



# Parent Guidebook

2007-2008

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## Contact Information

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FIPP House at The Byrd's Nest is located at:

1669 Highway West  
Taylorsville, NC 28681  
(828) 635-1175

[mawmawalisa2@yahoo.com](mailto:mawmawalisa2@yahoo.com)

Serving ages: 0-3 years

*Hours of operation:*

*Monday through Friday*

*First Shift: 7:15 a.m.-5:30 pm*

*Second Shift: 5:30 pm to 12:00 am*

FIPP Early Head Start's administrative office is located at:

137 7<sup>th</sup> Ave NW.  
Taylorsville, NC 28681  
(828) 635-1479  
(828) 635-1469 Fax

FIPP's administrative office is located at:

300 Enola Road  
Morganton, NC 28655  
(828) 433-2661  
1-800-822-3477  
(828) 438-6457 Fax

More information can be found on our website:

[www.FIPP.org](http://www.FIPP.org)

# Parent Handbook

## 2007-2008

Welcome to FIPP House, community-based family child care homes operated by Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP) and Early Head Start. Our vision is that families who are seeking relaxed, intimate, and caring learning environments for their very young children will find what they are looking for in a locally-operated FIPP House near them.

The Partnership:

<b>Family Infant and Preschool Program</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>Community Family Child care Homes</b>
FIPP has been providing early intervention, early learning, and parent support to communities in North Carolina since 1973. FIPP not only implements excellent programming, but is also a research facility providing invaluable insight and information that has for decades shaped the field of early childhood education and early intervention. FIPP has a large multidisciplinary team of professionals that support all program areas.	Early Head Start is a federally-funded expansion of Head Start and serves thousands of children across the nation. Early Head Start awards grants to local communities to provide comprehensive care and family support. Early Head Start regulates and monitors the quality of all Early Head Start program components.	Family Child care is a widely used type of out-of-home care for young children and it is a preferred choice for infants and toddlers. Research has shown that family child care has unique qualities that make it the preferred arrangement of many parents. Family child care tends to have a relaxed, home-like atmosphere that is especially responsive to infants and toddlers.

Because of this unique partnership, families in your community who qualify for Early Head Start, have access to world-class child care and early education in a family-like small group setting. We are excited about the potential of this three-way partnership and look forward to developing your community's network of providers.

This handbook will provide you with detail on the FIPP House enrollment procedures, philosophy and how FIPP House operates. Please read it thoroughly so that you know what to expect and what resources and supports are available to you and your family.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year!

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## Mission and Principles

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### ***Mission***

The mission of the Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP) is to promote the growth and development of young children by *supporting and strengthening families and building caring, responsive communities.*

We do this by:

- Developing partnerships with family members based on mutual respect, trust, and compassion.
- Promoting competency-building by helping families to identify priorities and goals, and make fully informed decisions.
- Supporting family participation in activities that build on existing abilities and strengthen parenting confidence and competence.
- Supporting child and family growth and well-being by creating opportunities, together with families, that promote capabilities of the family and individual family members.
- Working with a wide range of community partners to increase awareness, develop informal and formal resources, and assuring access to full community participation for all families with young children.
- Using evidence-based practices, evaluating promising practices, and using training methods supported by research and evaluation findings.

### ***Guiding Principles***

In order to achieve our mission and vision, FIPP uses the following principles to guide all programs, including FIPP House:

1. Families and family members are treated with dignity and respect at all times.
2. Staff are sensitive, knowledgeable, and responsive to family, cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity.
3. Family choice and decision-making occurs at all levels of participation in the program.
4. Information necessary for families to make informed choices is shared in a sensitive, complete, and unbiased manner.
5. Practices are based on family-identified desires, priorities, and preferences.
6. Staff provide supports, resources, and services to families in a flexible, responsive and individualized manner.
7. A broad range of informal, community, and formal supports and resources are used for achieving family-identified outcomes.
8. Staff build on child, parent and family strengths, assets, and interests as the primary way of strengthening family functioning.
9. Staff-family relationships are characterized by partnerships and collaboration based on mutual trust, respect, and problem-solving.
10. Staff use helpgiving styles that support and strengthen family functioning.

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## Our Philosophy

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Our philosophy is based on our understanding of the ways in which young children learn best. Our program supports the needs, interests, and abilities of young children, and emphasizes the interaction between the learning child and the social and physical environment. A critical component of this approach is our focus on providing children with the opportunity to explore and learn from the world around them. The overall framework of our program is firmly rooted in such activities as saying hello and goodbye, going to the store, preparing meals, and other daily routines that make up the fabric of children's lives.

The physical environment of the child care home is set up to look as much like a home as possible. In many FIPP Homes, the child care space is the family's living space. In some FIPP Homes, caregivers have created a special child care room. Furniture that is comfortable for adults and children make the space look and feel more like home and is comfortable for the children. Rugs, couches, a kitchen area, and toys that are accessible to small children further the home setting of each room.

Daily routines are an important part of our program. Preparing snacks, cleaning up, naptime, going on errands, toileting, and dressing are integral parts of our program, and are geared toward each child's individual interests and abilities. Young children are busy exploring and need experience in putting their environment into an understandable order. Routine activities are as important as planned experiences that your child will encounter at FIPP House.

While your child may seem to just play and giggle all day, s/he is really learning life skills. We are proud to say that our children spend a great deal of their day playing, but much preparation goes into planning daily experiences in order to ensure that they are interest-based and engaging to your child. As your child's body grows, his/her intellectual and emotional growth is just as dramatic.

Although FIPP House cannot be all things to all people, a very important part of our vision is being individualized and responsive to children and families. Children of all abilities are welcome and supported in participation of all everyday activities and routines. FIPP House is an inclusive setting. Children who need extra help or modifications will receive that help through the FIPP multidisciplinary child support team. Children who qualify for Early Head Start and are enrolled in FIPP House and who are maintaining regular attendance will not be excluded or expelled.

FIPP is committed to operating state-of-the-art programs that impact child development in powerful ways. One of the ways we do this is to research and monitor our programs and practices to ensure they have the desired positive effects on families and child development. From time to time you will be asked to participate in surveys or child assessments that help us get a better understanding of our program impact. Participation in providing this information is completely voluntary and will not affect your child's enrollment.

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## FIPP House Enrollment Procedure

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### *Admission and Enrollment*

Families interested in learning more about FIPP House can either:

1. Contact any of the FIPP House Programs listed on the second page of this guidebook
2. Contact the Early Head Start Administrative Offices

Families interested in enrolling in FIPP House must complete an enrollment form that contains information that helps us determine your family's eligibility for the program.

Federal Income Guidelines 2006	
Family Size	Max Income
1	\$9,800
2	\$13,200
3	\$16,600
4	\$20,000
5	\$23,400
6	\$26,800
7	\$30,200
8	\$36,600

For each additional person, add \$3,400.

Source: [HHS Poverty Guidelines](#)

Financial information can be verified by providing a copy of one of the following:

- Pay stub
- Tax returns
- Letter from employer

Families must meet the financial guidelines established by the federal Head Start Bureau. Depending on the other information listed on your enrollment form, you will either be enrolled in a FIPP House immediately or placed on a waiting list for an opening. We accept enrollment forms year round and fill openings as available. An Early Head Start representative at the administrative office will be available to assist you with any questions. Once all information is gathered the representative will determine if your family meets all of the EHS eligibility requirements. Upon enrollment, families will be required to complete a packet of forms that includes:

<b>Form</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Community Resource Book	A booklet of community resources is available to your family. Resources include child care, recreation, special needs, healthcare, and more.
Permission to Evaluate	This form permits us to do an initial developmental evaluation with your child and allows us to collect quarterly developmental information about your child's abilities so that we can provide individualized supports.
Medical Form	All children enrolling in EHS are required to have an initial comprehensive medical exam. Your child's physician completes the form and you must return it within 30 days of enrollment. Your child's most up-to-date immunization record must be provided before this deadline to retain your child care placement.
Research Form	This form collects demographic (race, education level, income, etc.) information on your family so that we can complete mandatory end of the year reporting to renew our funding.
Release of Information Form	This form allows us to request information from or provide information to the agency or organization of your choice.
Emergency Contact Form	This form provides us with the information we need to contact you or a designated emergency contact person in the event that we or medical professionals need information to ensure your child's health or well-being.
Field Trip Permission Slip	This form provides us permission to take your child off the premises of the child care home and playground so that we may engage in a wider range of daily learning opportunities.
Committee Volunteer Form	This form provides you with the opportunity to sign-up for a parent committee to enhance the quality of our programming.

If you need assistance filling out any of the forms in your enrollment packet, please let your provider know and we will arrange assistance.

### ***Cost***

FIPP House is a comprehensive, early childhood program provided to families who meet the income eligibility of Early Head Start. The core Early Head Start day is comprised of the first six hours of each day that your child is in care and is provided at no cost to families. Beyond the first six hours, families are responsible for paying for the additional cost of the care. Families who are eligible for child care subsidy may apply with the Department of Social Services and can receive a voucher to pay for all or part of these additional hours. Any fee paid by your family, it must be paid directly to the child care provider at the beginning of the month. All parent fees are due on the first day of the month and are considered late if they are not received by that day. Children may not participate in the extended day if fees are not paid by the last day of the month they are due and they must be picked up at the end of the six hour Early Head Start day.

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## Our Program for Children

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### ***Physical Environment***

Our physical environment has been thoughtfully organized to serve the developmental needs of infants and toddlers. Our program permits free flow of activity within the play room and provides opportunities for all of the children to interact with one another and with caring adults. The outdoor space has also been carefully planned to provide a safe, contained (fenced) space for children to explore their natural environment and learn from their observations and interactions, with plants, animals, sand, soil, water, wood and other natural materials.

### ***Curriculum***

FIPP House implements a specially designed curriculum named *Learning Through Life in Child care Homes*. This evidence-based curriculum was originally developed by Family, Infant and Preschool Program as part of a model demonstration project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The curriculum is a systematic way of identifying a child's strengths and interests and then identifying the everyday activities and routines in which the caregiver and group engages that pose high interest for the child and which would produce development enhancing opportunities if a child were to participate.

For very young children (birth to age three) everyday activities and events are the most important experiences in their development. Their entire life will be built on these first experiences. As a child sits on his/her daddy's lap and flips back and forth through a book while he describes the pictures; as a little boy clumsily helps his mother put the canned goods in the pantry closet, carefully stacking the cans; as a little girl splashes in the tub long after her body and hair have been washed; caring adults have opportunities to interact with children and respond in ways that will encourage young children's development. The opportunities that children have to play independently such as stacking cardboard boxes, collecting stones in the driveway, and even spending the morning wiggling toes and trying to grasp them are also important times for child learning. Because FIPP House family child care homes provide multiple everyday activities with responsive caregivers, they are the perfect setting for young children to get the experiences and interactions they need to grow and develop into strong and healthy older children. Nothing replaces the power of what a child will learn as he explores the world and shares new discoveries with a parent or caregiver whether grocery shopping, bathing, eating, or reading.

FIPP Early Head Start staff assists parents in maximizing these everyday opportunities for learning and relationship-building with young children. Skilled early childhood educators and family support specialists work with child care providers to:

- Identify everyday learning opportunities in which a child may participate
- Identify child interests, assets, and abilities that encourage participation
- Identify those everyday activities that hold the most interest for children and are likely to naturally support a child's participation and learning

- Support the child’s participation in a way that encourages him/her to explore, make choices, investigate ideas, elaborate, and become more complex
- Create new opportunities for children to interact with family members and participate in community activities that are interesting for children and support good child development
- Provide information about child development that helps families make informed decisions for their children and families
- Focus on strategies parents can use to support their child’s social, emotional, physical and intellectual development while doing everyday activities

This approach is both an assessment and a direct intervention/support. Staff and families are able to constantly assess the child’s participation and the results of that participation in order to modify the adult interactions that encourage child development. FIPP Early Head Start staff and caregivers guide each family to periodically reassess their family’s priorities and their child’s interests and activity settings to ensure the plan fits into the lifestyle of the family and meets the child’s goals.

$$\text{Child Interests and Abilities} + \text{Activities} + \text{Responsive Strategies} = \text{Child Learning and Confidence}$$

### ***Discipline***

The goal of our discipline policy is to help children learn to internalize appropriate standards of behavior which take into account the well-being of the entire learning community. The process by which children construct such standards as well as the self control to put them into practice is long and requires a great deal of patience from parents and caregivers. We recognize that children learn through active practice as well as trial and error.

Because of our commitment to developing a positive sense of self-esteem in addition to independent, responsive and caring behavior, we take a supportive and proactive approach to shaping children’s behavior. We approach “setting limits” in a predictable, clear, and sensitive manner. The limits we set arise from two areas of importance: keeping yourself and others safe; and respecting everything in the physical environment. We set up the environment to minimize the necessity of limits and share control with children in the decision-making process.

Caregivers at FIPP House know that many discipline problems may be avoided by incorporating preventative discipline into the program. Preventative discipline involves: arranging the space in ways that convey expectations to the children, eliminating hazardous situations, redirecting children, following through with consistent and natural consequences, engaging children in challenging and interesting activities, offering multiples of the same toys, and employing a sense of humor. To help caregivers put these ideas into practice; we have developed the following guidelines for group management. These guidelines are used by all FIPP House providers, assistants, volunteers, and parents when working with children in or around a FIPP House:

- Adults make every effort to understand what children need and are interested in and provide this to the children before frustration arises.

- Adults encourage children to communicate appropriately when resolving conflicts, and model this behavior themselves for the children to see. For example, children are encouraged to communicate verbally or with gestures what they want while the other children are encouraged to look and listen for understanding.
- Adults speak directly to children in a calm, friendly voice while maintaining eye contact. All adults reserve their “emergency voice” for true emergencies.
- Adults provide children with choices and enough assistance to minimize frustration and ample opportunity to independently demonstrate and practice emerging abilities.

Our community is built around helping children feel that they are in a safe and predictable environment. In addition, all adults are expected to avoid the following practices that have been proven to have damaging effects on young children:

- Corporal punishment shall **NEVER** be used, including spanking.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse, including yelling, time-outs or physical discipline.
- No child shall be denied food or drink as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- No child shall be criticized for picking up food with his/her fingers at mealtime.
- No child shall be labeled naughty, selfish or bad.

### ***Ratios***

Experience has confirmed that one of the most significant factors in providing a quality environment for children in a group setting is the number of qualified professional caregivers with whom your child can interact and relate. In FIPP House the ratio of adults to children is at least one adult for every four children. We hire and train additional staff to support all of the FIPP Houses in your community, so many days the ratio will be even lower.

### ***Cubbies***

Each child is provided with a space for his/her personal things. Each cubby is marked with the child’s name. Parents should check the cubbies every day for artwork, notes from the caregivers or the program, dirty clothes, etc. Sleep blankets are also stored in the cubbies and should be taken home every Friday to be laundered and returned on Monday.

### ***Children’s Items***

The following is a list of items that families are expected to provide for their children. These home items help us provide excellent care for your child and make your child’s time in our care more comfortable:

- If the child is bottle-fed, please provide one bottle for each expected feeding. Bottles must have caps and must be labeled with your child’s name and today’s date.
- Pacifiers must be labeled with the child’s name.
- Sippy cups must be labeled with the child’s name on the cup and on the lid.
- Transitional object or comfort objects for your child are encouraged.

- Two complete sets of clothes appropriate for the season must be kept in the child's cubby.

Toys and materials at FIPP House are carefully selected for appropriateness and shared by all children. Please do not bring toys from home. Children understandably have difficulty sharing them.

### ***Clothing***

Children should dress comfortably, simply, and suitably for the weather. Since activities are sometimes "messy," children should wear clothing that will allow them to participate without reservation.

Please keep two complete sets (including socks, underpants, pants and shirt) of seasonally appropriate clothes at FIPP House at all times in case your child needs a change of clothes during the day. All clothing should be labeled with the child's name. When clothes become soiled, we will change your child's clothes into one of the extra outfits. Please replace the extra outfit the next day.

Children play outside every day that it is not raining or bitterly cold, so they should be dressed appropriately. During winter months children should have hats and gloves. If children are not well enough to play outside, they should not come to group care until they are well enough to participate in all aspects of the schedule.

Providers are not permitted to wash soiled clothing. The items will remain in a sealed bag to be taken home that day to be washed.

### ***Daily Schedule***

FIPP House operates year round. Parents are encouraged to vary their schedule so that children do not spend longer than 10 hours a day in child care. Each FIPP House sets specialized hours posted at the front of this book.

Parents and children benefit from a good-bye routine and our child care providers recognize that many families have established routines. Parents are expected to walk their child to the child care room and leave him or her in the supervision of the child care provider. Parents are expected to spend a few minutes engaging their children in an interesting activity and are expected to say goodbye to their child before leaving. This is one of the ways children build basic trust with their parents and caregivers. Many times children may cry when parents leave, but it is important that you not sneak away when s/he is not looking. Child care providers are available and prepared to comfort crying children. The benefit of your child trusting you far outweighs the tears they are likely to experience. The providers are available to help you develop a goodbye routine with your child if you would like.

FIPP House provides care to infants and toddlers and maintains a relatively loose schedule that accommodates the needs of individual children while providing time and space for children to spend time exploring their environment and interacting with others. Infants are fed and diapered on demand and all children have at least one rest time each day. The day

also includes plenty of time for outdoor play, community walks, book reading, singing and dancing, playing with toys, and rocking and cuddling with a caregiver.

Children are signed in and out when they arrive and depart. FIPP House keeps a record of all adults that have permission to pick up your child. The individuals listed on your child's form will be the only ones we can release your child to unless we have written permission **prior** to pick up. Should there be any changes to the listed of acceptable adults, please notify your child care provider immediately to avoid confusion. In the event that someone from the approved pick up list comes for your child that is unfamiliar to your provider, picture identification will be required before releasing your child.

Parents are expected to pick up their children at or before pickup time. An overtime fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes will be charged for children picked up after this time. This overtime fee will be charged for every five minutes that child is late being picked up. The late fee begins to accumulate 5 minutes after the child's scheduled pickup time. The fee is due at the time of pickup and should be paid directly to the provider. Failure to pay the fee will result in removal from the extended day program.

### ***Rest Time***

A rest time is provided for each child. Infants are allowed to sleep on demand and are provided their own crib to do so. Toddlers and older children nap on a small cot that we provide for them. Children are not required to sleep, although most do. We encourage napping by providing soft background music and sitting with children, offering sleep toys and patting or rubbing children on the back as they lay on their cot. Even when children don't sleep, they are expected to rest quietly on their cots during rest time.

All babies under one year of age will be placed to sleep on their backs and covered by a blanket. We will not allow children to have extraneous plush toys in their cribs as this is suspected by professionals to contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. If your child must sleep in a different position, please provide the caregiver a note from his/her physician.

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## **Communication**

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### ***Daily Record***

Each child will go home with a Daily Record documenting the child's activities, interests and new abilities. This information is also kept on file and is used to plan the children's educational program. The Daily Record has a place for parents to document daily information about the child that caregivers need to know, and has space for parents to write questions to the provider. Please take the time to fill out your portion of the Daily Record each morning.

### ***Family Partnership Agreement***

Each family will have a comprehensive Family Partnership Agreement on which parents and caregivers document goals for supporting your child's development and goals for supporting

your family in identifying and accessing resources your family needs or wants. Family Partnership Agreements are updated at least quarterly at a special meeting and can be updated more frequently by caregivers' or parent's request. The Family Partnership Agreements are our way of making sure we are providing care and learning opportunities that are individualized to your child and that we are supporting your family with the priorities that you have identified. When appropriate, staff from Early Head Start's multidisciplinary team can work with you or the caregiver to help implement specific goals or plans.

### ***Home Visits***

Each child enrolled in FIPP House is provided with quarterly home visit from the child care provider and the family child care coordinator. These home visits are times when we connect with families to ensure that we are providing what you expect for your child, assist you in accessing any community resources that your family needs, coordinate health and dental care issues for your child, and update child and family goals.

### ***Concerns***

If you have concerns or requests regarding your child's participation in our program, we ask that you first share these concerns with your child care provider. If you need more information or attention, please contact the Family Child care Coordinator at Early Head Start. If necessary, we may take your concern to the EHS Program Coordinator or the FIPP Program Coordinator. We document all parent concerns and address them in a timely manner. We will always let you know how we are handling your concern.

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## **Operational Details**

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### ***Calendar***

Each FIPP House sets its own hours and annual schedule at the beginning of the program year. We are committed to operating during the days that we agreed to at the beginning of the year (stated in your parent contract). Holidays and closures are described in the parent contract at enrollment. If an emergency arises, or if the provider is sick, we will do our best to provide a substitute so that your child's attendance is not disrupted.

### ***Privacy Practices***

In order to operate the program and to meet the individualized needs of each child, we have access to certain personal information about the children in the program and your family. Our program respects your right to confidentiality and privacy. Providers and EHS staff do not share any personal information with anyone not employed with the program (including other parents in the group) without your written consent.

Upon enrollment, all parents receive a detailed description of our privacy practices and agreement form.

### ***Use of Substitute Providers***

At FIPP House we recognize the importance of consist care providers and predictable schedules. However, from time to time your child care provider may be sick, attending staff development activity or need to have some uninterrupted time away from the children for curriculum planning. During those times, FIPP House will provide a substitute care provider that will ensure that FIPP House remains open, thus lessening interruption to your family's schedule. Every effort is used to ensure repeated use of familiar substitutes. ALL substitutes must meet the state and federal guidelines.

### ***Parent Involvement***

Parent involvement is core to the success and mission of FIPP Early Head Start. Our mission is to promote the development of young children by supporting and strengthening families and building caring and responsive communities. Central to strengthening families is creating a culture of promotion and empowerment. Families must be active participants in making decisions for their children, their families, and the activities that support their children and families. FIPP Houses, therefore, value and create opportunities at every level of the program for parent influence, involvement and leadership.

Parents are encouraged to become involved in Policy Council, a parent and community led advisory committee that meets monthly to discuss and vote on financial and program issues concerning all areas of FIPP Early Head Start.

The Policy Council maintains a number of standing Parent Committees in order to encourage parent participation and in order to strengthen and diversify the supports offered by FIPP Early Head Start. The standing committees and their functions are:

Community Assessment	This committee gathers information about how well the county serves children birth to age three, so that we can provide additional supports to families in needed areas. This committee meets 4-6 times during the year.
Recruitment and Enrollment	This committee develops ideas for increasing enrollment and publicizes the program.
Fatherhood Initiative	This committee is made up of a group of fathers in the program who work together to plan fun things for fathers in the program to do with their children and support one another.
Self Assessment	This committee is responsible for gathering information about the quality of our Early Head Start program each spring. This committee meets twice a month (often with staff) during the spring months.
Personnel	This committee is responsible for interviewing and recommending staff to fill empty positions and for making recommendations about how to best support staff. This committee meets when applicants need to be interviewed.

Parent Development	This committee plans educational events and activities that are helpful to parents. This committee meets monthly.
Health Services	This committee helps plan dental screenings and helps us offer other medical services that are helpful to families. This committee meets four times each year.
Pregnancy Support	This committee meets to develop supports for pregnant women. This committee meets monthly.

Parents are self-selected to serve on specific committees based on their interests, abilities and availability. Parents serve as committee leaders and report directly to the Policy Council.

FIPP House has an open door policy that invites parents to visit at any time to ensure that their children are happy, safe, and well cared for. These visits are not disruptive to the child care process and send your child the message that you are aware of what goes on in child care and approve. The time you spend in the classroom interacting with your child and the caregiver helps your child build a strong bond with the caregiver and helps your child feel secure while you are away.

FIPP House encourages parents to become active partners in their children’s dental and medical process. Parents are encouraged to accompany their children to scheduled appointments and to learn more about preventative care. FIPP House provides opportunities for parents to discuss their concerns about mental health issues (such as separation anxiety, attachment, confidence, challenging behaviors etc.). FIPP House provides the opportunity for parents to be actively involved in planning and implementing any interventions requested for their child.

FIPP House supports and encourages parent involvement in advocating for the needs of children and families within their community and will provide families with information about family resources. A community resource guide is updated annually and distributed to families enrolled in the program.

***Lost and Found***

A lost and found box is kept at each FIPP House. Any items not claimed within a month will be integrated into our extra clothes closet or be discarded. Please check the lost and found box regularly for items that may belong to you or your child.

***Trips/Transportation***

Transportation for field trips is provided by the Early Head Start bus or the FIPP House van, if one is available. Caregivers are responsible for the safety and well-being of each child and the following rules are followed:

- Children will be transported in age and size appropriate car seats
- The total number of children and adults being transported will not exceed the total number of seat belts on the bus
- Child/caregiver ratio will be maintained

- Children will enter and leave the vehicle from the curb side unless the vehicle is parked in a protected area or driveway
- Everyone will remain seated while the bus is in motion
- Drivers and caregivers will do a safety inspection of the vehicle before taking it on the road
- The vehicle will meet and maintain safety inspection standards of the Division of Motor Vehicles of North Carolina Department of Transportation
- The program will comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations

### ***Parenting Education***

We encourage families to take advantage of opportunities to participate in literacy services by collaborating with CVCC-Alexander Center and assisting family members who need to work on their GEDs or ESL classes. We invite and encourage parent education in health, nutrition, and mental health by providing education in these areas for staff, parents and families. We offer educational opportunities for families to learn more about:

- CPR
- First Aid
- Positive Parenting
- Nutrition
- Preventative Healthcare
- Child Development
- Shaping Children’s Behavior

We encourage families to enroll in Early Head Start’s Parenting Club, a six week parenting education and support group that helps parents focus on their parenting priorities, develop new parenting strategies, and create a support network to meet their family goals.

### ***Child Abuse and Neglect***

We have your child’s health and safety as our first interest. Caregivers are trained on what is considered abuse or neglect and the program’s obligation in reporting any suspected abuse/neglect. FIPP Early Head Start must report any suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency and or death by maltreatment. The law requires anyone who has cause to suspect that a child has been (or is at risk of being) abused, neglected, and or dependant must report that child’s situation immediately to the Alexander County Department of Social Services. Parents will be informed if a report will be made or has been made. If a caregiver is involved in the suspected abuse, the caregiver will be immediately removed from the presence of children and will be placed on leave until an investigation is completed. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to move the children to another FIPP House with openings.

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## **Health and Nutrition**

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### ***Nutrition***

Meals and snacks are provided for children enrolled in the program and for parents while they are visiting or volunteering in the classroom during snack and/or mealtime. While

infants are fed on demand, toddlers and older children have a scheduled snack in the morning, lunch between 11:30 and 12:30, and one or two snacks in the afternoon depending on the length of the child's day. All meals and snacks are served family-style and children are encouraged to serve themselves.

Meals are prepared in the house kitchen and children are encouraged to participate in meal preparation, setting the table, and clean-up. Mealtime is an important routine that offers many varied ways of participating and offers many learning opportunities and can accommodate a variety of levels of ability. Participation in meal preparation, eating meals and clean-up are scheduled activities in our curriculum.

Meals are nutritious and our menu is posted each week in the playroom. If your child has any food allergies, you must provide a written description of the allergy and the child's reaction so that we can watch for it. Please also provide us with dietary restriction in writing. We will prepare a variety of food that reflects a variety of tastes and cultures and we will encourage children to try everything.

We participate in the U. S. Department of Agriculture Food Program, which allows us to enhance our food options.

### ***Health and Dental Care Coordination***

FIPP Early Head Start ensures that all children are healthy and ready to learn. A physical examination is required for all children upon enrollment. You will receive the form in the admissions packet and have 30 days to return the form to the provider. You will receive an additional form for each of your child's scheduled well-child check ups to be completed by your child's physician. Early Head Start staff and Health Department nurses monitor all children's files to ensure that children are healthy, able to attend group child care, and up-to-date on scheduled immunizations.

Several times during the year we schedule dental screenings in which all children are invited and encouraged to participate in. We will inform you before these screenings are scheduled and ask for your permission to include your child. You are invited and encouraged to attend during that time to support your child and learn about oral health care for children. Parents of children who need follow-up dental work will be assisted in locating an appropriate dentist. We provide financial support for follow-up dental care for families who need it.

### ***Illness***

We want your child to be in a healthy environment and we work hard to prevent any unnecessary exposure to illness. Any child that shows sign of illness, including the following, should not be brought to FIPP House:

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Deep cough
- Sore throat

Children who display these signs during the day will be isolated from the other children so that they can quietly rest and you will be called to pick your child up early. A child must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to FIPP House.

If your child was treated by a doctor for any reason, please bring a note that states your child is safe to be in group care with other young children before returning.

Frequent hand washing with soap and running water is necessary to prevent the spread of disease. Caregivers and children are expected to wash their hands frequently. Children must wash their hands upon entering FIPP House in the morning, before eating snacks or meals, after toileting, before and after water or sand play, after handling animals, after playing outside, and after coughing and wiping their noses.

### ***Medications***

We do not administer any medication (prescription and over-the-counter) except in an emergency situation such as allergic reactions, or when a child has a chronic condition where the administration of medication is required for participation in the program, such as asthma or diabetes. Detailed written parental permission with physician directions must be on file for these emergency or chronic situations. Diaper cream, teething ointment, and sunscreen may be applied, but only with detailed written parental permission on a program medication form. Emergency medications are kept in a locked cabinet or locked box.

Parents are welcome to come to FIPP House during the day to personally administer medication.

### ***Emergency Procedures***

Emergency procedures are prominently posted in each FIPP House. Regular fire and disaster drills are conducted. Children are taught what to do and to listen to the caregiver's directions. In the case of a real emergency, children will be accounted for and given aid and comfort as needed. Providers will remain with the children until parents arrive. Caregivers are trained annually in CPR and every three years in first aid.

### ***Accidents***

Children may be involved in minor accidents (scraped knees, bumps, and bruises, etc.) while in care. We have measures in place to create a safe environment that prevents accidents from occurring; however, active, healthy children cannot avoid some minor injuries. We treat cuts or scratches by washing with soap and water, covering, and applying ice if needed. An accident report will be completed specifying the nature of the injury, the time and place the injury occurred, the first aid administered, and the name of the caregiver involved. A copy will be given to the parent and a copy will be kept in the child's records.

Occasionally, incidents occur involving other children such as biting, pushing, or hitting. An accident form will also be used to document these incidents. We discuss these occurrences with the parents of both children, but the name of the other child will not be disclosed.

Biting is a behavior that happens frequently with children 12 months to 3 years of age. Caregivers will work with children and families to help children develop alternative behaviors for expressing and comforting themselves.

***Unhealthy Substances***

FIPP Houses are safe and developmentally supportive environments for children and families. FIPP Houses are drug-free, smoke-free, and weapon-free. No smoking is permitted within 20 feet of the premises. The premises include the outdoor play space.