

Grantee Quality Improvement Plan for Duluth Public Schools Head Start Program

The Duluth Public Schools Head Start program received an Environmental Health and Safety Review on May 10-11, 2016. During that visit, there was a deficiency noted under **Part 1304.53 regarding Facilities, Materials and Equipment**. In this document we will address each issue individually and offer a correction to bring us in full compliance with Head Start Standards.

Age –Inappropriate Playground Equipment

The report we received includes all 5 elementary school playground sites where we serve Head Start children.

Response- Stowe School has a smaller playground that is fenced and suitable for young children. This is the playground we use at Stowe so the tall climber at that site is not where Head Start children play. The other 4 schools have a notice posted inside the classrooms indicating that Head Start children are not allowed to use the tall structures on the playgrounds. This has been reinforced when the group is outdoors through the use of Active Supervision, with staff strategically posted around the playground. Further, we are committed to pursuing funding as it becomes available for separate age appropriate outdoor play space for Head Start children.

Action-At the 4 sites that Head Start children share a larger playground; we will add outdoor signage on the playgrounds to remind adults that children under 5 years of age are not allowed on the tallest equipment. Further, we will continue our Active Supervision protocol while children are using the school playgrounds to ensure children do not use the restricted equipment.

Insufficient Surfacing in a Fall Zone

Response-The school district and grantee has recycled tire chips used as shock absorbing material. This material is constantly shifting and may be why the level of surfacing was low when the reviewer was present.

Action-We have purchased rakes for use by staff to remedy this issue. Rakes are used to even out the surfacing during our daily playground inspections. This is not a perfect solution as other children are on the same playground constantly throughout the day and may kick this surfacing around as a result of their play. Staff will be instructed to bring their rakes with them to the playground and complete another safety check to ensure sufficient surfacing exists in fall zones. Further, we will create a work order to request Facilities Management to provide more surfacing material at and around the tire swing at Piedmont School.

Maintenance

Response-Head Start staff called the issue in question here, repairs and maintenance needed at the Stowe playground, to the Director's attention immediately.

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Action- The attached work order was completed to request the district maintenance staff to repair the structure and if necessary, order parts to complete the work needed. Children were not allowed to use the affected parts of the structure until repairs were completed.

Unsanitary Trash Storage

Response- We have 2 types of trash cans in most classrooms. One is a large, approximately 32 gallon can with a lid that is used for discarding food, contaminated items from for example art activities and items of that nature. The other is a small uncovered can for children to dispose of tissues and paper towels. It appears the report is citing us for using uncovered trash cans for paper towels and tissues. These cans are used for that purpose so that children do not need to touch the lid of the larger covered can when it has been closed following meal service. We understood this practice to be safer and more sanitary for children. We respectfully request clarification as to the best practices around disposing of paper towels and tissues.

Action- We will remove all uncovered trash cans and replace them with trash cans that can be opened by depressing a foot pedal. That type of can closes automatically. We believe this will meet the performance standards for safe and sanitary disposal of the paper waste in classrooms.

In closing, we anticipate these Health and Safety Violations can be addressed with the plan detailed above. Again, we respectfully request further clarification of the best practices for use of trash cans in classrooms.