quality early education in and out of the home, including home visits
- ongoing child development screening
- family support - especially for families with newborns, infants and toddlers, as well as pregnant and parenting teens
- parent education, including parent-child activities
- comprehensive health services, including services to women before, during and after pregnancy, assistance with well-baby and well-child check-ups; immunization tracking; 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 the community to meet specific needs and peer support groups

Early Head Start Program Options- Home or Center Based Early Childhood Education

Home-Based Option:

- ➔ All EHS families have the option of home-based services.
- ➔ The home-based option includes all the services provided by Early Head Start. These services include child development, health, nutrition, mental health, play groups and parent support/education.

Transition Between Program Options:

If things change and you are no longer enrolled in an educational program in the local ISD or other setting, or are no longer employed or participating in a job training program, you will transition to home-based services. Early Head Start supports infants and toddlers remaining with their parents when not in school, job training or employed. You are your child's first and most important teacher and the most important person in their life.

Summer for Early Head Start

The early childhood center closes the last day of the school year. The EHS office remains open during the summer. EHS staff are available to provide support and services throughout the summer months based on the needs of children and families.

Center-Based Option:

- ➔ The center-based program is provided to support families' efforts toward self-sufficiency and meeting personal goals. Parents should be in school, in job training, or employed.
- ➔ EHS has more enrolled children than there are available spaces in the center.
- ➔ Priority is given in the EHS Early Childhood Center to those infants and toddlers whose parent(s) are enrolled in our partner school district's educational programs. Our partner districts have donated space to EHS for these classrooms. Center-based services are an option to support a parent's efforts to obtain their high school diploma or equivalency.
- ➔ Flexible hours or part-time placement in the Center will be considered on an individual basis.
- ➔ Children with disabilities may participate in center-based services for inclusion activities with their peers.

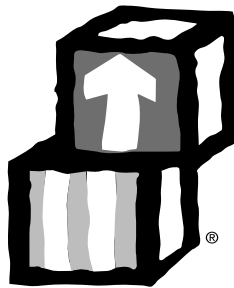
**Check
This
Out** 

Early Head Start

Home Based Early Childhood Education

Goals and Objectives:

- ➔ To support your child's overall development and philosophy that YOU are your child's first and most important teacher.
- ➔ To support school readiness by ensuring your child has the developmental foundation for successful learning.
- ➔ To share activities with you that you can do with your child during your normal everyday routines and play time.
- ➔ To provide a window into the future on what to expect your child to learn next.
- ➔ To provide ideas on the best use of toys and materials in your home.
- ➔ To provide ways to expand your child's play, offering him/her new challenges and motivations to try new things.
- ➔ To offer you support and tools for family well-being and development centered parenting.





Parents as Teachers Programs

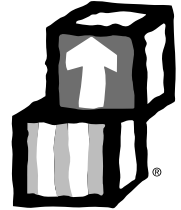
The nationally recognized Parents as Teachers (P.A.T.) program is used in Early Head Start home based early childhood education. We know that experiences in the beginning years of children's lives are the important foundation for school and life success, and that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. Our goal is to give parents the information and support they need to give their children the best possible start in life. The program emphasizes parent-child interaction, development centered parenting and family well-being. There is also a prenatal curriculum for pregnant women.

The program builds family strengths, recognizing that all parents want to be good parents, that parents are experts on their children, and that all families need support. The program focuses on making available social networks, community resources, mutual aid and peer groups as appropriate for the child and family.

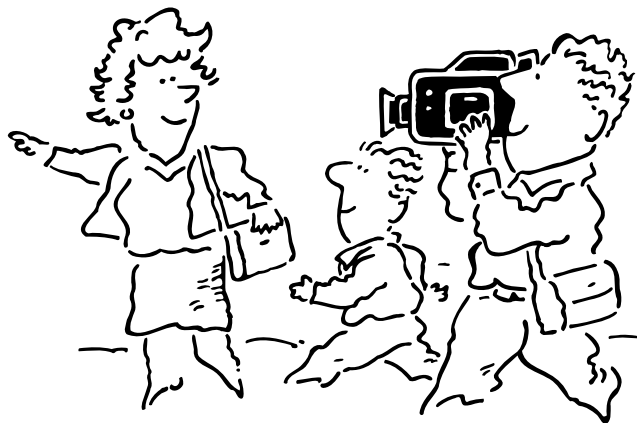
Home visits are made weekly with an Infant/Toddler Parent Educator. Parents participate in planned child activities during the home visit and are given basic information in the areas of intellectual, language, motor, and social-emotional development. Parents receive information on development centered parenting and are supported in family goal setting. Parents are provided the opportunity to participate in play groups with their children twice a month and ongoing parent education programs that are schedule at least monthly.



What to Expect on Your Home Visit



- A home visit each week for up to 1 ½ hours
- Your active participation in the home visit
- If you are pregnant, you and your home visitor will explore together how to have a healthy pregnancy and prepare for baby's arrival.
- You will observe the Early Head Start home visitor demonstrate activities to support your child's learning while you are playing together
- You will have the opportunity to practice the new activities with your child and receive feedback from the home visitor on ways to expand your child's play
- You and your home visiting teacher will have the opportunity to discuss any parenting concerns
- You and your home visiting teacher will build on the strengths of your family to provide a healthy and nurturing environment for your family
- Videotaping may be used on some home visits to help you develop your observation skills.





Play Groups in Early Head Start

Participation in play groups is encouraged for infant, toddlers and their families. Play Groups provide an opportunity for children and parents to enjoy activities in a setting other than their home. Children have the opportunity to play in small groups with other children their age. Families can meet and build friendships with other families enrolled in Early Head Start.

Important Facts About Play Groups

- Play Groups are offered twice a month.
- Healthy snacks are part of the fun.
- Play Groups provide a setting with new learning opportunities and experiences.
- Children experience new sights, sounds, smells and textures.
- Play Groups provide access to large motor play equipment, crafts and new foods.
- Play Groups provide infants and toddlers the chance to be with other infants and toddlers and learn new skills from their friends.
- Play Groups help infants and toddlers develop a sense of trust and confidence as they share these new experiences their family members.

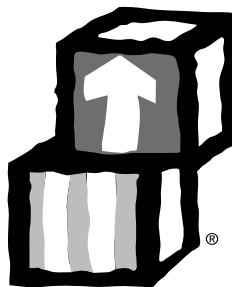


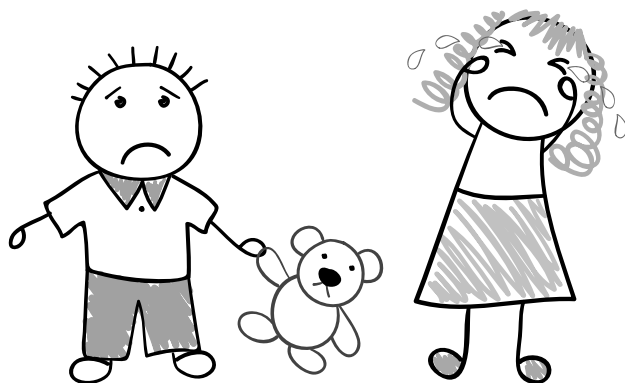


Behavioral Guidelines and Discipline

The following rules apply to parents, staff, volunteers or anyone who comes in contact with the children.

- ➔ Discipline is individualized for each child. It is directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- ➔ Infants and toddlers are redirected to positive activities. Quiet/calming time one on one with the child's teacher may be used.
- ➔ A positive classroom management approach will be used. Teachers focus on teaching social skills, appropriate interactions and natural consequences.
- ➔ No child is left alone or unsupervised.
- ➔ Spanking, hitting, slapping, shaking, threatening or yanking a child is never allowed. Time out is not used.
- ➔ No one will be allowed to yell at, put down, or call a child an inappropriate name.
- ➔ Food or drink is never withheld from a child as a form of punishment or used as a reward. Children are never denied their basic needs.





Child Abuse and Neglect

Texas law requires that school teachers, social workers, health professionals, child care providers, law enforcement and other professionals report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or law enforcement.

Please call **1-800-252-5400** to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.

- ➔ Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it.
- ➔ If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency.
- ➔ You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.
- ➔ Region 10 Education Service Center/Early Head Start is committed to preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, including:
 - Annual training for all Head Start/Early Head Start staff
 - Increase of employee and parent awareness of issues regarding abuse and neglect including warning signs that a child may be a victim. This occurs through staff development and/or parent education activities
 - Staff development and/or parent education activities that focus on awareness of child abuse prevention techniques
 - Training and support for parents about actions they should take to obtain assistance and intervention if their child is a victim of abuse or neglect

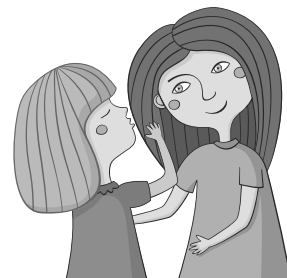
Confidentiality of HS/EHS Records

All information in the child's HS/EHS files is considered to be confidential.

School officials and Head Start/**Early Head Start** staff may access children's information. Written parent permission and informed consent must be obtained for other agencies or organizations to access the child's information.

Parents must give written permission/releases for **the following**:

- ➔ Early Head Start staff to request services from other agencies.
- ➔ Use your child's photograph i.e classroom newsletter, newspaper articles, classroom videotaping, internet, and school yearbook.
- ➔ Participation in sand and water play
- ➔ Consents for Head Start/Early Head Start required screenings such as:
 - Vision and hearing
 - Height and weight
 - Developmental/social/emotional screening
 - Dental
 - Classroom behavior observation
 - Anemia
 - Speech/Language



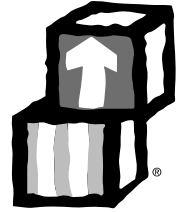
Rights of Parents

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a child who is a minor or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if EHS is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

Parents have the right to:

- ➔ Review their children's records and **challenge** inaccurate information
- ➔ Know about and attend meetings concerning their children
- ➔ Give permission for the release of records
- ➔ Discuss concerns with **local school district** or Early Head Start staff
- ➔ Expect a timely response for your concern
- ➔ Know that your child's and family's records are kept in locked, restricted file cabinets, and will be kept for 5 years from the end of the time that the child is in Early Head Start. After that, they will be destroyed. Notice about the destruction of records will be published in the local newspaper once a year.
- ➔ Know that some of your child's records are maintained on a secure electronic data base.

Complaint Procedure



Introduction

We hope that no family enrolled in Early Head Start (EHS) ever has a reason to be unhappy with our services, but sometimes people have different opinions about services, policies, and procedures. The following procedures are designed to encourage open, helpful communication, and more importantly protect your rights according to law.

The place to start is with your child's teacher. If you disagree about your services, or have questions and concerns, ask for more explanation. Talk things over and suggest possible solutions. Friendliness, a problem-solving approach, and working openly together will usually solve most problems. If you have tried this and are not satisfied, these are the steps you can take. Services will continue during this complaint procedures unless you decide otherwise.

Local level

- a) Talk with EHS Center Director/Lead Teacher.
- b) Call the EHS coordinator for your site and ask for a meeting with her and the personnel involved in the complaint. She will arrange a meeting at a time convenient to everyone involved, within 10 days of your call.
- c) The EHS Coordinator will work with you and the other people involved to resolve the difficulties and find a solution.
- d) The EHS Coordinator will write a summary of this meeting and give everyone involved a copy.
- e) If the situation is not resolved, the concern will be forwarded to the Director of Preschool Services at Region 10 Education Service Center.





Parent Engagement

- Parents/guardians of children currently in the program are invited and encouraged to participate in local campus parent committees.
- Each campus conducts parent meetings or activities.
- Parents are given opportunities to volunteer.
- Parent libraries are on each campus with books for adults and children.
- **Families** work with the Family Resource Specialist to develop individualized Family Partnership Agreements based on each family's strengths and goals.
- Father/male involvement is encouraged through the D.R.E.A.M. Team (**D**ads **R**eading, **E**ducating, and **M**entoring).
- Workshops on various topics are available to parents.
- The Policy Council membership includes parents from all Region 10 ESC Head Start/Early Head Start campuses.
- Policy Council membership is made up of at least 51% current Head Start/Early Head Start parents who have the responsibility for participating in making decisions regarding the overall operation of the program.
- Opportunities are provided for parents/guardians to participate on Head Start advisory committees for Health Services and Education to enhance the services provided to children.

Community Partnerships

Early Head Start (EHS) seeks ways through collaboration and networking within the EHS community to meet the needs of families. The EHS Program provides information about community resources that can help you and your baby. The EHS Program is able to help be a resource for your child's growth and development, by promoting confident parenting and loving relationships. EHS will support you in accomplishing your goals and together recognizing your success.

Pedestrian Safety



Head Start/Early Head Start age children should never cross a street without a grown-up.



Even very young children need to be taught pedestrian safety. Some things you should talk with your child about include:

- Remind your child(ren) to look for a crosswalk before crossing the street and to hold an adult's hand.
- When crossing the street, stop at the curb or edge of the road. Look left, then right, and then left again for moving cars before crossing. Keep looking left and right until you are safely across the street.
- If your area has sidewalks, teach your child(ren) to stay on them at all times.
- Remind your child(ren) to wait for the car to come to a complete stop before approaching the vehicle.

Bus Safety



Riding on the Bus

- Students must go to a seat and be seated immediately upon boarding.
- Infants and toddlers riding with their student parent must be in approved car seats appropriate to their age and weight.
- The bus will not move until all children are seated.
- Students must remain seated while the bus is moving.
- Students should keep arms, hands, legs and heads inside the bus at all times.
- Fighting, scuffling and the use of profane or inappropriate language is not allowed.
- The emergency doors and exit window controls should be used only during drills or actual emergencies.

Unloading from the Bus

- All students will remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. **DO NOT RUSH!**
- All students will move away from the bus immediately upon leaving the bus.
- If a child must cross the street or road after getting off the bus, he/she should walk to the front of the crossing arm, then stop and look to the driver for a signal to cross in front of the bus.

Child Health

Parents: You are your child's first teacher and caregiver; you play a major role in your child's health. A healthy child is a child ready for learning.



Physical Examination

Before your child can enter the classroom or receive direct services (for example, home visits or center based services) parents must provide a copy of the child's last physical exam signed by the doctor/clinic to the Early Head Start Family Resource Specialist. The exam must be appropriate to the child's age as recommended by the Texas Health Steps and Texas Department of State Health Services schedule (see below):

Physical Exam Schedule	
1-2 Weeks Exam	15 Months Exam
2 Months Exam	18 Months Exam
4 Months Exam	24 Months Exam
6 Months Exam	30 Months Exam
9 Months Exam	36 Months Exam
12 Months Exam	

If your child is on a different schedule recommended by his/her pediatrician, the last well exam and a note from the doctor, defining his recommended schedule is required. If you are having difficulty obtaining a physical examination, please notify the Family Resource Specialist at your campus and we will work with you to get one.

Immunizations (Shots)

Before the child can enter the classroom or receive direct services (for example, home visits or center based services) immunizations must be current and appropriate to the age as recommended by Texas Health Steps and Texas Department of State Health Services schedule.

Parents are required to submit updated immunization records after each appointment to the Early Head Start Family Resource Specialist.



Dental Exam



Dental exams are required at age 1 year and every 6 months after. Parents are responsible for providing a copy of this exam to Early Head Start Office and complete all follow-up appointments.

If you are having difficulty obtaining a copy of your child's exam, please notify the Family Resource Specialist at your campus and we will work with you to get one.

Financial Assistance/Insurance

Early Head Start will assist parents to access available health care resources to pay for required services. (Medicaid, CHIP etc.) On a case-by-case basis a **limited amount** of Early Head Start funds is set aside to pay for services for those children who do not qualify for insurance or Medicaid. All services and payment for services must be prearranged through the Family Resource Specialist assigned to your campus. Please notify the Family Resource Specialist at your campus for additional help or information.

Required Screenings

Occasionally you may receive a notice that your child will be screened. Early Head Start is required to track height, weight, hearing, vision, nutrition, anemia, developmental and speech/language screenings. It is your responsibility as a parent to review the results for your infant/toddler and follow-up with any necessary referrals or appointments for your child as requested by Early Head Start. Your Family Resource Specialist is available to assist you.

Medication



In compliance with Region 10 and local school district policies Early Head Start staff cannot administer medications to your child. All medication administration will be done by the school nurse or her designee. Medication administration rules adopted by the school district are followed. Please notify Early Head Start Family Resource Specialist at your campus if your child is taking any medications so that arrangements can be made.

Over the counter medications, including such medications as diaper creams fall into this category and cannot be administered by staff. If needed, the school nurse must administer.

Special Needs

Occasionally a baby may have special requirements due to health concerns. This includes sleep positions and feeding instructions. These will be followed with a signed order from your child's health care provider.



Communicable Disease Procedure

Early Head Start follows the communicable disease and health procedures required by the *Minimum Standard Rules for Child Care Centers*, *Head Start Performance Standards* and your local school district. The school nurse is responsible for all health decisions while your child is in an Early Head Start classroom. If you have questions ask your Family Resource Specialist.

When a child is excluded from a center-based activity for health reasons, the Early Head Start Program will follow the guidelines as established by the local independent school district and the Texas Department of State Health Services. A child who displays indications of possible contagious disease or body parasites shall be excluded from the center for at least twenty-four hours. Based upon the recommendation of the school nurse and the communicable disease guidelines of the Texas Department of State Health Services, Early Head Start will require that the child has received written permission to return from their doctor or clinic.

How Sick is Sick?

In order to insure the safety and health of our children and staff, children who have any of the following conditions may be excluded from the classroom until either the condition subsides, the child is no longer contagious, or we receive a note from the child's doctor stating the child is no longer contagious. The school nurse is responsible for determining if a child is ill and needs to be sent home – and if a physician note is required for return.*

1. **Your child has thick green drainage from his/her nose.**
2. **Your child has yellow discharge from the eyes.**
3. **Your child has had an oral fever of more than 101 degrees in the last 24 hours.**
4. **Your child has vomited (more than one time) in the last 24 hours.**
5. **Your child has had diarrhea (more than two times) in the last 24 hours.**
6. **Your child has cuts or openings on the skins that are pus-filled or oozing.**
7. **Your child has lice or nits.**
8. **Your child has a communicable disease**
9. **Your child has an undiagnosed and untreated rash.**

* Per local school district policies and Texas Department of State Health Services guidelines.

Home Based:

- ➔ Please notify Early Head Start as soon as possible to cancel your appointment.
- ➔ The staff cannot make a home visit if your child is believed to be ill.

Center Based:

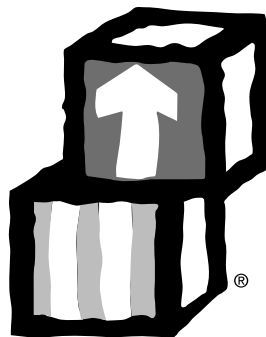
- ➔ Please notify Early Head Start as soon as possible to let the teacher know that the child is ill.
- ➔ If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, your child must be out 24 hours after symptoms subside, is fever free without medication, or until released by the doctor. You must bring a doctor's note if required by the school nurse.



Accidents/Illness

In the event of an accident, illness or an emergency, the Early Head Start program will notify you and provide detailed information, including a written report. If a critical illness or emergency requires the immediate attention of a physician, the EHS staff will:

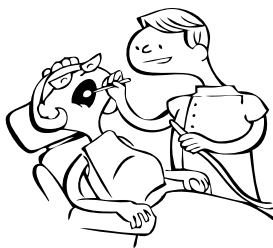
- ➔ **Call 911** for emergency medical services to assess and transport your child to the nearest emergency room, if required;
- ➔ Give your child first aid treatment or CPR, if required;
- ➔ Contact the physician of record in your child's record;
- ➔ Ensure supervision of all other children in your child's group.





Services for Pregnant Women

Becoming an advocate or supporter for your child's health care begins in the womb; it is important for you to provide the best health care possible from the very beginning. Early Head Start staff provide or coordinate prenatal education experiences, and monitor prenatal and post-partum care. Services for expectant families and newborns are provided in the family home.



Dental Care

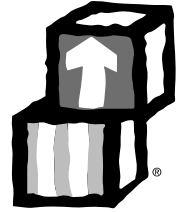
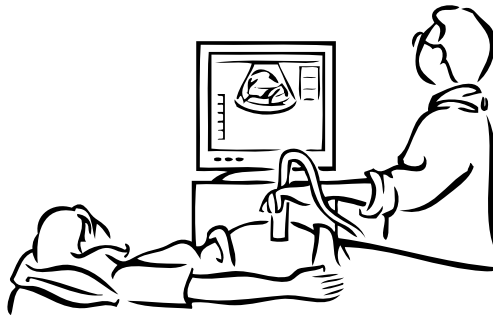
It is recommended that expectant mothers receive a dental exam every 6 months and they are responsible for providing a copy of this exam to the Early Head Start Office and completing all follow-up appointments.

If you are having difficulty obtaining a copy of your exam, please notify the Family Resource Specialist at your campus and we will work with you to get one.

Prenatal Education includes:

- Normal fetal development, including the risks of smoking and drinking alcohol
- What to expect during labor and delivery
- Nutrition education
- Support groups with other families
- Breastfeeding education
- Selection of a pediatrician





Prenatal Care (Health care before birth)

The Family Resource Specialist will assist expectant mothers in accessing prenatal and postpartum care, through referrals immediately upon enrollment in the program if the expectant mother does not have a health care provider.

- ➔ Early and continuing physical exams with your physician are required throughout the pregnancy.
- ➔ Women are expected to keep all prenatal appointments and to complete all referrals or follow-up appointments as recommended by their doctor.

Postpartum Care (Health care after birth)

- ➔ Mothers are expected to continue keeping all appointments, follow-ups and referrals as recommended by her physician, including the six week post-partum exam following the birth of her child.
- ➔ Two weeks after the infant's birth, the Family Resource Specialist will schedule a home visit to discuss Early Head Start's enrollment for the infant. The discussion will also include:
 - Selecting a pediatrician
 - Ensure the well-being of both the mother and the child
 - Provide support to parents as they adjust to the demands of a newborn.
 - Assess for postpartum depression



