



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

# Sure Start Program Guide

*Updated SY 2018-19*



**COLLEGE AND CAREER READY**

A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

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## An Introduction to the Sure Start Program

### What Is Sure Start?

Sure Start is an exemplary, research-based preschool program that serves military children and families living overseas. In addition to offering a high-quality educational program that reflects best practices in the field, Sure Start also provides health and nutrition, social, and parent involvement services. Close collaboration between families, schools, and the installation community is viewed as essential and a required part of the program.

This multipronged approach to the delivery of services distinguishes Sure Start from all other DoDEA programs. At the same time, Sure Start ensures that participating children receive the same uncompromisingly excellent education that all DoDEA children are guaranteed.

Sure Start's comprehensive model, although appropriate for all preschool children, targets preschoolers who are "at risk" for later school failure because of economic circumstance or other health and/or family factors. Because this innovative, effective model is expensive to replicate, it is reserved for those children and families who will most benefit from participation in the program. As its name implies, Sure Start is dedicated to providing participating children with a sure start in school and later life.

### Philosophy

As noted, DoDEA believes that with a sure start, children in all military families can develop the social/emotional and academic competence needed for productive, lifelong learning. The Sure Start preschool program is based on the premise that children's potential for learning is influenced by their early cultural, physical, social, emotional, linguistic, creative, and cognitive experiences. It incorporates the tenets of child growth and development and family systems theory that stem from the works of Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, Smilansky, Kolb, Bronfenbrenner, and Gardner, among others.

Because children who are identified as being at risk for school failure may have limited access to opportunities that enhance development in all domains, Sure Start provides children and families with an intensive curriculum that teaches requisite skills in a way that addresses children's unique learning styles and intelligences. The Sure Start program is wedded to the beliefs that risk is not destiny and that early intervention can ameliorate risk factors.

In summary, Sure Start staff and administrators believe the following:

- All children benefit from early experiences that are supportive of their ages and developmental capabilities, individual needs, and cultures.
- All children must have a healthy start in life in order to be ready to learn. All children learn best when provided with a safe and nurturing environment at home and at school.
- From the earliest age, children need to be exposed to rich experiences in language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, technology, and physical education (PE) so that maximum advantage can be made of the "windows of opportunity" for learning, as described by brain research.

- All learning for young children is interrelated, and children learn academic skills at the same time that they master social/emotional and physical skills.
- All children learn through play and benefit from adults who understand how to build upon children's natural desire to learn about the world around them.
- All children have different learning styles that need to be accommodated, taking into account their individual types of intelligences, including emotional intelligence.
- All families must have knowledge of and access to community resources and social services that address their needs if they are to provide their children with a secure and stimulating environment that supports their children's social and academic success.
- Family involvement in children's educational experiences is crucial to children's success. Children flourish when their families and schools provide consistent messages about learning and development.
- Preschool programs must link College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), curriculum, instruction, and assessment to those of the later grades to provide children with a seamless transition between preschool and kindergarten.

## Eligibility

Sure Start's first responsibility is to the four-year-old child, who turns four by **September 1** of the enrolling school year, of a military or eligible Department of Defense (DoD) employee whose rank is Enlisted (E) E1-4; General Schedule (GS) GS1-4; or Non Appropriated Fund (NAF), NAF 1-2<sup>1</sup> rank equivalent at the date of application. (Note that the application date is not to exceed six months before the first day of the following school year). Eligibility for the Sure Start program does not extend to students who are non-DoD-sponsored or to children who are geographically in a non-DODEA site. Please see [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01, DoDEA Sure Start Program](#) for eligibility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. It is important to note that only the sponsor's rank is used to determine eligibility—not family income, **unless it is used to determine rank equivalents for NAF Levels 1-4 or rank equivalent GS1-8**. Any sponsor in the range of E5-9, GS5-8, or NAF 3-4 rank equivalent who wishes to apply for the program is eligible to do so with the understanding that first priority is given to those children whose sponsor is in the E1-4, GS1-4 rank equivalent, or NAF 1-2 rank equivalent range. Further explanation of eligibility requirements can be found in Chapter 7, Program Logistics and Administration.

## Background Information

The DoD operates two educational systems for the children of military and civilian DoD families: Child Development Programs (CDP) and the [Department of Defense Education Activity](#) (DoDEA) schools. CDP offers child care and before- and after-school care to dependent children from 6 weeks to 14 years of age. DoDEA educates students from pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and offers programs in overseas schools for selected preschool-aged children, such as those with disabilities or in Sure Start

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<sup>1</sup> NAF Rank Equivalent: The NAF rank is used to determine Sure Start eligibility for the dependents of NAF employees. The NAF employee rank uses different banding levels than its counterparts (i.e. Enlisted (E) Service members or GS civilian employees). In order to determine the priority order for enrollment in the Sure Start program, the NAF employee rank must be at the level equivalent to the enlisted Service member and GS civilian employee.

programs. In DoDEA's stateside schools (Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools), Pre-K-aged children are also served.

For most of its existence, DoD operated CDP and DoDEA as two complementary, but independent, educational systems. However, in 1991, noting that a sizable population of preschoolers was not being served by either system—because of cost, geographic location, family factors, or lack of available child care slots—Ms. Millicent Woods, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel Support & Families Education), conceived the idea for Sure Start.

From the outset, Sure Start was designed to provide high-quality services to children identified to be at risk for future school failure. As noted, Sure Start is unique among DoDEA programs in that it includes comprehensive health and nutrition, social, and parent involvement services, in addition to providing educational programming.

### Sure Start and Head Start

In developing Sure Start, program designers looked for guidance to best practices in early childhood programs throughout the country. Because Head Start functions only domestically, Sure Start was designed to provide similar services as Head Start to families living overseas. The Sure Start model has since grown and continues to develop.

From its inception, Sure Start has incorporated many of the features of Head Start that are correlated with high quality. These include the following:

- A four-tiered service delivery system for education, health and nutrition, social services, and mandatory parent/sponsor involvement. Separate component plans outline the provided services and timelines for delivery.
- Medical, dental, and developmental screenings for all enrolled children. Immediate follow-up assessment and services are provided if problems are identified.
- Nutritious lunches and snacks that take into account children's individual and cultural preferences, as well as food-related health concerns. These are provided at no cost to students.
- Active involvement in the program by families of all children through required participation in classroom activities, parent education meetings, and home visits.
- Thoughtful and intentional planning that ensures that the program environment, curriculum, materials, routines, and activities are appropriate to the children's ages, individual needs, and cultures.

To make Sure Start fit into the DoDEA culture and regulations, Sure Start has evolved into a program with a distinct personality. Specifically, Sure Start differs from Head Start in the following ways:

- Oversight for individual programs is at the Headquarters (HQ) and district office levels, rather than resting with the local program. Parents may recommend changes, but they do not have governing power in the same sense that individual Head Start Parent Policy Councils do. All Sure Start programs follow DoD regulations.



- Unlike Head Start, which uses income as the sole defining criterion for eligibility, Sure Start regards the sponsor's rank as the first priority, but not the sole factor, considered in enrollment.
- Whereas Head Start mandates that a minimum of 10 percent of classroom slots be reserved for children with disabilities, Sure Start does not use disability status as an eligibility criterion. When screening reveals that a Sure Start child has special needs, Sure Start staff work with the DoDEA special education staff to determine the best possible environment, placement, and services for the child.
- Parent involvement in Sure Start is mandatory. Parents are informed before registration that an involvement commitment (i.e., 30 hours per parent) is a precondition for enrollment. Cooperation and participation in home visits is also an enrollment requirement. Parent involvement is viewed as being integral to the program's philosophy and operations. Although Head Start leaves the determination of staff-child ratios to state and local licensing boards, Sure Start specifies a ratio of two adults to 18 to 20 students. Although parent volunteers lower the adult-to-child ratio, their presence does not affect official ratios.
- Whereas Head Start programs make curriculum adoption decisions at the local level, all Sure Start programs use the same curriculum, which is based on current research about how children grow and learn and is consistent with Sure Start Program Standards and the DoDEA College and Career Ready Standards for Preschool ([CCRSP](#)). Both the Sure Start teacher and the paraprofessional receive annual training in Sure Start's curriculum to ensure consistent implementation. New Sure Start teachers and paraprofessionals will receive three days of training at a determined area site.<sup>2</sup>
- Whereas Head Start operates a variety of program models, all Sure Start programs operate on a full-day schedule (typically six hours).

### The Sure Start Pilot Program and Evaluation

During the spring of 1992, a pilot Sure Start program was implemented at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, to test the viability of the model. The results of an extensive evaluation by DoD established that all of the goals of the pilot program were successfully met, including the following two research objectives:

- Each student received a high-quality preschool education that prepared him or her for kindergarten.
- Parents were fully involved in the education of their children.

As a result of the documented successes of the pilot program (plus the enthusiastic endorsement of participating families, staff, and administrators), 26 Sure Start programs were established in Europe and the Pacific in the 1992–1993 school year. In 1997–1998, the program was expanded to 14 additional sites. By the year 2000, 65 Sure Start sites were in operation around the world. In recent years the number of sites has been reduced to 52 due to DoD force restructuring. It is expected that the number of Sure Start programs will stay constant for the immediate future.

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<sup>2</sup> Returning teachers and paraprofessionals will receive at least two days of training.



## Sure Start Standards

Sure Start is governed by three sets of standards that establish the parameters for program success: Sure Start Program Standards, DoDEA Early Childhood Education (ECE) Space and Safety Standards, and DoDEA CCRSP.

### Sure Start Program Standards

The Sure Start Program Standards provide specific guidance on how to implement this program so that it meets agreed upon indicators of quality. The program standards define the conditions and expectations for quality programming in each of Sure Start's four component areas: education, health and nutrition, social services, and parent involvement. In addition, they state what services must be provided to children and families and what the time lines for delivery are to be.

The Sure Start program standards are referenced in this Guide within each of the relevant component chapters. Sure Start Program Standards for Education are in Chapter 1; Sure Start Program Standards for Health and Nutrition are in Chapters 2 and 3; Sure Start Program Standards for Social Services are in Chapter 4; and the Sure Start Program Standards for Parent Involvement are in Chapter 5.

### DoDEA College and Career Ready Standards for Preschool (CCRSP)

DoDEA has adopted the Objectives for Development and Learning as DoDEA's [CCRSP](#). The comprehensive objectives are based on current research in the field of ECE and include predictors of school success. The objectives are progressions of learning which are organized into ten areas of development and learning, including developmental areas, content areas and English language acquisition. They cover the following areas: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition.

Although DoDEA CCRSP apply to all Pre-K programs operated by DoDEA, not just Sure Start, staff and administration should note that these standards are aligned with the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) for grades K-12 and directly correlate with Sure Start's adopted curriculum and online portfolio and assessment system, [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#). Planning in Sure Start, however, needs to begin with the CCRSP as well as the program standards. DoDEA embraces the position that an effective program has a comprehensive and ongoing system of curriculum assessment as well as program evaluation that is based on sound early childhood practices and philosophies. DoDEA [CCRSP](#) are a valuable part of ECE only if they are coupled with program standards that specify the key elements needed to build an environment in which early childhood CCRS can be implemented effectively. Awareness and effective implementation of both these early learning and program standards are a shared responsibility of all stakeholders, including parents.

### DoDEA Space and Safety Standards

The DoDEA ECE Space and Safety Standards are provided in this guide to ensure compliance and guidance with appropriate health, space, and safety requirements for young children in all DoDEA schools. The standards are based on requirements of the National Health and Safety Performance Standards-Caring for our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition ([CFOC3](#)) (2011) and the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (NAEYC) and [DoDEA Regulation 6055.01](#), DoDEA Safety Program.

## Organization of the Sure Start Program Guide

Part	Chapters	Description
Part I	1 - 5	Provides an overview of each component area in the Sure Start program.
Part II	6 - 7	Presents the mechanics of how the Sure Start program operates at each site.
Part III	8	Presents <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a> about the Sure Start program.



## Chapter 1: The Educational Component

### *Sure Start Program Standards for the Education Component*

Fifteen program standards guide the education component. The objectives of these standards are to do the following:

- Provide children with a learning environment and varied experiences that will help them develop socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, toward the overall goal of social and academic competence.
- Integrate the educational aspects of the health, social services, and parent involvement components into the daily program of activities for children and families.
- Assist parents in increasing their knowledge, understanding, skills, and experiences in child growth and development to enhance their role as the principal influence on their child's education and development.

The fifteen program standards addressing the Education Component are:

#### **Standard 1**

*A written plan for achieving the program's educational goals and objectives will be developed.*

A Sure Start Program Component Plan will be written by the Sure Start teacher and the paraprofessional with the help and approval of the building administrator. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Program Component Plan](#). New programs should refer to the Sample Sure Start Program Component Plan to structure their plan. Refer to the [Sample Sure Start Program Component Plan](#) in the Appendix. Existing programs need only review and update the previous year's component plan from year to year. The completed program component plan will be reviewed by the Sure Start Advisory Committee and submitted to the district office within 45 days of the start of the program. This will serve as documentation for systems accreditation. The school administrator will share the finalized component plan and Recommitment Letter with the school liaison officer (SLO), and the district leadership will submit the letter to the base command, when necessary, for recommitment to the Sure Start program. Use of the Recommitment Letter is optional and based on need for command support. Refer to the [Recommitment Letter](#) in the Appendix.

#### **Standard 2**

*All Sure Start programs will use standards-based curriculum to help children work toward mastery of College and Career Ready standards.*

All programs are to use the same curriculum to ensure consistent high quality across sites. The DoDEA adopted curriculum is research-based, aligned to CCRS and program-specific standards, and validated for use with four-year-old Pre-K programs. As needed, DoDEA will purchase appropriate curriculum materials and provide professional development on the appropriate use of the materials to help children achieve the DoDEA [CCRSP](#).

Sure Start programs use *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Volume 5: The Objectives for Development and Learning* (Dodge, Heroman, Colker, & Bickart) for implementing the CCRSP and program standards. Refer to [CCRSP](#) in the Appendix.

### Standard 3

*The indoor physical environment will be organized into the 10 functional interest areas as described in The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volumes 1 & 2 and will be consistent with the health, safety, and developmental needs of four-year-old children. The program will have access to a safe outdoor area with appropriate play equipment.*

Minimum space requirements will be 35-square-feet per child inside and 75-square-feet per child outside at each Sure Start program. The teacher's desk and filing space should not be included in this calculation and when possible should be located apart from the classroom. In 21<sup>st</sup> Century designs, shared space may be calculated in the minimum space requirements.

### Standard 4

*The program will provide consistent, appropriate, and sufficient furniture, equipment, and materials to meet the needs of the children. The furnishings and materials will be arranged in such a way as to facilitate learning, ensure a balanced program of spontaneous and structured activities, and encourage self-reliance in the children.*

Furniture, equipment, and materials are to be selected in coordination with the district or HQ point of contact (POC) for ECE. Items are to be selected from a master inventory to provide a variety of learning experiences that encourage experimentation and exploration. The classroom should be set up as described in *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volumes 1 & 2*. The Sure Start staff should refer to the Sure Start Inventory List and the Possible Sources for Inventory Ordering Needs to assist with the equipping the Sure Start classroom. Click the links to download the [Sure Start Inventory List Form](#) and the [Possible Sources for Inventory Ordering Needs](#).

### Standard 5

*The program will establish procedures for helping children and families transition into the Sure Start program.*

Parents are to receive orientation and be encouraged to walk through the classroom with their child before the first day of class. They will also receive regular training on child development and learning throughout the year. These procedures are detailed in [Chapter 5, The Parent Involvement Component](#) and *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 5.

### Standard 6

*The classroom teacher and paraprofessional will conduct two home visits and two parent conferences per year.*

Together, the teacher and paraprofessional will visit the children's families in their homes at least twice a year in accordance with [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01](#). A parent-teacher conference is required for all Sure Start families in the fall. An additional home visit may be scheduled in lieu of parent-teacher

conferences after the second marking period. The mechanics of conducting home visits and parent conferences are detailed in [Chapter 5, The Parent Involvement Component](#) and in *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 5.

### Standard 7

*The program will develop a daily schedule that balances child-initiated activities with teacher-directed instruction.*

A copy of the schedule will be posted for parents and visitors to consult and for students a picture-based schedule will be developed and posted at the children's eye level. These schedules will show a balance of individual, small-group, whole-group activities, morning and afternoon group meeting times, uninterrupted child-choice time of at least one hour, and daily scheduled outdoor time of at least 45-60 minutes a day. In developing a program schedule, Sure Start staff should refer to the Sample Daily Schedule. Refer to the [Sample Daily Schedule](#) in the Appendix. Additionally, Sure Start staff should refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 2.

### Standard 8

*The program is designed to meet the individual differences and needs of all participating children and their families.*

*The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapters 4 and 5 describes strategies for partnering with families and meeting children's individual needs. The Sure Start program is designed to meet the needs of all children including children with disabilities and children who are English language learners (ELLs). The Sure Start program is appropriate for most children who require accommodations and services. If a student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or qualifies for special education services, the Case Study Committee (CSC) will determine appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE). If the Sure Start program is determined to be the LRE, the Sure Start teacher will serve as the general education teacher in the same way K-5 classroom teachers serve as the general education teacher. The Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities (PSCD) teacher, or other Special Education teacher will provide the special education services as outlined on the child's IEP. The Sure Start staff and Special Education staff should collaborate frequently.

### Standard 9

*The program activities and resources will celebrate, honor, and respect the cultures of all children and families served.*

Sure Start staff should refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapters 1 and 5 to address this program standard. It is recommended that the Sure Start staff have a mastery of some basic phrases in the children's native languages and bring each family's cultural heritage into the classroom. The Sure Start staff should encourage a child's dual language while providing sound English instruction. The staff should also be aware of local host-nation customs and norms. Examples of strategies to support this program standard include counting in the host-nation or prominent second language, singing ethnic or host-nation songs, displaying host-nation artifacts,

encouraging families to send in photographs, and showing a general respect and value for home cultures.

The actual celebration of holidays is not part of the Sure Start program. Although the Sure Start program recognizes and respects ethnic and religious diversity and celebrations, teachers should discuss with parents that these celebrations should remain in the home as opposed to the school setting. Note that Sure Start classes, at the teacher's discretion, may elect to participate in school-wide activities and celebrations (Red-Ribbon week, Read Across America, story book parades, etc.). Celebrations of learning are embedded in the curriculum and outlined at the end of each study in *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Teaching Guides*.

### Standard 10

*The program will employ procedures and strategies for appropriate guidance that promote children's safe and healthy development.*

Sure Start staff should refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 4 to address this program standard. The behavior guidance plan will be based on the teaching of social/emotional growth strategies rather than a punitive/reward system.

As outlined in [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01](#), a ratio of two adults (one teacher and one paraprofessional) for every 18 to 20 children is to be maintained at all times to ensure child safety and so that staff can provide the individual attention children need for success. The one exception to this policy is during naptime/rest time, when only one staff member need be present, so that the teacher and paraprofessional can take their lunch. In the event of teacher or paraprofessional absence a substitute teacher should be arranged. A contingency plan should be developed to outline how the classroom will be covered if a substitute teacher is not available. Administrators must ensure that the ratio is maintained. Sure Start paraprofessionals should not be pulled to substitute in other classrooms or cover grades K-5 lunch duty. This compromises the safety and integrity of the program and is not consistent with [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01](#).

### Standard 11

*Program staff will conduct ongoing observations and assessments of student progress and development.*

To address this program standard, Sure Start staff should refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1*, Chapter 4. Staff will maintain portfolios and records documenting each child's growth, development, and progress for the purposes of educational planning and informing parents of their children's progress. Sure Start staff will regularly document student progress using the online assessment system under contract by DoDEA.

### Standard 12

*The program will provide for self-evaluation.*

As outlined in [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01](#), each Sure Start program should be reviewed through a self-evaluation process. Working together as a team, the teaching staff and the building administrator will evaluate the program to identify its strengths and target areas in need of improvement. The self-

evaluation should include [The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R), the [DoDEA Space and Safety Checklist](#), and the [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#).

Sure Start staff and administrators may refer to the Sure Start Program Improvement Plan Example, as needed. Sure Start teachers may use the Sure Start Program Improvement Plan Template. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#). Refer to the [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan Example](#) in the Appendix.

### Standard 13

*The program will integrate the educational aspects of Sure Start with the health, social services, and parent involvement components.*

To have lasting effects on children's growth and development, ECE programs should be comprehensive (Barnett, 2008). Children's screenings, family-style dining, and parent participation in classroom activities will be integrated into the daily schedule. The Sure Start staff will work with families to make needed referrals and to involve families in community events and opportunities that will enhance the quality of life for all family members.

### Standard 14

*The program will offer and require professional development activities for staff.*

In accordance with [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01](#), Sure Start staff will participate in annual professional development. To maintain program quality and enhance the professional growth of staff, both the Sure Start teacher and the paraprofessional will be trained annually on curriculum, instructional strategies, and program implementation. Other opportunities for professional growth may be available to staff throughout the year in conjunction with local school, district or HQ initiatives.

### Standard 15

*The program will participate in the accreditation process.*

As a part of the elementary school accreditation, Sure Start classes are included in school-wide planning and activities that support continuous school improvement and the accreditation process ([DoDEA Regulation 1307.01](#)). Data for continuous school improvement goals should be generated from the reports provided by the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) online assessment system.

## Implementing the Education Component Program Standards

Following Sure Start's philosophy, Sure Start staff is to integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment into a high-quality educational program that ensures all children reach their potential as learners. Taken together, the following descriptions provide a portrait of quality early educational programming. Each Sure Start program is to replicate these features.

### Curriculum

Curriculum may be defined as a systematically organized written plan that is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn. All Sure Start curriculum materials must do the following: align with the specified goals for children's development and learning; align with how



children learn the knowledge, skills, and dispositions incorporated in these goals; support the type of instruction that best helps children achieve these goals; and contribute to the type of classroom environment needed to support the implementation of the curriculum. All Sure Start programs use the same adopted curriculum: *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, (Dodge, Colker, Heroman, & Bickart, 2010) which includes Volumes 1-5, Daily Resources, and Teaching Guides.

The curriculum focuses on providing children with experiences that promote development and learning in the following areas: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science & technology, social studies, and the arts. Curriculum activities grow from simple to more complex tasks and from concrete to abstract concepts. The curriculum activities also allow for individualized instruction based on children's specific needs. All children, including those with disabilities who are on IEPs and ELLs, need to be able to access the curriculum.

Parents should be made aware of curriculum activities through newsletters, parent meetings, classroom participation and bulletin boards. Parents should engage in curricular activities during their required parent participation time and at home by using activities and suggestions recommended by the teacher.

### Instruction

When implementing activities and experiences for the Sure Start program, staff should be guided by an understanding of how young children learn with developmentally appropriate practices. In the Sure Start classroom, instruction consists of small-group, large-group, and individual activities. Because young children are active learners, a significant amount of instruction and the majority of children's work are completed in the classroom interest areas. Thoughtfully planned curriculum activities are implemented with the following considerations in mind: the activities' importance to children's overall development; the children's progress in accomplishing the DoDEA [CCRS](#); how the environment can be structured to promote these activities; what strategies can be used to enrich and extend learning; and how these activities can be coordinated with the experiences parents provide in the home. Teachers are encouraged to build instruction around materials found in the classroom, school, and home environment. The experiences, needs, and interests of the children in the program also influence the instructional design so that learning takes place in a context that is meaningful to the children.

Effective instruction in the Sure Start classroom is intentional and responsive. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 1: The Foundation* is the adopted curricular resource detailing what effective instruction looks like in the classroom. Chapter 3: What Children Learn and Chapter 4: Caring and Teaching provide detailed information about children and intentional teaching. Refer to [Examples of Effective Instruction](#) in the Appendix for what should be evident in a Sure Start classroom.

### Whole-Group Instruction

It is obviously important to provide a variety of choices and activities when working with young children and to plan transitions to successfully manage the classroom. The use of interest areas throughout the classroom is a required component of the program. This, however, should not be misconstrued to mean that some direct instruction each day, whether with the entire class or portions of the class, is inappropriate. The Sure Start teacher must carefully and intentionally plan to create a healthy balance

and utilize a variety of instructional methods to meet the needs of diverse learners. It is also important to understand that periods when Sure Start children are in a large group should be no longer than 15 or 20 minutes in length.

Large-group meetings provide an opportunity for children to experience a sense of belonging to a group. Children practice communication skills as they express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and share the work they have been doing. Large-group time provides opportunities to talk about topics that interest the children and to solve problems that affect the whole group. Most teachers plan large-group time in the morning and again at the end of the day, although there may be other times whole group instruction is appropriate such as reading aloud a story, discussing plans for the next activity, or to solve problems that affect the whole group (Dodge, Heroman, Colker, Bickart, 2010, pg. 73).

Here are some examples of acceptable direct instruction:

- Discuss the day's schedule, learning objectives, review rules, and discuss the study topic
- A shared reading or big book activity to introduce or reinforce a certain concept
- A read-aloud for simple enjoyment and to encourage, model, and nurture a love of reading and language
- Observing and discussing the weather, counting attendance, answering the question of the day, singing, dancing, or any other activity that requires group awareness
- A group writing activity or composition followed by choral reading (e.g., morning message or shared writing) to model writing and/or left-right progression
- Demonstration of a new game or a piece of classroom equipment, or modeling social skills through puppetry
- Demonstration of proper use of a learning tool or new materials in an interest area
- Teaching/reinforcing a song, finger-play, or choral reading
- Introducing a classroom visitor
- Discussing safety procedures such as a fire drill or bus safety before a field trip
- An activity that involves all children participating in charting, listing, or large-group graphing activities to collect mathematical and scientific data for comparison and/or study
- Orally collecting information and interpreting it in a picture graph
- Reflect on the day's events, discuss what is planned for tomorrow, and closing rituals such as a good-bye song, recording what was done at school today on a calendar, or a time for children to share what they worked on at school today

### Using Food in the Classroom

Being aware of children's cultural sensitivities is part of developmentally appropriate practices and therefore an essential part of the Sure Start classroom. Because food is considered sacred in many cultures and scarcity is a reality in many families, food in the Sure Start program must be used only for consumption. Although cooking activities and snack preparation are highly appropriate and encouraged, food products are not to be used for art activities or display purposes. The rule of thumb is that all foods used in the classroom need to be consumed. Use of food for art purposes or use of rice or

beans as a substitute for sand in the sand table does not occur in the Sure Start classroom. Sure Start staff may refer to the list of acceptable Sensory Table Ideas to provide students with experiences beyond sand and water that do not utilize food. It is acceptable to use food ingredients for the Intentional Teaching Experience where the students create play dough, modeling clay, oobleck, etc. Refer to the [Sensory Table Ideas](#) in the Appendix.

## Specialists

Sure Start enrollment is not included in the school population when determining their school's staffing ratio for specialists. Due to the staffing ratio used for specialists, it is not recommended that Sure Start be included in the school's specialist rotation on a regular basis. It is anticipated that the majority of support from the specialists will be consultation with the Sure Start teacher.

However, specialists, who work with Sure Start students, should do so within the Sure Start classroom environment and with the students in a way that does not compromise the Sure Start program standards and guidance. The following are several scenarios illustrating appropriate collaboration with a specialist:

- A music teacher could speak to the whole class during center time for a short period of time about the similarities of rhythm to patterns and demonstrate clapping to make some patterns. Then she/he could introduce some simple rhythm instruments and put them in a center for students to explore. The music teacher could remain in the Sure Start classroom and be at the center with the instruments and interact with small groups of students who choose to participate and show an interest in that center and learning more about rhythm, patterns, etc.
- A PE teacher could introduce a hopping game to children as a whole group during outdoor play and then interact with small groups of children who are interested in continuing to play the game or extend their learning around this concept.
- In general, a Sure Start teacher would want to have a time period when all centers are open and the specialists could position themselves in a center that most closely aligns with their area. While the specialists are there, they can interact with the children and observe the children's interactions with peers and the materials.

Collaboration with other specialists, such as the guidance counselor and the educational technologist, is encouraged when possible. The guidance counselor can be a valuable resource to support the social services component of the Sure Start program and help the students with their social-emotional development. The Sure Start teacher and paraprofessional should collaborate with the guidance counselor to ensure lessons are developmentally appropriate and address the needs of the class. Collaboration with the educational technologist enables the Sure Start students to become familiar with computer skills and experience technology-enhanced learning. The Sure Start teacher and paraprofessional should collaborate with the educational technologist and are encouraged, when possible, to plan developmentally appropriate activities that relate to the class's current study or address an identified [Objective for Development and Learning](#).

## Lesson Planning

Teachers are required to develop weekly lesson plans that will create ways for students to achieve the DoDEA [CCRS](#). Although there is not a prescribed method for lesson planning, it is recommended that lesson plans be created using the planning tool in the DoDEA contracted online assessment tool, [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#), and include a variety of activities that are thoughtful, intentional, and incorporate time and materials needed. Curriculum materials to be utilized in lesson planning include the Teaching Guides, the Intentional Teaching Cards/Experiences, the Book Discussion Cards™, and the Mighty Minutes™. Implementing the adopted curriculum provides teachers with numerous options for incorporating extended studies.

Teachers should also strive to employ both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Lesson plans must be flexible and fluid enough to accommodate students' interests and the divergent ways students use to discover and explore. Lesson plans are only "anticipated" or "expected" ways that children may proceed through the week's activities. It is understood that unexpected events and teachable moments may sidetrack the best of planned lessons. Children's interests and needs must always be at the heart of the Sure Start day.

## Holidays

In the past, many early childhood programs planned lessons around monthly holidays. A "holiday curriculum" or the actual celebration of holidays is not part of the Sure Start program. Although teachers certainly want to respond to student initiated inquiries and activities related to the holidays they celebrate in their homes, lesson planning should not include holiday activities or celebrations. Each of *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Teaching Guides* provides an opportunity to celebrate learning at the end of the extended study.

## Daily Schedule and Routines

The daily routine organizes the instructional time. It provides consistent times for children to engage in individual, small-group, and large-group activities. Because young children are aware of the daily sequence, each Sure Start program should have a picture-based schedule that children can refer to that is posted at their eye level.

A posted schedule that everyone can refer to should be prominently posted. All periods of the day, from the opening of the program to the departure of the last child, should be noted on this daily schedule.

A well-planned daily schedule reflects the age and developmental abilities of the children. The time allocated for each activity period should reflect recognition of preschool children's needs, interests, and abilities. For example, active and quiet periods should be balanced during the day. To extend the depth of understanding during activities, preschool children require at least 40 to 45 minutes to become fully involved in an activity. Therefore, large blocks of time of at least an hour should be allotted for self-selected activities in interest areas. Outside activities lasting 45-60 minutes a day should be included in the daily schedule. Periods when preschool children are in a large group (such as the morning meeting) should be about 15 to 20 minutes in length. Children who are developmentally immature and unable to

sit in the group for this period of time should not be forced to do so. Instead, they may be referred to the paraprofessional for an individual parallel activity or some form of redirection; the ultimate goal is to have them be comfortable and able to participate as a member of the whole group. Refer to the [Examples of Daily Routines](#) in the Appendix.

## Length of the Sure Start Day and Planning Time

The Sure Start program is a full-day program which normally coincides with the elementary school day and includes a 45-minute teacher planning time without students for the Sure Start teacher. There are several options that school administrators may utilize depending on the unique characteristics of the local community.

- The Sure Start students' day may start 15 minutes later than the other students in the school and end 30 minutes earlier.
- The Sure Start students' day may begin 45 minutes after the start time of the other students in the school.
- The Sure Start students' day may end 45 minutes before the other students in the school.
- The Sure Start students' day begins and ends at the same time as the other students in the school. An additional paraprofessional may be assigned to Sure Start during the teacher's designated planning time to maintain the required ratio. Careful consideration should be given to the time of the day when the coverage for planning will be provided. For example, family-style dining during lunch and outside learning time are both important instructional times and assessment opportunities for the social-emotional and physical objectives.

The shortened Sure Start students' day should **ONLY** be an option if it results in no additional transportation costs or does not require parents to drop off or pick up their student who would normally receive transportation. If these options are not a possibility, the Sure Start teacher should meet with the principal to discuss other options to allow for teacher planning time.

## Using the School Information Center

A weekly library rotation should be included in the program. This enables a Sure Start student to become familiar with lifelong reading habits and gives them the privilege of borrowing books from the school library. Parents are encouraged to visit the school information center to become familiar with its workings. This lays the foundation for a parent to visit the base or community library with their child as a part of building good literacy practices. During the scheduled weekly visits to the information center, the paraprofessional and/or teacher assists the information center specialist with book rotation and encouraging proper literacy and library skills.

## Transitions

Transitioning from one scheduled activity to the next is difficult for some young children. However, when teachers use learning games and other activities to help children adjust to and move between activities, children become accustomed to following school routines and learn new concepts at the same time. When a visitor walks into a Sure Start program, it should be apparent that the schedule, transitions, and daily routines are designed to promote learning. Sure Start staff should refer to *The*

*Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 2: The Learning Environment and Chapter 4: Caring and Teaching as well as the list of Transitions to help plan the routines in the Sure Start classroom. Refer to [Transitions](#) in the Appendix.

## Transitioning from Sure Start to Kindergarten

The transition from the Sure Start program to kindergarten may be difficult for some children to understand. Staff should expect that children will experience many strong emotions during this transition such as fear, anxiety, joy, excitement, sadness, or frustration. The Sure Start program should provide a variety of activities such as visits to kindergarten classrooms, meeting the kindergarten teachers when possible, visiting and eating lunch in the cafeteria, and reading about or writing stories about going to kindergarten to make the transitions as smooth and seamless as possible. Prior Sure Start students in kindergarten might be excellent “guest speakers” to talk with the class about the similarities and differences between Sure Start and kindergarten. Graduation ceremonies to mark the end of Sure Start are **NOT** appropriate and should never be held. It is recommended that teachers use *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Teaching Guide: Getting Ready for Kindergarten* during the last few weeks of the school year. This investigation addresses how kindergarten is like Sure Start and how it is different, how the children feel about going to kindergarten, and how the children will make and keep friends in kindergarten. This study also provides an appropriate week at the end of the study focused on Reflecting and Celebrating.

## Classroom Environment

Sure Start classrooms should be “print rich,” be supportive of the children’s home cultures, promote independence, foster decision making, and encourage initiative and involvement. The basic premise of room arrangement is that the classroom should be divided into distinct interest areas where children can play and engage in high-level learning. Noisy areas should be separated from quiet areas, materials should be displayed on low, open shelves with written and picture labels in order for children to become independent learners. Refer to the [Descriptions of Sure Start Classroom Environments](#) in the Appendix.

By dividing the classroom into attractive, inviting interest areas, Sure Start offers children clear choices for play and learning. Sometimes children like to work together; at other times, they prefer to work alone quietly, or to work with one or two friends. Typically young children work best in small groups, where they can learn to relate to other children.

The indoor interest areas listed below should be clearly defined for the Sure Start students, although some may need to be combined, depending on room size, arrangement, and commonalities:

1. Blocks
2. Dramatic Play
3. Toys and Games
4. Art
5. Library
6. Computer
7. Sand and Water
8. Discovery
9. Music and Movement
10. Cooking

Materials need to be available for children to explore and experiment within each of these 10 interest areas, plus the outdoor area. Staff should understand that books, paper, markers and other writing materials belong in every interest area, not just the library/literacy interest area. Likewise, math, science, and social studies materials should not be consigned to just one area of the classroom. Sure Start staff should refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1: The Foundation and Volume 2: Interest Areas* to assist with equipping each area. The Sure Start staff should refer to the [Sure Start Inventory List](#) and [Possible Sources for Inventory Ordering Needs](#) to assist with the equipping a Sure Start classroom. Click on both links to download.

## Classroom Atmosphere

The atmosphere in the Sure Start program reflects the tone set by staff. Visitors should hear lively chatter from children talking and working together and from staff interacting with and responding to children. You should expect to see Sure Start teachers and paraprofessionals who are genuinely interested in what the children are doing, how they are feeling, and what they have to say. The staff's expectations for each child should be appropriate to what the child can understand and do at his or her stage of development. Cooperation and caring among the children and between children and staff should be evident. Sure Start staff should refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 2: The Learning Environment and Chapter 4: Caring and Teaching, as well as the [Examples of Effective Classroom Atmosphere](#) in the Appendix, for additional information about what is expected in a Sure Start classroom community.

## Social and Emotional Competence

Social and emotional curriculum is not a week of "I Am Special" or "We are Friends." The real curriculum is reflected in the norms, the language, and the values that teachers establish for the classroom community. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Teaching Guide: Beginning the Year Teaching Guide* helps to develop a classroom community where children are building relationships that make them feel supported, safe and valued.

Teachers pass on important social and emotional messages in every interaction that they have with the children in their care. Teachers and paraprofessionals should model for children the language and attitudes that you expect them to use with each other.

The first, and most important, message is that school is a physically and emotionally safe place for children to learn and grow, and teachers are there to act as partners in this exciting journey. From that strong base, move on to establish a respectful and cooperative classroom community where problems are just puzzles to be solved, where children's strengths and gifts are celebrated, and where children gain pride in learning how to manage emotions. Sure Start staff should refer to the [Daily Interactions Chart](#) in the Appendix for additional information about effective interactions between both adults and children and children with their peers.



## Assessment

The following factors are critical to the assessment of young children:

- Children should be assessed in their natural settings.
- Children should be assessed by people they know.
- Accurate assessment of children requires multiple assessments using multiple measures.

Effective assessment of young children should be designed to ascertain more than a child's achievement at one given time. It should encompass a child's physical, social-emotional, and language development, as well as how a child approaches learning as expressed through such factors as curiosity and ability to stay on task. Many experts view a child's approach to learning as the most important element to measure. Sure Start follows the position statement of the NAEYC in "[Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation](#)" (NAEYC, November, 2003). Sure Start programs participate in two types of assessment: (1) initial screening of students to identify needs and (2) ongoing assessment to monitor student growth and development, measure student progress, and inform planning for individualized instruction.

## Educational Screening

Within 45 days of program start-up, all children are to be screened for potential developmental, medical, and language concerns. Because the majority of these initial screenings are health related, detailed procedures for conducting these screenings are described in [Chapter 2, The Health and Nutrition Component: The Health Component](#). One type of screening is education-specific and screens for developmental delays. This screening is to be done by the Sure Start teacher using a standardized screening tool. Currently, Sure Start programs use the Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R). It is the school's responsibility to reorder this screening tool as needed and should be considered a top priority. Sure Start staff should refer to the [Possible Sources for Inventory Ordering Needs](#) for information regarding how to reorder the ESI-R. New Sure Start teachers will be trained on the administration of this screening tool. Developmental delays are the most common type of disability affecting preschoolers; therefore, this screening tool is very important. If additional student needs are determined during the screening process, immediate follow-up and consultation with the PSCD teacher or CSC Chair is recommended. For students with IEPs, Sure Start staff will work closely with special education service providers to ensure that appropriate services, interventions and support are in place. DoDEA's goal is to keep any child, regardless of disability, in the least restrictive environment.

## Ongoing Assessment

Sure Start uses developmentally appropriate approaches to document how well the program is meeting its goals for children and to adjust instruction to meet each child's needs. Both the teacher and paraprofessional are required to regularly observe and document children's progress with the DoDEA [CCRSP](#). This documentation should be entered into the online assessment system, [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#). Checkpoints for all development (Objective 1-14) and content areas (Objectives 15-36) are completed quarterly. Through direct observations and appropriate assessment tools, staff can determine whether children are making developmental gains and use this

information to adjust to the program and communicate meaningful information to families about their child's progress.

The [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) "Development and Learning Report" is to be shared with parents three times per year, as a minimum, to help communicate children's progress.

### Observational Tools

The basic component of a developmentally appropriate assessment system is observation. Observation-based assessment tools allow staff to determine children's progress in achieving the DoDEA [CCRSP](#).

Sure Start staff utilizes the online assessment system, [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#), to document student achievement and progress. Use of the information gathered through observation is integral to ongoing planning and individualization of the curriculum. These observations provide a running commentary on how Sure Start is meeting the needs of the students it is committed to serving. Checkpoints are to be entered into [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) based on dates provided in the annual Sure Start Assessment and Program Evaluation Timeline document. The [Sure Start Assessment & Program Evaluation Timeline Checklist](#) can be accessed by clicking the link.

**Preliminary** checkpoints are required at the end of the first quarter, and **finalized** checkpoints are required at the end of the second, third, and fourth quarters.

### Portfolios

Staff members are to use portfolios. Portfolios are a compilation of children's works that illustrate development over time and provide evidence of children's progress in meeting the DoDEA [CCRSP](#). Portfolios provide a living history of how children learn and acquire social, emotional, physical, literacy, and cognitive skills. Portfolio evidence can be scanned or photographed and uploaded to [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) or kept in physical form.

What goes into children's portfolios? Here are some suggestions.

#### ***Actual work completed by children:***

- Drawings, paintings, collages (Including those inspired by stories or music)
- Writing
- Books/stories dictated and illustrated by children
- Computer printouts of art, writing, or creative experiences
- Graphs of science-related experiments

#### ***Photos of children's work:***

- Artwork
- Cooking activities created on their own or as part of a group project
- Dramatic play
- Block buildings
- Working and interacting with one another

Portfolios should include a selection of students' works and teachers' observations, as well as teacher commentary on the context in which the work was produced. In addition, teachers must summarize how and to what degree the child's work illustrates mastery of the DoDEA CCRSP and the Objectives for Development and Learning.

To this end, staff might include the following written records/anecdotal notes:

- Questions, issues, and brainstorming notes from children's involvement in small-group project work
- Notes and comments by children about their work, including descriptions of their artwork recorded by staff on a sentence strip
- Interviews with children about favorite play activities
- Children's personal reactions to classroom experiences
- Children's self-evaluations of their work

To make this a team effort, both teachers and paraprofessionals will share the responsibility for regularly adding to the children's portfolios.

Portfolios obviously are growing documents. To be useful, they must be expandable, durable, accessible, and portable. The best option to collect evidence for portfolios is through the online assessment and portfolio system; however, accordion files, portfolio holders, or plastic containers with lids can serve as physical portfolio containers. Any container that offers enough room to organize the contents is appropriate.

Because a number of portfolio entries will accumulate throughout the year, it is recommended to group them by the [CCRSP](#). Within each category, place the dated items in the container chronologically. The following may prove a useful way to organize portfolios:

- Art Activities (fine-motor-skill development)—Drawings, photos of block constructions, collages, samples of writing with letters.
- Movement (gross-motor-skill development)—Videos of movement activities, observations of outdoor play, interviews with the child about favorite games.
- Math and Science Activities (concept development)—Photos of the child measuring during a cooking activity, chart of activities performed by the child in caring for plants, checklists covering the child's use of creative thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Language and Literacy (communication; early reading, writing, listening and speaking skills)—Recordings of stories, signs written by the child, copy of child's effort to print name, stories or poems dictated by the child
- Personal and Social Development (self-concept, social skills, self-help skills)—Observation notes on social skills, chart of the child's choices, notes from conversations with parents.
- The purpose of maintaining portfolios as an assessment tool is to monitor and measure each child's progress and then plan—with parental input—how to best meet the educational needs of every individual child.

## Program Evaluation

In addition to evaluating children's progress, Sure Start staff will assess the effectiveness and quality of their program as a whole. This will be done through the following:

- Administration of an observational tool for pinpointing program strengths and weaknesses. Programs use [The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R).
- Completion of the Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#).
- Completion of the DoDEA Annual Sure Start Report. Click the link to download the [Annual Sure Start Report](#).
- Surveys and reports compiled by the districts in coordination with DoDEA HQ (Annual Report).
- Participation in the accreditation process.

Using the reports from the monitoring and evaluation of programs, the district office, in coordination with DoDEA HQ, will ensure the program is being implemented as required and intended.

[The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R), which Sure Start programs use, should be completed by the Sure Start teaching staff, in cooperation with the school administrator, no later than the last Friday in November.

## Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan

Areas shown to be in need of improvement should be targeted for focus. Staff should work with their administrator to identify areas that need special focus. The staff and administrator may use input from any sources, including [The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R), results from the Parent Questionnaire, or from student data to set goals for program improvement and an action plan for achieving them. Click to the link to download the [Parent Questionnaire and Family Questionnaire Summary Sheet](#). A Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan should be on file with the school administrator and district ECE instructional systems specialist (ISS). Click the link to download the [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#) (examples are in the Appendix).

The Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan should be reviewed with the administration to compare how program quality has changed at midpoint during the school year and within one month of the school year's end. For example, staff might find at the initial examination that the classroom does not contain enough science-related materials or that no schedule is posted for children or parents. These easily correctable omissions can readily be added to the classroom so that the next time the self-improvement plan is consulted, these items would no longer be noted as areas needing focus.

Program evaluation as described here is intended to be a program improvement and training tool for staff and should in **no** way be used to evaluate staff performance.

## DoDEA Annual Sure Start Report

At the end of the program year, each Sure Start program is to complete written documentation of the services they've rendered. Click the link to download the [Annual Sure Start Report](#). This includes recording data on the following:

- Characteristics and demographics of the student population
- Sponsor's rank
- Parent education meetings
- Participation hours
- Number of applicants and sponsor's rank in waiting pool
- Student progress as monitored and measured by using [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#)
- Summarized findings and comments received on the parent questionnaire
- Sure Start Snack Calendar Excel Document
- Total funds spent on curricular cooking

This information is to be submitted to the school administrator and the DoDEA district ECE ISS (Sure Start POC) by the date indicated on the Assessment and Program Evaluation Timeline.

Refer to the [Assessment and Program Evaluation Timeline Sample](#) in the Appendix.

### Accreditation

The design of the education component of the Sure Start program includes a third-party evaluation of quality. To this end, all Sure Start programs are to participate in the DoDEA accreditation process. In essence, accreditation is a means of determining whether or not a Sure Start program meets nationally recognized criteria for high-quality early childhood programs. Data collected regarding student progress and achievement of continuous school improvement (CSI) goals should be extracted from the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) portfolio and assessment system. If periodic assessments are mandated at the school or district level, then Sure Start programs should implement the use of the *Creative Curriculum* Daily Resources Intentional Teaching Cards or On the Spot Assessments tools.

### Professional Development

Sure Start's continued strength and success are due, in large part, to the professional development component that has been a part of the program since its inception. Yearly and ongoing professional development ensure that as new knowledge and innovative practices evolve, Sure Start practices themselves will be modified or updated to reflect the most current research and understanding of child development and learning. As curricular areas review standards and obtain new materials, Sure Start teachers and paraprofessionals will also be trained in the use of best practices using current materials.

Training informs both the Sure Start teacher and the paraprofessional about yearly expectations and how to meet them. Training may include the implementation of current developmentally appropriate practices and/or what new guidelines and practices will be used. Training also enables the Sure Start staff to sustain high-quality, on-model implementation practices.

Professional development for new staff has two training strands. The first strand covers program guidance, addressing the health and nutrition, social service, and parent involvement components. New teachers receive training on the Sure Start philosophy and on operations and management of the program, including setting up the environment, policies and procedures, and program evaluation.

Returning teachers are updated on any new or modified procedures and receive continued training in appropriate guidance and child development.

The second training strand addresses the educational component and how this supports curriculum implementation and the [CCRSP](#). Teachers receive training on specific instructional strategies aligned with current DoDEA initiatives and priorities, such as CCRS.

### Logistics of Training: Timing, Location, and Funding

Training for new and returning staff members is to occur within the first two full weeks of the school year, before the return of students. Funding is provided for new Sure Start teachers and new paraprofessionals to ensure consistency in approach and delivery of content and program requirements. Because most Sure Start programs are geographically isolated, training provides a much needed opportunity for teachers to connect and collaborate face-to-face. Therefore, training at the district level for new Sure Start staff is required annually. How the training schedule is arranged and conducted is flexible. The training should meet the needs of each district. In addition, returning teachers and paraprofessionals should check the Schoology Pre-K/Sure Start Schoology Group for updates in the program guidance and look at available training modules for review and new information. The training can follow one of these schedules:

- Three days of training for new staff at a designated district site is mandatory.
- At least two days of training for returning staff members (two days face-to-face at the designated district site, one day of online training; one day of training organized by school complexes or training by district at designated site within commuting distance if funding is **unavailable**).
- Returning teachers will be updated on any new or updated procedures, new curricular materials and receive continued training in appropriate guidance and child development, as needed.
- Ongoing professional learning opportunities may occur throughout the year.

Funding for new staff training is a Headquarters responsibility. Training will be coordinated between the district offices and HQ.

### School Administrator Training

As an educational leader, the Sure Start principal is responsible for many of the Sure Start program features including oversight, supervision, and monitoring of the program. Therefore, the administrator must have a working knowledge of the Sure Start Program Standards, the administration of the program, the DoDEA [CCRSP](#), and the supporting curriculum materials. It is recommended that administrators attend the new teacher training at least once, as well as any recurring training that may be specialized for the school administrator. In addition, the administrator should check the Pre-K/Sure Start Schoology Group to be apprised of updates in the program guidance and training in the educational component, which supports DoDEA curriculum implementation. To ensure program and community leadership at a site that hosts a Sure Start program, administrators should not consider training to be voluntary, and they should make every effort to attend. If requirements at the beginning of school year make it difficult for administrators to attend the annual Sure Start training, the district

office may organize and offer administrator training in late September or October as an alternative. If possible, training should occur prior to teacher report date of current school year.

### **Professional Development During the School Year**

Other supporting training is to occur during the school year. Sure Start teachers are required to go to all school-related trainings (e.g., Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team, CSI, CCRS, faculty meetings). However, if there is a school or district-sponsored training day that is not applicable to the Sure Start teacher (e.g., a training on standardized testing), every effort should be made to allow the Sure Start teachers to participate in alternate activities, such as visit another Sure Start site or meet with other Sure Start teachers.

### **Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities (PSCD) Teachers**

To ensure that appropriate services are in place, PSCD teachers should serve on the Sure Start Advisory Committee and collaborate with the Sure Start staff. When questions arise regarding students who may require Student Support Team (SST) or referral to CSC for special education evaluation, the Sure Start teacher should consult with the PSCD teacher for guidance on the referral process and next steps.





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## Chapter 2: Health & Nutrition | The Health Component

### *Sure Start Program Standards for the Health Component*

Six program standards govern the health component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan. These standards are designed to do the following:

- Provide a comprehensive school health services program that includes a broad range of medical, dental, and mental health services to Pre-K children to assist in their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development toward the overall goal of social and academic competence.
- Promote preventive health care and early intervention.
- Provide the child's family with the necessary skills and insight to ensure that the child continues to receive comprehensive health care even after leaving the Sure Start program.

The six standards addressing the Health Component are:

#### ***Standard 1***

*A written plan for achieving the program's health goals and nutrition standards will be developed.*

This component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan will be written in collaboration with a pediatrician or other health representative, such as the school nurse serving on the Sure Start Advisory Committee, with input from the Sure Start teacher and paraprofessional. At the annual training, new programs will receive a model program plan on which to structure their plan. Existing programs need only review and update the previous year's program plan from year to year.

#### ***Standard 2***

*Each child enrolled in the Sure Start program will undergo a complete medical examination, such as the four-year old well child check-up.*

Completed Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form should be returned to the school nurse.

Click to download the [Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form](#).

#### ***Standard 3***

*Each child enrolled in the Sure Start program will undergo a complete dental examination.*

Completed Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form should be returned to the school nurse.

Click to download the [Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form](#).

#### ***Standard 4***

*Each child enrolled in the Sure Start program will undergo a vision screening.*

Results will be documented by the school nurse in the current student information system and pertinent information shared with the child's family. The screening should include the following: vision acuity, color vision and strabismus. If screening warrants further evaluation a referral will be made for a complete vision examination.

### **Standard 5**

*Each child enrolled in the Sure Start program will undergo a hearing screening.*

Results will be documented by the school nurse in the current student information system and pertinent information shared with the child's family. If screening warrants further evaluation a referral will be made for a complete hearing exam by audiology.

### **Standard 6**

*A mental health professional, such as the school psychologist or counselor, who is familiar with installation resources, will be available to the Sure Start program on a consultation basis.*

Results of any referrals should be recorded by the participating health professional and pertinent information shared with the child's family and the school nurse. Immediate follow-up will be provided for any indicated problems. Referrals will follow the same protocol as those in the elementary school.

## **Implementing the Health Standards**

These standards and this Guide should be shared with the military installation health professionals and the school nurse.

### **Screenings & Immunization Requirements**

All childhood immunizations must be completed before a child attends the Sure Start program or in accordance with local policy. If you have questions, please consult with the school nurse about current required immunizations. To further ensure that each child receives a sure start in life, medical, dental, and developmental screenings are to be performed for each child within 45 calendar days of program entrance. Parental consent for these screenings is a precondition for enrollment in Sure Start.

Appointments for the medical and dental examinations should be arranged during the first month of program operations and **completed within 45 days** of the child's entrance into the program. This schedule is used so that follow-up referrals, if appropriate, can begin without delay. The results are maintained in the student's health file in the school health office and are strictly confidential.

Each site implements its own screenings; the following plan is suggested:

- The school nurse can complete the height, weight, vision, and hearing portions of the screenings. Vision screenings should be done for visual acuity, color vision and strabismus (crossed-eyes).
- The complete medical exam will be scheduled by the parent with a pediatrician and occur within 45 days of enrollment.
- Medical examination results can be recorded on the form used by the local medical facility or on the Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form. Parents should take the Sure Start Medical and Dental Evaluation Letter to their physician and dentist. Copies of the completed medical exam and screening records are to be maintained in the school nurse's office. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form](#) and the [Sure Start Medical and Dental Evaluation Letter](#).

- Dental examinations will be scheduled by the parent with the dental clinic and occur with 45 days of enrollment. Copies of the completed Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form are to be maintained in the school nurse's office. Click to download the [Sure Start Child Medical Evaluation Form](#). Self-care oral hygiene procedures should be a part of the daily schedule. Supervised tooth brushing is part of classroom teaching. This takes place after lunch or at any other appropriate time during the class day. As part of the Sure Start Program Component Plan, the dental health services should provide appropriate child toothbrushes and toothpaste to use in class, when possible. When this is not possible, toothbrushes should be ordered through the General Service Administration (GSA) ordering process, or as a last resort, commissary funds can be used to purchase toothbrushes and toothpaste for every student.
- Any results that have educational impact are shared with the classroom teacher.

### Ongoing Health-Related Measures

Children's health is to be monitored daily by staff and if necessary referred to the school nurse.

The school nurse, in compliance with the current School Health Services Guide, will advise Sure Start staff and parents about whether or not to leave a sick child in the classroom, to send the child home, or to refer the child for medical attention. A child who develops a fever of 100 degrees F. or higher will be sent home. A child may return to Sure Start after he or she has been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of antipyretics medication (i.e., a type of medication that will prevent or reduce fever).

Other policies governing the admittance of sick children are as follows:

- A child with diarrhea more than two (2) times within a day should stay at home and remain at home until diarrhea symptoms are not present for 24 hours.
- A child diagnosed with strep throat must be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to Sure Start.
- A child diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be treated with medication for 24 hours before returning to Sure Start. Children with suspected bacterial conjunctivitis will be referred for medical treatment.
- A child with chicken pox may return to Sure Start when cleared by a medical provider.
- A child with ringworm must be treated and the affected area covered before returning to Sure Start.
- A child with impetigo must be free of weeping lesions. The lesions must be covered and medical treatment initiated before returning to Sure Start.
- A child with head lice must initiate treatment and be checked by the school nurse upon returning to Sure Start. No child will be sent home for head lice; however, the child needs to see the school nurse.
- A child must be free of fever and vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.
- A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school in the case of any condition.

A sick child will remain in the school health office until he or she is picked up by a parent or guardian when a condition is present that is considered contagious and easily passed from child to child. A child who is not feeling well but has no sign of a fever may remain in the classroom until being picked up by a parent or guardian.

### Toilet Training

A child cannot be denied enrollment in school because of a lack of toilet training. The examining physician needs to ensure that the child has no physical problems or developmental delays. The teacher and the school nurse should collaborate on an action plan along with the parents to develop toilet training skills. In most cases, a typical four-year-old is toilet trained.

### Sanitation of Classroom Environment

Young children do not have fully developed immune systems and may be more susceptible to germs and diseases than adults. Therefore, the Sure Start program has the following sanitation guidelines:

To prevent the spread of germs, staff must follow diligent cleaning and sanitizing procedures. Tabletops, counters, and other environmental surfaces need to be cleaned daily with detergent and rinsed with water. Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting products must meet the guidelines as stated in [Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, Third Edition \(2011\)](#). (CFOC) [3.3.0.1](#). Only U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered products that have an EPA registration number on the label can make public health claims that can be relied on for reducing or destroying germs. The EPA registration label will also describe the product as a cleaner, sanitizer, or disinfectant. It is important to use the least toxic cleaner, sanitizer and disinfectant for the particular job. Products that are labeled as “green” sanitizers and disinfectants should be EPA-registered. Products must be used according to manufacturer’s instructions. Alternatively, staff will spray surfaces with a bleach solution made of one-fourth cup of household bleach to one gallon of water until they glisten. The bleach spray can either be allowed to air dry or be wiped dry with paper toweling after two minutes. If a bleach solution is used, it must be prepared fresh daily and discarded at the end of the day. This solution (500-800 parts per million chlorine) has been shown in laboratory settings to effectively kill high numbers of blood-borne viruses, including the HIV and hepatitis B viruses. At the same time, this solution is nontoxic if accidentally swallowed. (NOTE: NEVER MIX THE BLEACH SOLUTION WITH VINEGAR OR AMMONIA. HIGHLY POISONOUS CHLORINE GAS WILL BE PRODUCED!)

Staff should use the sink to prepare the bleach solution to alleviate spills and help keep the bleach away from the body. Chemical splash goggles should be worn for eye protection and nitrile gloves (not latex) for skin protection.

Odors in bathrooms need to be controlled by ventilation and appropriate cleaning and disinfecting. Chemical air fresheners are not to be used because they may cause nausea or an allergic response in some children. Ventilation and sanitation also help control and prevent the spread of disease and contamination. ([CFOC3, Standard 5.2.1](#))

The cleaning contracted by the school must ensure that the above procedures are followed. Sure Start teachers should work with their administration to ensure that these requirements are specified. Refer to the [Sure Start Program Cleaning Schedule](#) in the Appendix.

## Child Safety

Safety concerns are of vital importance to the Sure Start program. The following provisions need to be addressed and followed:

- Students are to be under adult supervision at all times.
- Students and staff are to follow proper procedures during hand washing, which include using soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. Hands are to be dried with single-use or disposable towels. To avoid recontamination from faucets, faucets are to be turned off using a disposable towel.
- Staff are to wash their hands with soap and water at appropriate times, including before preparing or serving food, assisting students with toileting or nose wiping, after handling pets or animals, or after contact with any potentially infectious materials, including bodily fluids. Towelettes and hand sanitizers are not a substitute for hand washing with soap and water. However, hand sanitizers may be used in the event that hand washing facilities are not present. When using hand sanitizers there should be no visible dirt on the child's hands. ([CFOC 3.2.2.5](#))
- Students and all adults are to wash hands, when entering the classroom, after using the bathroom, blowing their noses, and before meals or engaging in cooking and food-handling activities.
- Materials and furniture in the classroom must be regularly checked that they do not pose a risk to students' safety.
- The height of classroom furniture should not impair visual access to students.
- All children riding wheeled vehicles or using wheeled toys must wear a helmet. Helmets should be removed as soon as children stop riding the wheeled toy or using wheeled equipment. ([CFOC 6.4.2.2](#))
- Potentially dangerous materials are to be stored in a location that is not accessible to students.
- All chemicals and potentially dangerous products, such as cleaning supplies and bleach, are stored in original, labeled containers inaccessible to students in a locked cabinet. The bleach solution must be in a marked spray bottle and also kept in a locked cabinet.
- All medications are stored in the school health office; any exceptions must be managed under an individual health care plan developed by the school nurse and following the physician's recommendation.
- Staff is to be familiar with and make use of the universal precautions to prevent transmission of blood-borne diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C.
- Electrical outlets not in use must be covered with protective caps.
- Written emergency evacuation procedures are to be posted at all exits
- Facilities must have a minimum of 35 square feet of unencumbered space per student indoors and a minimum of 75 square feet of space per student outdoors. Shared space in 21<sup>st</sup> Century buildings may be factored into the calculation

## Rest Time

To ensure that all Sure Start children receive sufficient rest, the daily schedule includes rest time. Typically, rest time follows lunch/recess. The recommended time allocation for rest time is one hour. As children finish eating; they clear their plates, clean the table areas, use the restroom, wash their hands, brush their teeth, and get out their mats. (Mats may be placed in sleep areas before lunch if space is available.)

Although children are encouraged to sleep, they are not forced to do so. Children may rest quietly on their mat with a book or a stuffed animal. Typically, most four-year-olds will sleep if given the opportunity. If children are not sleeping, observations should be conducted to determine why. With guidance, teachers will find that they will rarely have more than one or two children who do not fall asleep. Rest time plays a crucial role in enhancing memory and boosting learning.

To promote sleep, staff should dim the lights and make sure that mats are separated, talkers are separated, and children are encouraged to sleep. Soft classical music or nature sounds playing in the background is likewise conducive to rest. Exit areas are not to be blocked. Children should be positioned on their mats so as not to distract each other. Non-sleepers should be provided with book boxes and quiet toys.

### Pets

[DoDEA Administrative Instruction \(AI\) 6055.01, DoDEA Safety Program](#) provides guidance regarding pets in the classroom which must be followed. Sure Start permits pets in the classroom with the exception of ferrets, turtles, iguanas, lizards and other reptiles, psittacine birds (i.e., those of the parrot family), animals that may shed dander and enzymes that are sensitizing in nature and may cause allergic reactions or any wild or dangerous animal. In caring for and maintaining pets, staff should follow the guidelines from [Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, Third Edition \(2011\)](#), and [DoDEA AI 6055.01](#).

Staff needs to ensure that none of the children or staff is allergic to the pet. In addition, the following rules must be adhered to:

- Written approval will be filed with school administrators for each school year.
- The school nurse and parents have been consulted to ensure that the animal will not cause allergic reactions or fright for students in the classroom.
- Any animal in the Sure Start classroom must be certified by the veterinarian to be in good health and must have the disposition to be around students (not animals in sealed containers or aquaria).
- Pet immunizations shall be signed by a veterinarian and kept on file in the school.
- Appropriate care for animals must be provided daily, including weekends, holidays or other times when school is not in session.
- Animal cages shall be of an approved type with removable bottoms and shall be kept clean and sanitary.
- Animal litter boxes shall not be located in areas accessible to children. All litter shall be removed and discarded as required by the local authorities.
- Animal food supplies shall be kept out of reach of children.
- Live animals and fowl shall be kept distant from food preparation, food storage, and eating areas.

**Hands must be washed after handling any animal.**



## Health Component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan

The Sure Start Teacher and Sure Start paraprofessional, with support of the school nurse, will ensure that parents have scheduled dental and medical appointments within 45 days of start of program with appropriate personnel. If there is not a supporting military installation medical treatment facility, parents are to seek medical and dental appointments with their primary health care provider.

The base Dental Clinic (if there is one at the local installation) will be responsible for the following, as requested:

- Designate a member for the Sure Start Advisory Committee
- Schedule dental screening for each child in the Sure Start program, scheduled and coordinated with the school nurse and clinic according to needs of the community
- Provide follow-up visits needed for children as required
- Provide support services for the Sure Start program
- Present at a parent meeting, if requested

The base hospital/clinic (if there is one at the local installation) will be responsible for the following, as requested:

- Designate a member for the Sure Start Advisory Committee
- Provide follow-up visits needed for children as required
- Provide support services for the Sure Start program
- Present at a parent meeting, if requested
- Support access to training in Child/infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid (if the local installation provides it)

The School Counselor will provide the following:

- Work with parents as requested
- Recommend intervention programs and consult with teacher, parents, and children as needed

The school nurse will provide the following:

- Perform vision and hearing screening and record results
- Perform height and weight screening
- Maintain electronic records of office visits/health related encounters via the DoDEA-approved Student Information System
- Contact parents with health issues/concerns and consult with parents to answer health-related questions



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## Chapter 3: Health & Nutrition | The Nutrition Component

### *Sure Start Program Standards for the Nutrition Component*

Six program standards govern the nutrition component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan. These standards are designed to do the following:

- Provide lunch and snacks at no cost to the student that will help meet the student's daily nutritional needs, recognizing individual differences and cultural patterns, and thereby promoting sound physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth and development.
- Provide an environment for nutritional services that will support the use of the snack and lunchtime as an opportunity for learning.
- Help staff, child, and family to understand the relationship of nutrition to health and the variety of ways to provide for nutritional needs and to apply this knowledge in the development of sound food habits even after leaving the Sure Start program.
- Demonstrate the interrelationships of nutrition to the educational activities of the Sure Start program and its contribution to the overall child development goals.
- Commit the resources and support of the agency, staff, and parents in meeting the child's nutritional needs so that nutritional care provided by Sure Start complements and supplements that of the home and community.

The six standards addressing the Nutrition Component are:

#### **Standard 1**

*A written plan for achieving the program's health and nutrition standards will be developed and included in the Sure Start Program Component Plan.*

This plan will be written by the Sure Start teacher, with assistance from the installation nutritionist/dietician or other health representative such as the school nurse on the Sure Start Advisory Committee. The plan needs to be shared with and involve the participation and commitment of the food provider (i.e., Army and Air Force Exchange Service [AAFES]). New programs will be given a model nutrition component of the Program Plan. Existing programs need only review and update the previous year's Program Plan from year to year.

#### **Standard 2**

*As a part of the Sure Start curriculum, the Sure Start program will provide—at no cost to the students—two snacks and lunch for every child enrolled in the program. Together, lunch and snacks will provide one-half of the child's daily nutritional needs.*

DoDEA will be responsible for providing the funding for the nutritional component in cooperation with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which will provide funding for free and reduced lunches. Sure Start students are categorically eligible for free lunch from the DODEA student meal program but parents are required to complete the Free and Reduced Meal application following local Student Meal Program guidance. Please note that siblings are not categorically eligible for free lunch. If families desire free or reduced meals for other school age children, completion of the Free and Reduce

Meal application for other school age children is necessary. In planning for these meals in cooperation with the food provider (i.e., currently AAFES, NEX, MCCS), Sure Start staff need to consult the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [My Plate](#) guidelines for children 2 to 6. Refer to the [Sample Sure Start Weekly Snack Menu](#) in the Appendix.

### **Standard 3**

*The program will serve lunch in the classroom, family style.*

Staff and parent participants are to sit with children during family-style dining and provide a socializing experience in a relaxed atmosphere. Food is not to be used as punishment or reward, and children are encouraged, but not forced, to try all foods.

### **Standard 4**

*The curriculum will include nutrition education for children.*

Meal periods and food are planned to be an integral part of the total education program. Snacks are to be integrated into child-choice times and available to Sure Start children throughout the day.

### **Standard 5**

*The program will involve parents in the nutrition services.*

Information about menus and nutrition activities will be shared regularly with parents. Parents are required to provide information on children's food allergies and sensitivities, preferences, and cultural heritage.

### **Standard 6**

*Staff will comply with applicable local regulations for food service operations.*

## **Implementing the Nutrition Component Standards**

All meals served must meet the nutritional guidelines established by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. A hot lunch and two snacks are to be served during the time the children are in care, and they will provide one-half of the child's daily nutritional requirements. An actual headcount should be provided to the cafeteria each day that concurs with the daily attendance record. Snacks are to be available to children on a self-serve basis during child-choice time and served at any time to any child who indicates he/she is hungry. No Sure Start child is ever to go hungry.

To ensure that children have access to good nutrition and grow up healthy, they need to eat a wide variety of foods, as prescribed by the [My Plate](#) guidelines for children 2 to 6.

Staff should note the following recommendations for children with a substantial change in appetites:

- Do not insist that children eat when they are not hungry.
- Keep records/observations of children who have changes in eating habits and if valid, seem to be under eaters, and report this information to the school nurse for follow-up.
- Keep healthy snacks available for eating between regularly scheduled meals.

- Encourage snack participation
- If you have picky-eaters, sit them with children who are more likely to try and eat a variety of foods.
- Offer foods that are more energy-dense than you might ordinarily serve, such as nut butters, cheese, and higher-fat yogurt and milk.

In addition to a wide variety of foods, all young children should have six to eight servings daily of water. Because water accounts for a higher percentage of body weight in young children than it does in adults, they can become quickly dehydrated. To ensure that children drink enough water, adults need to offer children water several times a day, even when water fountains or bottled water are visibly available.

Although the nutrient needs of children with disabilities are typically the same as for other children, difficulties in chewing or swallowing or a lack of feeding skills may require that the texture and consistency of foods be modified. For other conditions that require modification of the menu, such as food allergies and digestive or metabolic disturbances, this information should be part of the child's health record, and a physician's prescription must be kept on file at the school and at the food preparation site and updated periodically. A qualified nutritionist should help plan for meeting these needs.

The Sure Start staff will not be responsible for heating or preparing any lunch food item. The food should be delivered in bulk, not prepared on cafeteria trays. Classrooms without dishwashers should coordinate with the school cafeteria manager and administration to ensure that dishes are properly cleaned and sanitized. Questions and concerns regarding food delivery and preparation should be directed to your school's cafeteria manager and administration. An excellent resource for additional information on nutrition for preschoolers is [Choose My Plate](#).

### **Serving and Eating Family-Style Lunch**

Mealtimes should promote the physical, social, and emotional development of the children. They should take place in a quiet, well-lit, and well-ventilated area. Meal-related activities provide opportunities for decision making, development of self-regulation, self-concept and resilience, learning to take responsibility, sharing, and reinforce basic skills concepts. Communicating with others, muscle control, and eye-hand coordination are also developed.

Family-style lunch is a requirement of the Sure Start program and is a part of the Sure Start curriculum. Children are to eat in their classroom, not in the cafeteria. All children eat the same foods, serve themselves on child size plates (not cafeteria trays), and enjoy pleasant conversation. Because they serve themselves, children are more likely to try new foods. They can decide for themselves whether to put one pea or a spoonful on their plates.

Staff is required to sit with students during lunch, as part of Sure Start's curriculum. Parents are likewise encouraged to join the children for family-style lunch. They may sit with their own child or join another table, as is their preference. Neither staff nor parents are required to purchase a lunch; however, they are welcome to do so. The purpose of family-style dining is to model appropriate eating habits,

introduce healthy new foods, and opportunities for nutrition education. Staff lunchtime occurs during the nap/rest time. More information is available at [CFOC 4.7.0.1](#).

The following procedures will help make family-style dining experiences successful:

- Plan to seat four to six children and one adult at each table. When this is not possible, the teacher may change tables in order to help promote conversation during family-style dining.
- Tables should remain in the interest areas where they are located, rather than being moved to a central location. The tables do not have to be on linoleum flooring.
- Sure Start staff, parents, and other volunteers who join the class for lunch are to model appropriate manners, promote self-help skills, and engage children in conversation.
- Children are responsible for setting the table, bringing food to the table, and cleaning the table. It is recommended that children set the table before the delivery of the food. This is best accomplished by assigning two or three children to be helpers. Children, however, should clean up after themselves when finished eating.
- Food is to be served in child-sized bowls and platters with child-sized serving pieces. Food service managers may not be aware of Sure Start standards and may need to be informed of this by the administrator.
- Drinks, including milk, are to be served from small pitchers (not milk cartons) so children can serve themselves.
- Salt and sugar should not be served or available to diners.
- All children at a table should be seated before any child starts to eat. Table groups, however, need only wait for everyone at their table to be seated—not the entire class. Children may recite a poem/chant or sing a song that lets them know when to begin eating.
- Invite children to begin passing the food clockwise as soon as the poem, song, or chant is completed.
- Maintain a leisurely pace so children do not feel hurried.
- Allow children to refuse food, but encourage them to taste a little of everything.
- Encourage children to serve themselves only as much as they can eat. If they cannot finish what is on their plate, do not force them to do so.
- Model good hygiene, safety practices, and manners.
- Have children clean up their own spills.
- Encourage conversation about the foods served, the day's events, or other topics of interest to the children.
- Model a calm, relaxed manner.
- Allow children to leave the table when finished. They can clear their dishes, wash their hands, brush their teeth, and then get ready for rest time. Children who are slow eaters should be allowed to take their time.
- Ask the children to help clean up and wipe the tables. Children should not use the bleach water but should wipe the tables with a damp cloth containing detergent. The teacher/paraprofessional/parent participant will spray the tables with the bleach solution once the tables have been cleaned and children are no longer seated at the table.

Some children with disabilities may be eating at a different developmental level than the other children. For example, if a four-year-old is eating with the skills of a two-year-old, start where the child is and plan with a nutritionist or occupational/physical therapist how to help the child reach an adequate level of self-feeding skill.

For all children, the food needs to be cut into smaller pieces than are normally served to older children. For example, hotdogs should be sliced lengthwise and then into smaller pieces to prevent choking. Burgers and sandwiches should be cut into halves, so that children may help themselves to manageable portions. Sweets (cake, cookies, soda, etc.) should not be served in Sure Start.

If a child refuses a food, offer the food again at some future time; however, don't keep asking the child. Forcing children to eat or using desserts or other food as reward or punishment may create problem eaters and unpleasant or undesirable associations with the food. Remember that all foods offered should contribute to the child's needs, including the dessert. "Clean plate" clubs, stars, and other gimmicks to encourage children to eat are not appropriate.

Food-related activities should be planned within the child's range of abilities. Activities related to meal service include shopping for food, setting the table, serving the food to others or self, cleaning up, and making place mats and table centerpieces. Examples of learning activities are field trips, tasting parties, food preparation, planting and growing food, reading stories about food, role-playing parents or grocer, making scrapbooks and exhibits, feeding classroom pets, and planning menus to share with parents. Children should be allowed to help with all of these activities. These may need to be coordinated with food service personnel as well.

Meal periods are part of the flow of the day's activities. Food-related activities can be used to teach language arts, color, texture, arithmetic, science, social skills, and hygienic practices; however, the primary purpose of these activities is to establish sound long-term food habits and attitudes. The education program may include a special nutrition focus that carries over into the menu and mealtime activities. For example, if a trip is planned to an orchard, related emphasis should be placed on the fruit in the menus, mealtime conversation, and classroom food preparation experiences.

Parents can be involved in nutrition through formal and informal presentations; individual counseling by a nutritionist, nurse, or other staff; attendance at local adult education programs; and cooking classes. Also, parents can participate in menu-planning committees for curricular cooking activities, and staff can distribute pamphlets and newsletters, and employ audiovisual aids. [My Plate](#) has many resources that can be used for parent education.

## Snacks

Snacks are to be funded by DoDEA HQ and procured following local guidance using the school's government purchase card (GPC). Snacks need to be made available to children throughout the day; because some children may arrive at the program hungry and others may become hungry during the day. Programs need to offer both a morning and afternoon snack. Water should be available to children at all times.



Snacks are a part of the Sure Start curriculum. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Volume 2 details how to implement the Cooking Interest area and facilitate learning experiences for students. Snacks should be available as a self-help activity in the cooking area. Snack should also be available to children throughout the day if they indicate hunger, not just during choice time. Occasionally, a snack may be served family style as a culminating activity for a cooking project or group study.

Snacks should represent two of the levels in the [My Plate guidelines](#) for children ages two to six. Children with known high cholesterol levels should be served snacks low in cholesterol. Sweets are not allowed in Sure Start. Choose foods for snacks that contribute not only to the child's nutrient needs but also to good dental health.

Menus for snacks should be dated and posted in the classroom for parents to view. The food items should be identified by the kind of food, not just the category of food group; for example, specify "orange juice" rather than "fruit juice." All substitutions must be indicated on the menus.

In serving themselves snacks, children should be able to follow recipe cards that give them pictorial instructions. Children should also consult a posted picture menu and sign a snack sheet, showing they have had a snack. Many teachers like to make the snack area an inviting place for children to eat, setting up a Sure Start Café complete with umbrella and red-checkered tablecloth.



## Chapter 4: The Social Services Component

### *Sure Start Program Standards for the Social Services Component*

Three program standards govern the social services component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan. These standards are designed to do the following:

- Establish and maintain an outreach and recruitment process that systematically ensures enrollment of eligible children.
- Provide enrollment of eligible children regardless of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, or disability.
- Assist and support parent participation in the school and home program and related activities.
- Assist the family in its own efforts to improve the condition and quality of family life.
- Make parents aware of community services and resources and facilitate their use.

The three standards addressing the Social Services Component are:

#### ***Standard 1***

*A written plan for achieving the program's social services goals and objectives will be developed.*

This plan will be written by the Sure Start teacher, with input from the social services representative. New programs will be given a model social services component plan on which to structure their plan. Existing programs need only review and update the previous year's component plan from year to year. The plan must address the following:

- Recruitment of children
- Providing referrals for counseling, as appropriate
- Emergency assistance or crisis intervention
- Furnishing information about available community services and how to use them
- Contacting parent or guardian with respect to an enrolled child whose participation in the Sure Start program is irregular or who has been consistently absent. Refer to the official [DoDEA Attendance Policy](#).
- Identification of the social service needs of Sure Start families and working with other community agencies to develop programs to meet those needs.

#### ***Standard 2***

*The social services component will provide for close cooperation with existing community resources.*

With the social services representative on the Sure Start Advisory Committee, Sure Start staff will develop a system for making community counseling, referral services, Military and Family Life Counseling program, and other resources available to Sure Start families.

#### ***Standard 3***

*Sure Start staff will provide for the establishment, maintenance, and confidentiality of all social services-related records, including completed enrollment forms, referral and follow-up reports, reports of contacts with other agencies, and reports of contacts with families.*

All confidential records must be kept in locked filing cabinets and accessible to individuals only on a “need to know” basis.

## Implementing the Social Services Component Program Standards

The social services component’s mission is to improve quality of life for the enrolled families by making parents aware of available community services and by assisting families in their efforts to improve the condition and quality of family life.

### Recruitment of Children

The recruitment process involves systematically seeking out children who have identified “targeted population” factors. Recruitment techniques include consultations with community agencies that are in a position to know eligible families, use of social media to promote the Sure Start program (i.e. flyers posted on Facebook, Armed Forces Network, local media, TV, radio), community bulletin boards, etc. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Application](#).

### Services to Families

The Family Service Center, or appropriate base agency, should provide the following services to the Sure Start program:

- Designate a member to be on the Sure Start Advisory Committee
- Contact community agencies, ensuring they will provide services to Sure Start families.
- Provide the [Sure Start Application](#) information to families on an ongoing basis.
- Help families improve family life (e.g., by providing information about parenting skills, budgeting, planning, counseling).
- Provide support services for the Sure Start program.
- Be a resource at quarterly parent meetings, if requested.
- Maintain a master list of services provided and available to families.
- Consult with teachers, nurse, administrators, and parents as needed.
- Refer families for emergency placement (a family does not need to meet the regular eligibility requirements for an emergency placement).

Sure Start programs should make every effort to involve parents in identifying individual family needs and in planning ways to meet those needs. The Sure Start teacher and paraprofessional will, as appropriate, do the following:

- Solicit ideas from community agencies on how they can provide support to families.
- Discuss the social services component with families and tell them about availability of services.
- Work with the social services representative to ensure families have the services they require.
- Follow established school guidelines for referring families to counseling.
- Follow established school guidelines for referring families to agencies that provide crisis intervention and emergency assistance.
- Invite base agencies to tour the program and include them in outreach efforts.
- Maintain confidential records.

- Contact parents or guardians when attendance becomes irregular. Please review the official [DoDEA Attendance Policy](#).
- Place providers on a special Sure Start email list to receive pertinent program information.
- Request placement on providers' email lists to keep informed of the providers' activities.
- Develop a media relations program with local press, radio stations, and TV stations.

The Sure Start staff should maintain a master list of all identified needs and services being offered so that a comprehensive perspective exists for the provision of services. The social services component is dynamic in nature and must ensure that emerging family needs are consistently being addressed and met. Staff should periodically review these needs and services as a program-monitoring tool. A tally of services accessed during the year is included in the Annual Sure Start Report. Click the link to download the [Annual Sure Start Report](#). Refer to [Services to Families](#) in the Appendix.



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## Chapter 5: The Parent Involvement Component

### *Sure Start Program Standards for the Parent Involvement Component*

Ten program standards guide the parent involvement component. The objectives:

- Provide a planned program of experiences and activities that support and enhance the parental role as the principle influence in a child's education and development.
- Provide a program that recognizes parents as integral contributors to the Sure Start program and to their communities.
- Provide opportunities for parent participation in classroom and other program activities.

The ten standards addressing the Parent Involvement Component are:

#### **Standard 1**

*A written plan for achieving the program's Parent Involvement Component's goals and objectives will be developed.*

This plan will be written by the Sure Start teacher with input from the Sure Start Advisory Committee. New programs will be given a model parent involvement component plan on which to structure their plan. Existing programs need only review and update the previous year's component plan annually. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Program Component Plan](#).

#### **Standard 2**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for involving parents in experiences and activities that lead to enhancing the development of their skills, self-confidence, and sense of independence in fostering an environment in which their own children can develop to their full potential.*

Parent participation in classroom activities is a precondition for enrollment.

#### **Standard 3**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for involving parents in experiences in children's growth and development, which will strengthen their role as the primary influence in their children's lives.*

Along with parent meetings, the Sure Start teacher will provide opportunities for active parent involvement in the classroom and for sharing information based on observations at home that helps to assess the child's strengths, development, and needs.

#### **Standard 4**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for involving parents in ways of providing education and developmental activities for children in the home and the community.*

Through parent education meetings, in-school conferences, and home visits, staff will guide parents in implementing activities at home that reinforce the Sure Start curriculum.

**Standard 5**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for involving parents in activities in physical health, mental health (social-emotional), dental, and nutritional education.*

As outlined in [Chapter 2: The Health Component](#) and [Chapter 3: The Nutrition Component](#), parents will be involved in children's screenings and be invited to participate in family-style dining.

**Standard 6**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for involving parents in identification and use of family community resources to meet basic support needs of the family.*

As outlined in [Chapter 4: The Social Services Component](#), staff will work with families to secure needed community resources and referrals.

**Standard 7**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for involving parents in identification of opportunities for continuing education that may lead toward self-enrichment and employment.*

As outlined in [Chapter 4](#), staff will work with families to secure needed resources and referrals for obtaining continuing education opportunities.

**Standard 8**

*The program will provide methods and opportunities for parents to meet with the Sure Start teachers and other appropriate staff to discuss and assess their children's individual needs and progress according to the proposed schedule for home visits and parent conferences.*

Staff will meet with parents **four** times a year to discuss children's needs and progress. Two or three of these meetings will be home visits; one or two of these meetings will be school conferences.

**Standard 9**

*The program will provide for regular two-way communication between staff and parents.*

Program staff will provide regular communication with parents. Both formal and informal channels of communication should be in place.

**Standard 10**

*The program will address parents' needs in a timely manner.*

Parent concerns and challenges will be addressed by the teachers, administration or Sure Start Advisory Committee as deemed necessary.

**Implementing the Parent Involvement Component**

The Sure Start program meets the needs of parents through four main types of activities:

- Parent orientation
- Parents as classroom participants and partners in education



- Home visits and parent conferences
- Parent education meetings

It is vital for the teacher and paraprofessional to be culturally sensitive to all parent participants. This is especially relevant in overseas military communities, where many foreign national parents are married to U.S. military personnel. Many are apprehensive about participating because of their culture or a lack of confidence in their English language skills. It is important for the teacher and the paraprofessional to help all parents assimilate into the Sure Start classroom.

### Parent Orientation

To prepare parents for the Sure Start program, staff will schedule an orientation meeting before the first day of school. It is mandatory for at least one parent to attend; however, it is recommended that both parents participate if possible. The orientation will cover the following:

- An overview of the Sure Start program—its goals, philosophy, operating procedures, schedule, family-style dining, positive guidance strategies, etc.
- An introduction to the Sure Start curriculum, including a tour of the classroom interest areas and an overview of the daily schedule
- An explanation of what children learn in Sure Start and how they learn through play
- Parents' roles and responsibilities, both in the Sure Start classroom and at home
- An overview of the Sure Start policy, which explains that students' siblings are not allowed in the Sure Start classroom while a parent is fulfilling participation hours during instructional day

### Parents as Participants in the Classroom

Parent participation is integral to the success of the Sure Start program. Each parent is required to be a partner in education by participating in the Sure Start classroom no less than thirty hours. In two-parent families, both parents are expected to contribute 30 hours each (total 60 hours per family). Parents who are deployed for an extended period of time are expected to participate in the classroom for a time equivalent of three and half hours per month. To facilitate the parent participant process, the principal or Sure Start teacher should send a letter to the sponsor's commander at the start of the program year. Please click the link to download the [Letter to Command - Sample](#). The letter should explain the importance and requirement for parental participation in Sure Start and enlisting the commander's support in allowing parents to meet this obligation. Parents are required to follow local guidance regarding the school's volunteer requirements (e.g. Red Cross training, background checks, etc.). The Sure Start teacher will maintain a parent participation log.

In working with parents in the classroom, Sure Start staff can provide opportunities for parents to:

- Read a story to children
- Lead a song
- Facilitate an art project, work with children on completing puzzles, building with blocks, or working with students in interest areas
- Introduce children to a recipe

- Work with children in preparing and setting up snacks and meals
- Participate in family-style dining (parents may purchase a school lunch or sit with the children, they are not served out of the student lunch or eating different items)

Teachers may post “Parent Participation Ideas” in each work area of the classroom to assist adults. This might include specific activities to work with children in interest areas, models of printing, steps to operate a computer program or game, etc.

Sure Start is fully committed to the belief that parents can best contribute to their children’s growth and development by actively participating in the classroom. Therefore, staff should encourage parents to use their participation hours in this way; however, extenuating circumstances may prevent some parents from participating in the classroom. In these instances, Sure Start staff must work with parents to help them find a meaningful way to contribute their time. Some suggested ways of participating outside the classroom include the following:

- Accompany the class to the library or on field trips
- Repair books or toys
- Make materials or play props for the class
- Put together prop boxes for dramatic play
- Maintain a class scrapbook or photo album
- Sanitize interest areas or program materials (at the end of the day)
- Prepare interest area materials

If a parent is not making significant progress on his/her participation hours, the teacher should contact the parent to see if there is a problem and arrange times for completing participation hours. If this does not resolve the problem, the teacher and the administrator should meet together with the parent(s) to discuss the problem. In some cases, the administrator may need to send the parent’s unit commander a friendly reminder letter explaining the Sure Start parents’ obligation to the Sure Start program.

The goal is to successfully get all parents into the classroom—not to punish them if they fail to do so. Many times, it is the parent who fails to meet his or her participation obligation who is most in need of Sure Start’s services. Therefore, no child is to be expelled from Sure Start because his/her parents fail to meet their participation requirements. Rather, a way must be found to facilitate parent participation in the program.

The Sure Start Advisory Committee will make local policy about hosting younger siblings in the Sure Start classroom for special events only. Parents are asked to make alternative arrangements for sibling when completing parent participation hours. Younger children are precious, but Sure Start classrooms are designed to be developmentally appropriate for four-year old children and may be resourced with materials that are not appropriate for younger children. In the interest of safety, only enrolled students will be allowed in the classroom on regular school days.

## Home Visits and Parent Conferences

Sure Start mandates that both the teacher and the paraprofessional together make at least two visits per year to each Sure Start family home. Parents must agree to these before their child is enrolled in the Sure Start program. In addition, two parent in-school conferences will be held at school. Teachers should work with the school administration to determine a plan for individual parent meetings (home visits & parent conferences) and ensure that the calendar is set at the beginning of the school year.

### *The First Home Visit*

The first home visit, which is mandatory, takes place between the time children are selected for Sure Start and the program's initial start date. Sure Start's delayed start ensures that staff has the needed time to complete these home visits. It should be noted that all students who are selected for Sure Start should experience a home visit before starting in the program regardless of when they are selected. Under no circumstances are home visits to be conducted by the teacher alone, for both educational and safety reasons. Both the teacher and the paraprofessional visit each family as a team. If there is a delay in hiring the paraprofessional, then the school must provide an alternate staff member to accompany the teacher on home visits. The first visit serves as an opportunity for the staff, children, and families to meet one another informally, begin building relationships, and establish the concept of parents as partners in education. Staff should use this visit to interview families about their expectations for their children in Sure Start and to identify any training or special help families might want. It is also a good time to take photographs of the children with their families that can be displayed in the classroom.

At least one other home visit should occur during the school year. These latter home visits are more formal attempts to help parents work with their children to effectively promote development and learning. Each home visit lasts approximately 30 to 60 minutes. To make all of the home visits a success, staff needs to schedule them at times that are convenient for parents. The staff's goal is to involve parents in their child's development. Partnership should always be the theme underlying home visits. Refer to [Practical Tips on Conducting Home Visits](#) in the Appendix for conducting home visits. Click the link [Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#) to download the forms.

### *The November In-School Conference*

Two parent conferences complement the home visits. In-school conferences in the Sure Start program should be scheduled for up to one hour since they are comprehensive and are an essential part of the Parent Component. The November meeting is a mandatory "in-school" conference, requiring parents to interact within a school environment. At this meeting, staff works with families to outline goals for the child and family for the remainder of the school year. Click the link to download the [Family Conference Form](#). There are different approaches to this form; teacher and parents could select goals together, teacher could select two goals, parents select two, and student select one. Allowing the student to set a goal encourages ownership of his/her own learning. These goals should be revisited and progress celebrated! Teachers can also use this time to discuss any parent concerns or insights from parents regarding their young child. At this time all screenings should be complete and any concerns may be discussed.

### *The End of First Semester Home Visit or In-School Conference*

At the end of the first semester, staff can elect to either make a second home visit or hold a second parent conference at the school. At this meeting, teachers are to share the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) Development and Learning report with parents as well as review the individual goals for the child. Teachers will also use this instructional time to share strategies to use at home to meet the individual goals. Teachers should use this time to discuss issues within the social service and the health and nutrition components. The dates for this will be determined at the district or school, depending on the preference of district leadership.

### *The End of Year Home Visit or In-School Conference*

The final interaction (second/third home visit or the second school conference) takes place the week after Sure Start ends, while the rest of the school is still in session. Staff should use this time to discuss transition issues with families, provide summer activities and to evaluate the Sure Start experience.

### *Release Days for Home Visits and Conferences*

When possible, home visits and in-school conferences should be scheduled during the conference days allocated at the school. However, teachers may need additional days since these parent meetings are more comprehensive and should be scheduled to accommodate this essential interaction. Release time for these instructional days will be determined at the district or school collaboratively with leadership (up to three days for second in-school conferences and up to one week for home visits; release time will be dependent upon number of enrolled students). In either venue, staff will use this instructional time to work with families on reinforcing at home what children are learning at Sure Start, sharing the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) Development and Learning Report, planning and implementing the [Family Conference Form](#), and sharing strategies for parents to use at home.

The schedule for conferencing with parents can be summarized as follows:

- Before School Starts: mandatory home visit. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#).
- End of First Quarter (November): mandatory parent conference at school. Click the link to download the [Family Conference Form](#).
- End of First Semester: second home visit or second parent in-school conference, Sure Start Advisory Committee should include dates for this instructional time in the Sure Start Program Plan. (Some schools use the system-wide assessment week in March.)
- End of Year: third home visit or second parent conference, depending on the end of first semester conference/home visit.

### **Parent Education Meetings**

Sure Start staff convenes four parent education meetings a year, approximately one at the each quarter. Meeting dates can be adjusted to meet the needs of the local community and the Sure Start individual schedule. The final parent education meeting should address transitional issues, including summer activities to keep children involved in exploring and learning.

This final meeting can be part of a family activity, such as a Sure Start family picnic or a celebration of learning (see *Getting Ready for Kindergarten Teaching Guide*).

Staff (with parental input) selects topics for parent education meetings that address the interests and concerns of the Sure Start community. Guest speakers, community resources, and school resources can be used during the meetings. Making sure that food and child care are available is also suggested. The easier staff makes it for busy parents to attend, the better the turnout is likely to be.

Some suggested topics for parent meeting sessions:

- Child growth and development
  - your child/infant to age 5
  - the school-age child
  - positive guidance and setting limits
  - nutritional needs of young children
  - sibling rivalry
  - becoming readers
  - becoming mathematicians
  - the value of play
  - Providing children with toys and experiences that meet their ages and individual needs
- Sure Start curriculum
- The parent as educator
  - questions to ask
  - how to read to children
  - trips to take together
  - games to make and play
  - toys to buy and make using home materials
  - how to help in school
  - the appropriate role of TV, songs, nursery rhymes, and stories
- Family life
  - dealing with separation
  - Moving
  - Divorce
  - Death
  - handling stress
  - family counseling services
- Appreciating diversity
- Fire prevention; safety and sanitation
- Academics in Sure Start
- Positive discipline
- Making sure your child is ready for kindergarten

Some ideas for activities to do at these sessions include the following:

- Setting up a lending library for toys, books, CDs, and prop boxes
- Setting up a garden at the program
- Conducting food-related activities such as cooking classes; publishing a cookbook; and making meals with healthy foods
- Sponsoring “Everything You’ve Always Wanted to Know...” wellness fairs with specialists and relevant materials available: pediatricians, blood pressure technicians, nutritionists, dieticians, and other health professionals
- Computer literacy classes
- Family literacy classes (modeling reading aloud, adult literacy)
- Holding a session at the base library to introduce families to this service, obtain cards, and highlight age-appropriate literature
- Make and Take Workshops in which parents actually make items they can use to work with their child at home (e.g., letter/number cards, rhyming lotto)
- English for English as a second language (ESL) parents

The philosophy underlying Sure Start’s parent involvement component is that when the program joins forces with parents, everyone benefits. This means that parents must be supported not just through program-related activities, but in their homes as well. When parents are able to work with their children at home in the same way that Sure Start staff work with children at school, gains are inevitable. Parent education, home visits, and parent conferences are instructional and contribute to this important goal.



## Chapter 6: Roles and Responsibilities of Key Staff

Six key players make up the Sure Start Team:

1. The elementary school principal
2. The Sure Start teacher
3. The Sure Start paraprofessional
4. The Sure Start Advisory Committee
5. Parents and other volunteers
6. District Superintendent's Office (DSO) ECE representative/area and HQ ECE staff

The roles and responsibilities of each are described in turn.

### Elementary School Principal or Designee

The principal oversees the implementation and operation of the Sure Start program at the school. Although each program has a unique, individual flavor, Sure Start requires standardized procedures to guide program implementation. Principals need to be knowledgeable about Sure Start Program Standards and the DoDEA [CCRSF](#) which are the Teaching Strategies Objectives for Development and Learning in order to effectively support, supervise, and evaluate Sure Start staff.

DoDEA HQ designates the Sure Start teacher and paraprofessional as “fenced” positions. Additionally,

- Teachers receive extra-duty pay as compensation for conducting activities that take place outside of the duty day, such as home visits scheduled after normal school hours, required parent meetings scheduled after normal school hours, student recruitment, and other responsibilities such as planning and procuring resources for curricular cooking & snack. DoDEA has provided area funding for extra duty (40- to 79-hour band) to ensure that teachers are compensated for any requirements of the program that extend beyond the duty day. Click the link to download [Extra-Curricular \(EDC - Information\)](#).
- These funds are part of the district and subsequently the school extra-duty budget, and they will be made available within the previously mentioned band of hours. It is the responsibility of the teacher to submit a time sheet and an extra-duty request when these hours are completed.
- Sure Start paraprofessionals are authorized to be on duty the same number of days as Sure Start teachers. The Sure Start paraprofessionals' hours will mirror the teacher duty day; additional hours spent outside the duty day will be approved, in advance, by administration and indicated on the employee time sheet. These hours may include home visits of new students, parent meetings and other work pre-approved by administration. This enables the paraprofessional to work together with the teacher as a team. No other use of this authorization, including duties as lunchroom or bus monitors, is permissible outside the Sure Start classroom. This also includes the paraprofessional being assigned to other classrooms to work as substitutes. This ensures safety in terms of adult-child ratios and is in accordance with national early childhood guidelines and the Sure Start Guide.
- Substitutes are used any time teachers or paraprofessionals are absent. The school office maintains a list of authorized substitutes for Sure Start teachers and paraprofessionals. It is a



requirement of the Sure Start program staffing standards to ensure that two paid DoDEA employees are in the classroom at all times (with the exception of naptime/rest time, as already noted). If a substitute cannot be provided, the school should have a contingency plan to provide appropriate coverage to ensure the class maintains ratio requirements.

The principal has the following oversight responsibilities:

- Serving as a member of the Sure Start Advisory Committee.
- Along with the Sure Start teacher, completing an assessment of program quality at the beginning of the school year (e.g., The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised). The assessment is not to be used as a teacher performance appraisal; rather it ensures that Sure Start program and the DoDEA [CCRSP](#) are effectively implemented and that training needs are identified. The principal and Sure Start staff will meet to identify Sure Start program needs and set a [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#) (see also [Chapter 1](#)), using the assessment instrument. This program assessment and Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan will be completed within the first 45 days.
- Support advertising to the community to complete registration and inform the community of the program. This is especially important because staffing changes may occur and many teachers are gone over the summer when advertising should be at its peak.
- Ensuring program staffing is in place and initiating recruitment action to hire Sure Start staff when positions become available, per the position descriptions.
- Supervising Sure Start staff. In so doing, the principal must make it clear that the Sure Start teacher accounts for hours completed outside of the regular duty day and fills out necessary paperwork for extra-duty pay. (As noted, DoDEA has provided extra-duty funds [40-79 hours] for Sure Start teachers who complete program requirements after normal duty hours.)
- Supporting the Sure Start alternate schedule for home visits, progress reporting, and teacher training that specifies g Sure Start students to begin the school year 12 school days later than other students. The delay allows Sure Start staff time for selection of students, home visits, and professional development.
- Principals may also support a staggered start for these students, if the teacher requests. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways—for example, half the class begins on Day 1, the other half (without the Day 1 students) begins on Day 2, all students attend on Day 3; on Days 1 and 2, selected students come to school with parents at specific times, on Day 3 all students attend a full day. If a teacher elects to use the staggered start, please note that ALL Sure Start students should be in attendance on the first day of Sure Start. Staggered start begins prior to the first day of Sure Start, not the first day of Sure Start.
- Releasing Sure Start students five days before the end of the school year so the staff can conduct final home visits or parent in-school conferences as well as transition activities, prepare proper end-of-year documentation, complete the Sure Start Annual Report, and move files as necessary.
- Ensuring that Sure Start staff making home visits and conducting in-school conferences are provided with the necessary student release days for making these visits (up to three days for in-

school conferences and up to five days for Home Visits). Extra-duty hours are not available for paraprofessionals; therefore it is recommended the Sure Start teacher work with the school administrator to ensure pre-approval for the hours outside of the duty day. This schedule should be made well in advance.

- Supporting parent education meetings by attending, if requested by Sure Start Staff, assuring access to facilities, and allowing adjustments to the paraprofessional's hours to accommodate the after school hours.
- Ensuring that the Sure Start classroom meets the space and facility requirements, as outlined in [Chapter 2: Health & Nutrition](#) and working with the Sure Start teacher to meet the Space and Safety standards.
- Ensuring that the cleaning contract for the Sure Start classroom meets the needs of the program. Because Sure Start children eat in the classroom, carpets may need to be cleaned more frequently than in other classrooms. The cleaning contract needs to ensure that carpets are deeply cleaned at least twice a year. Covered garbage cans with tight-fitting lids and foot pedals should be substituted for regular wastepaper baskets. Moreover, garbage should be emptied midday (following lunch), and floors should be damp-mopped and bathrooms cleaned more often during the day.
- Ensuring that the indoor and outdoor environments are equipped to promote learning in all interest areas. The key to this design plan is open shelving units (with a maximum height of 30 inches) that can be used both to delineate activity areas in the classroom and to allow children independent access to play materials. All furnishings must be child-sized and child-proofed. Administrators and Sure Start staff may use the inventory and sources for ordering to ensure that the program is well equipped. Click the links to download the [Sure Start Inventory List](#) and [Possible Sources for Inventory Ordering Needs](#).
- Ensuring that food service is provided and that Sure Start is integrated into the school lunch program. The Sure Start family-style lunch is provided through the school's lunch program and is an essential part of the Sure Start curriculum. The principal and teacher need to work with the local cafeteria manager to ensure that appropriate family-style dining requirements are met and meals include fresh fruit and vegetables rather than sweets. Additionally, schools are to provide two snacks per day for the Sure Start classroom. Sure Start students are categorically eligible for free lunch while enrolled in the Sure Start program.
- Providing transportation for Sure Start students at those schools where transportation is provided to the general school population. The administrator should be aware that safety requirements for transporting four-year-olds specify that children use safety belts, that vehicles have appropriate child safety seats, and that a monitor ride the bus. These safety standards also apply to any field trips. The principal needs to review transportation policy to ensure that all safety requirements for preschool children are in compliance with Logistics Division Policy 00-L-001, dated August 3, 2000. Administrators work with transportation to accommodate the transportation policies of each school.
- Overseeing the budget for Sure Start. DoDEA funded the original setup costs for the sites. All programs are now considered to be fully equipped and operational. The maintenance, repair,

and replacement of materials and equipment, along with consumables, should be part of the school's annual budget (this includes art materials). If additional materials are needed, teachers should submit a request to the administration according to school policy. Many Sure Start materials, such as blocks, table toys, clothes for dramatic play, and so on, are considered Priority 1 curriculum materials from a Sure Start perspective because the program is not textbook driven, as is general education. These materials should be updated, replaced, and replenished yearly, along with other curriculum materials of the school. These materials include any family style dining materials needed, developmental screening tools, or other materials needed to complete parts of the program.

- Acting as a liaison between the installation/unit commander(s) and the Sure Start program to support parent involvement. Principals should make contact to generate support for all facets of the Sure Start program. In particular, making the installation/unit commander aware of Sure Start's parent involvement component has proven helpful. This enables parents to take leave from their jobs with the full support of their superiors.
- Providing support to the Sure Start program as needed. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - Welcoming parents to Sure Start at the orientation meeting
  - Setting expectations for attendance and parent involvement
  - Attending Sure Start Advisory Committee meetings
  - Coordinating with the school nurse to facilitate medical and dental screenings as well as vision, hearing, height and weight.
  - Designating a teacher workspace outside the classroom when facility space permits (so that the teacher's desk and filing cabinet can be removed from the classroom)
  - Coordinating with district leadership and school nurse to provide for CPR training, first aid training, and blood-borne pathogen certification for the Sure Start staff
  - Providing a secure and locked location where Sure Start confidential records can be housed at the end of the school year
  - Ensuring the indoor/outdoor areas meet the Sure Start criteria
  - Supporting appropriate field trips for Sure Start classes

### **Sure Start Teacher**

The primary role of the Sure Start teacher is to provide children with an individualized developmental program based on specific standards of learning, by creating a learning environment and varied experiences that facilitate social, intellectual, physical, and emotional growth appropriate to their ages and stages of development. The teacher's role encompasses overseeing a comprehensive educational program that addresses children's needs within the context of the family; helping parents increase their knowledge, understanding, skills, and experience in child growth and development; and identifying and reinforcing experiences that occur in the home that support what children learn at school.

The Sure Start teacher works directly under the supervision of the DoDEA elementary school principal. Although the teacher works independently in accordance with established procedures, he or she must submit copies of all reports, policies, and newsletters to the principal, as per school policy. Teachers

must be able to develop working relationships with agencies in the community, make home visits, and attend professional meetings as assigned.

The Sure Start teacher must promote a close working relationship between DoDEA, CDP, and the community to nurture the collaborative intent of this program and to ensure a high-quality environment for Sure Start children, families, and staff.

The teacher's specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Participate as a contributing faculty member to the total educational community.
- Attend school meetings and functions as required of all faculty members.
- Participate in the school's accreditation process.
- Take the lead role in conducting the annual early childhood program evaluation and develop a Program Progress Plan.
- Complete the DoDEA Annual Sure Start Report.
- Collaborate with the CDC personnel, community resources, and teachers who deliver services to children with disabilities, as appropriate.
- Participate in monthly fire, evacuation, and lockdown drills.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the Sure Start program, including the education, health and nutrition, social services, and parent involvement components.
- Draft the education and parent involvement component plans at new programs; at continuing programs, update the annual Sure Start Program Component Plan in conjunction with the Sure Start Advisory Committee.
- Carry out the goals, policies, and activities specified in the Sure Start Program Component Plan.
- Coordinate a Sure Start Advisory Committee to draft the Sure Start Program Component Plan at new programs; at continuing programs, revisit and update as needed.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with families.
- Conduct Sure Start parent orientation.
- Schedule welcoming visits to the classroom for children and parents before program start-up. This can be done in conjunction with the parent orientation if child care is provided during the parent orientation time.
- Conduct and/or facilitate at least four group parent meetings during the year. (One can be the orientation meeting.)
- Conduct four parent-teacher conferences during the year. The first conference, before school start-up, must be a home visit. The November meeting must be a school-based conference. The last two meetings may be either home visits or a home visit and an in-school conference, depending on the teacher's preference. All home visits and parent conferences must include the paraprofessional.
- Communicate regularly with families, including publication of a weekly or monthly newsletter.
- Train and work with parent participants; monitor hours.
- Provide children with a high-quality learning environment.
- Create a pleasant, inviting atmosphere for children.

- Maintain individual goals for each child, and adjust the goals as needed.
- Develop weekly lesson plans that reflect the individual needs of students as well as addressing the DoDEA [CCRSP](#).
- Assess children using an approved developmental and/or learning checklist (e.g., Teaching Strategies, the DoDEA [CCRSP](#)).
- Maintain a portfolio for each student. This can be done electronically through [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) or in other ways preferred by the teacher.
- Observe children regularly, and record information in student's portfolios.
- Maintain all confidential Sure Start records in secure, locked cabinets. Move program records to a secure location during the summer.
- Actively participate in family-style lunch, sitting and interacting with the children in the classroom. This is required curriculum time.
- Maintain a safe, healthy educational environment.
- Works with principal to ensure Space and Safety Standards are being met as outlined in [Chapter 2: Health & Nutrition](#).
- Classrooms will include at least 10 interest areas (or centers) according to a prescribed design (Refer to *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, 2010, Dodge, Colker, Heroman, & Bickart).
- Recommended to maintain infant/child CPR training and first aid certification according to local certification requirements.
- Along with the medical representative on the Sure Start Advisory Committee, coordinate screening for Sure Start children with the school nurse, military facilities, school staff, and parents, ensuring that screenings are completed within 45 days of the child's enrollment in the program.
- Conduct daily health checks, observing children for any signs that might indicate illness, abuse, or neglect, as per school policy.
- Ensure that safety and hygiene standards are met through constant supervision, effective arrangement of space, proper maintenance of equipment, and so forth. Refer to [Chapter 2: Health & Nutrition](#).
- Regularly conduct safety and health inspections indoors and outdoors.
- Conduct ongoing assessment of equipment and material, removing items that pose safety hazards and ordering needed or replacement items according to school policy.
- Work collaboratively with and guide the paraprofessional to effectively implement all Sure Start program components.
- Provide input to administration regarding performance of the paraprofessional if asked
- Implement procedures and strategies obtained from annual training.
- Use positive guidance strategies.
- Regularly sanitize center toys and equipment when children are not present.

### Sure Start Paraprofessional

The paraprofessional's primary function is to perform duties under the direction of the Sure Start teacher while they work together as a team. The paraprofessional is supervised by the designated

school administrator. Although assistance and guidelines are available to the paraprofessional, he or she is expected to use initiative and creativity in accomplishing Sure Start's standards of learning.

The paraprofessional must meet the qualifications of an educational aide and the position description for a Sure Start paraprofessional. Previous experience with preschool children is highly recommended.

Sure Start's paraprofessionals are regarded as an integral part of the teaching team. They work even when children are not present in the classroom. Paraprofessionals are authorized to be on duty the same number of days and the same scheduled duty day as the Sure Start teacher. Additional hours spent outside the duty day will be approved, in advance, by administration. Extra hours may be needed to participate in home visits, attend scheduled parent education meetings, occasional planning and other work as needed.

The Sure Start paraprofessional has the following responsibilities:

- Be familiar with all aspects of Sure Start Program, the Component Plan, and the DoDEA [CCRSP](#).
- Attend annual Sure Start training.
- Follow security, safety, health, and other required rules; inform the teacher of identified problems.
- Assist in planning and implementing a learning environment, curriculum, and varied experiences that help children develop socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their ages and stages of development.
- Observe students, document and note specific skills in support of the progress of learning.
- With the teacher, arrange the room and play materials to accommodate the daily schedule.
- Prepare the learning environment (e.g., mix paint, prepare play-dough, assemble props for dramatic play) and help the teacher develop a list of needed supplies and equipment.
- Review and implement the daily schedule and plans in coordination with teacher.
- Participate and assist with family-style dining, including initiating and promoting conversations and the use of good manners.
- Help children develop self-help skills.
- Build supportive relationships with children and families.
- Create a pleasant, inviting atmosphere for children.
- Regularly greet children and families at arrival and departure times (for those programs where children aren't bused); help children collect their belongings when they depart.
- Interact with children during play activities to promote growth and learning.
- Use approved child guidance and caregiving techniques that support overall program objectives.
- Be aware of local host-nation customs.
- Ensure that safety and hygiene standards are met through constant supervision, effective arrangement of space, proper maintenance of equipment, and so forth.
- Conduct daily health checks and observe children for any signs that might indicate illness, abuse, or neglect, as per school policy.
- Conduct safety and health inspections of indoor and outdoor equipment.

- Regularly sanitize center toys and equipment when children are not present
- Recommended to maintain infant/child CPR training and first aid certification.
- Assist the teacher in leading and conducting parent involvement activities, including home visits and parent education meetings. It is a requirement that the paraprofessional attend home visits and parent conferences with the Sure Start teacher.
- Brief and work with parent participants.
- Perform other related duties as identified and assigned by the teacher that comply with program guidelines.

### **Sure Start Advisory Committee**

The Sure Start Advisory Committee is one of the key organizational features that distinguish Sure Start from other programs. The Sure Start Advisory Committee is composed of a medical/health representative, a social services representative, the Sure Start teacher, PSCD teacher, and school administrator. Any of the following representatives from the installation would make excellent additions to the program's Advisory Committee:

- Installation CDP/CDC/Family Child Care director or representative
- School liaison officer (SLO)
- Installation pediatrician (membership is strongly encouraged)
- Installation dentist (membership is strongly encouraged)
- Nutritionist
- Base social worker
- Family Advocacy Program officer
- Family Support Center director or Family Service director
- Fire department, safety, or civil engineering representative, if needed
- School nurse
- Guidance counselor
- CI teacher and/or other specialists
- Elementary school kindergarten teacher
- Sure Start paraprofessional

Each site determines its own Sure Start Advisory Committee members and the overall size of the group, based on local needs and the availability of community representatives. It is vital, however, that persons representing DoDEA, the Service Child Development Programs, and each of the four components of the Sure Start Program Component Plan (education, health and nutrition, social services, and parent involvement) be included. Note, however, that one person may represent more than one component area.

The Sure Start Advisory Committee is responsible for meeting two times during the year, once before the Sure Start program begins and once at the end of the year.



The following agenda items are to be accomplished at the initial meeting:

- The Sure Start teacher develops the education and the parent component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan, with support and guidance from the site administrator and other members of the Sure Start Advisory Committee.
- Develop or revise the Sure Start Program Component Plan to include dates for home visits and conferences.
- The medical/health representative on the Sure Start Advisory Committee has responsibility for the health and nutrition component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan.
- The social services representative on the Sure Start Advisory Committee has responsibility for the social services component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan.
- The Sure Start teacher has responsibility for ensuring input from parents for the parent involvement component of the Sure Start Program Component Plan. Input from parents is to be solicited once school is in session.

Input to The Sure Start Program Component Plan from other members of the Sure Start Advisory Committee should be encouraged to promote collaboration and to ensure that children and families receive needed services.

- Formalize cooperative arrangements with installation and community representatives. These may include such agreements as establishing arrangements with the base hospital for screenings, formalizing food service preparation and delivery with AAFES, and arranging with the Officers' Spouse Club or Family Support Center for child care services during parent meetings. The Sure Start Advisory Committee should send copies of all agreements to the base commander and school liaison Officer (SLO), as appropriate. Copies should also be maintained at the local site.
- Select children for the remaining allotted spaces.

During the final quarter of the year, the Sure Start Advisory Committee meets one last time to conclude business for the year and to set the program in operation for the next school year. Among transition activities to be addressed are these:

- Select up to half of the students for the upcoming year (only priority 1, E1-4), although the Sure Start Advisory Committee may elect to defer selecting students until the August meeting.
- Schedule a date for the fall Sure Start Advisory Committee meeting, when students will be selected for the program. Reminders should be sent prior to the meeting date.
- Set calendar for upcoming school year regarding home visits and conferences.
- Brief administrative staff on program advertising, application procedures, deadlines, and the student selection date.
- Set classroom policy about bringing siblings during special events as siblings should not be present when parent are completing participation hours.
- Review the Sure Start Program Component Plan, making notes on successes and challenges to be considered for revisions for the following years.

If vacancies on the Sure Start Advisory Committee occur during the year, the administration is to assist the Sure Start Advisory Committee in obtaining replacement members.

### Parents and Other Volunteers

An underlying premise of the Sure Start program is that children's lives are enriched when parents and other community member participate actively in classroom life. Parent participation in the classroom is a prerequisite for enrollment: 30 hours (3.5 hours/month) per parent unless a parent is on long-term deployment or sea duty (at least 90 consecutive days), then the hours are prorated.

To ensure that the parent participant's time in the classroom is both effective and rewarding, all volunteers need to attend parent orientation. Parents who were not able to attend the initial parent orientation meeting need to meet individually with the teacher before spending time in the classroom to make the experience a positive one.

Parent participants do not count toward the teacher-child ratio requirements. Because of this (and to avoid any suggestion of impropriety) participants are never to be left alone with children, even during rest time. Participants must sign in and out and abide by any other school policies governing volunteers. Teachers should work with the Sure Start Advisory Committee to make a policy and explore options for other children/siblings in the Sure Start classroom.

In addition to parents, participants in the Sure Start program can be school support staff, community members such as members of the Sure Start Advisory Committee, guest presenters from offices that deal with health or safety, information specialist (IS), or career practicum students from high schools or colleges. Participants might wish to talk with students in a group or individually, read a book, or share a project. In all instances, staff must work with participants to ensure that the classroom experience is a positive one for the children.

### DSO Instructional Systems Specialists (ISSs)/POC

District ISSs/POC have the job of supporting curriculum, instruction, and assessment at schools in DoDEA districts. They should be trained in ECE and developmentally appropriate practices. They must also be able to demonstrate how the preschool curricular materials ordered for the Sure Start classrooms support the achievement of the Sure Start program and CCRS. In addition, they should be able to connect Sure Start teachers to curriculum and/or expert resources (e.g., materials, consultants) who can support and/or be an additional resource for program implementation.

DSO ISSs/POC shall do the following:

- Be knowledgeable of early childhood best practices including curriculum, instruction, and assessment that are theoretically based and consistent with developmentally appropriate practices.
- Be familiar with curricular materials in and ordered for the Sure Start classroom.
- Be familiar with the Sure Start learning environment (i.e., *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*).
- Plan and deliver curriculum training that supports a centers-based environment for learning.

- Have a working knowledge of the assessment system, [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Consult with teachers regarding effective and appropriate ways of assessing four-year-old learners.
- Assist teachers with analyzing data from the Sure Start system of assessment, [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) in their specific subject areas in order to use the data for instructional strategies.

### Administration

- Understand the requirements of the physical facilities and assist in setting up Sure Start classrooms.
- Assist building planners in designing new Sure Start classrooms and playgrounds that meet the Sure Start criteria.
- Work with schools and Sure Start teachers and administrators to coordinate the nutrition service for Sure Start snacks and family-style dining.
- Monitor and offer training in program management.
- Work with schools in the recruitment and training of new Sure Start teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Work with HQ on new early childhood initiatives and program development.
- Assist schools in conducting their annual program evaluation (i.e., ECERS-R).
- Collect and summarize district-wide end-of-year Sure Start Annual Summaries and forward to HQ.
- Assist and monitor schools in complying with the checklist of health and safety standards.
- Monitor Sure Start programs annually as part of district accreditation. Monitoring best occurs through site visits if possible. If site visits are not possible then monitoring should occur through the annual report, student progress, the online assessment system and feedback from stakeholders.

### Educational Component

- Have a working knowledge of early childhood theory and its application to the content areas.
- Support curriculum implementation by planning and delivering training in using the preschool curricular materials.
- Advocate and provide guidance for the adoption of appropriate curriculum materials to support the DoDEA [CCRSP](#).
- Serve on DoDEA educational task groups to represent and advocate for best practices for preschool programs.
- Support the implementation of the Sure Start Education Component Program Standards.
- Provide guidance for the completion of the schools' education component plans based on the program standards.
- Provide updated research information on best practices in preschool education.
- Have a working knowledge of and support best practices for ongoing, appropriate assessment and progress-reporting practices.

- Support social/emotional goals by providing support through training and appropriate professional resources.

**Health and Nutrition Component**

- Provide guidance for the completion of the schools' health and nutrition component plan based on the program standards.
- Support the implementation of the Sure Start Health and Nutrition Component Program Standards at schools.
- Provide guidance and support for safety and health requirements by providing training and appropriate professional resources.

**Social Services Component**

- Advocate for improving the condition and quality of family life on the military bases.
- Work with Sure Start teachers to establish guidelines for referrals to community services.
- Coordinate community agency responsibilities for new Sure Start programs.
- Provide parent workshops for Sure Start meetings as requested.
- Assist with promotion of Sure Start programs.
- Support Sure Start programs with current social services information.

**Parent Involvement Component**

- Provide overview information to Sure Start staff about working with parents and parent recruitment.
- Assist schools with current documentation/information on parent involvement.
- Provide parent workshops or information for parent meetings, when requested.
- Help schools comply with the requirements of the parent component plans, including home visits and parent meetings.
- Assist with concerns of parents when elevated to the district office.

**Headquarters Early Childhood Instructional Systems Specialist/POC**

The HQ office will designate an early childhood ISS/POC for the Sure Start program. The HQ ECE ISS will assist in policy development and monitoring of the Sure Start program. It will also be the responsibility of the HQ POC to provide guidance on the funding of the Sure Start program's initiatives to include annual training that will include curriculum implementation. The HQ POC must have expert knowledge in ECE and training that includes the foundations of early childhood research and theories. Specifically, the HQ Early Childhood ISS Minimum Education Requirement:

- A Master's degree in the field of Education is required for all Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS). The coursework must have included study in at least three of the following five areas: (1) Learning theory, psychology of learning, educational psychology; (2) instructional design practices; (3) educational evaluation; (4) instructional product development; and (5) computers in education and training.
- Five years of specialized experience in gained in teaching, educational research, development of educational materials and aids, educational testing, guidance counseling, educational

administration, or comparable activities in an elementary and/or secondary school, which has clearly demonstrated success in the application of principles, methods, and techniques of education, and familiarity with current developments in early childhood education, specifically four-year old preschool programs.

HQ Early Childhood Instructional Systems Specialist will include the following responsibilities:

- Serve as coordinator for all DoDEA Sure Start and Pre-K programs.
- Assess the system-wide effectiveness of the Sure Start program.
- Establish guidance, policy and procedures for program implementation.
- Develop goals and objectives for Sure Start through Sure Start field observations, accreditation reports annual reports, the online assessment system and stakeholder feedback.
- Represent DoDEA in meetings of various agencies and departments of the federal government relating to the area of ECE.
- Serve as the DoDEA POC for Teaching Strategies.
- Monitor funding for system-wide initiatives for ECE.
- Provide guidance for annual training and travel.
- Work with districts in the training of new Sure Start teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Be familiar with curricular materials and DoDEA CCRSP.
- Identify training needs and provide training in methods for implementing and maintaining effective instruction in existing curriculum and in initiatives for curriculum improvement.



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## Chapter 7: Program Logistics and Administration

### Sure Start Class Size

The Sure Start Advisory Committee selects 18 children for the program annually. A waiting pool of applicants should be maintained for vacancies that occur. Although 18 children is the ideal maximum size for the program, up to 20 children may attend. The two extra slots are reserved for children who may be referred on an emergency basis, or for students who move into the area who were already enrolled in Sure Start at their previous school. In those cases, the class size may temporarily increase to 19 or 20. Students may enroll in the program as vacancies occur, up to one month before the last day of Sure Start. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Application Score Sheet](#).

### Student Eligibility Criteria

Sure Start's first responsibility is to the four-year-old child (the child must turn four on or by September 1 of the enrolling school year) of a military or eligible DoD employee whose rank is E1-4; GS1-4; or NAF 1-2 rank equivalent at the date of application. (Note that the application date is not to exceed six months before the first day of the following school year, and sponsor rank will be verified prior to enrollment). Non-DoD-sponsored students and those residing in non-DoDEA locations are not eligible for enrollment in Sure Start. Please see [DoDEA Regulation 1307.01, DoDEA Sure Start Program](#) for eligibility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. It is important to note that only the sponsor's rank is used to determine eligibility—not family income, unless it is used to determine rank equivalents for NAF Levels 1-4 and rank equivalent for GS1-8. Any sponsor in the range of E5-9, GS5-8, or NAF 3-4 rank equivalent who wishes to apply for the program is eligible to do so with the understanding that first priority is given to those children whose sponsor is in the E1-4, GS1-4, or NAF 1-2 rank equivalent range.

The NAF employee ranks use different band levels than its counterparts (i.e., Enlisted Service members or GS civilian employees). In order to determine the priority order for enrollment in the Sure Start program, the NAF employee rank must be at a level which is equivalent to the enlisted Service member and general GS civilian employee. In order to determine the priority for NAF levels 3-4 and the enrollment in the Sure Start program, the Sure Start Advisory Committee will need to consider the salary equivalent of E5-9 and GS5-8.

Children of all ranks may be eligible for temporary Sure Start placement if referred for consideration by Family Advocacy, the Chaplain's Office, or other family support agencies, documenting an unusual circumstance or an extraordinary hardship. A hardship referral is to be considered by the Sure Start Advisory Committee for a placement decision. If accepted, the referral does not indicate siblings will be accepted into the program in subsequent years.

Additional criteria are used to further prioritize students if the number of eligible applicants is greater than 18 or if there are not 18 priority 1 children eligible for Sure Start. At the date of application, the sponsor is required to show proof of sponsorship (e.g., military orders) and proof of current rank (e.g., pay stub). Validation of rank will be required before the Sure Start Advisory Committee convenes.



If the first priority range has been exhausted and the enrollment remains below 18, then applicants may be considered following the priority chart below. However, it is important to note that in order to comply with the intent of the program, the majority of students must be from priority group 1. All Sure Start classes are to maintain an enrollment of 18 students who qualify for the program as indicated in the chart below, exhausting the applicant pool if necessary.

Under no circumstances will a child be removed once accepted into the program. It is the responsibility of the Sure Start teacher, the paraprofessional, school administrator(s) and community agencies to assist Sure Start families in ensuring that all program requirements are met. Refer to [Chapter 8: Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) for more information.

**Table 11: Prioritization of Sure Start Income Eligibility**

RANK	PRIORITY	ADDITIONAL CRITERIA
E1–4, GS1–4, or NAF 1-2, rank equivalent	First Priority	* Within each priority, additional criteria are used to further prioritize such as in the NAF category where income level must sometimes be used to determine E/GS rank equivalents for NAF Levels 1-4 or the GS 1-8 rank equivalents.
E-5, GS5 or NAF 2 rank equivalent	Second Priority	
E6–7, GS5–6 or NAF 3- 4, rank equivalent	Third Priority	
E8–9 or GS6–8, or NAF 4, rank equivalent	Fourth Priority	
Children of Warrant Officers and Officers are not eligible for the Sure Start program, except in Cuba.		

Each site is encouraged to prioritize and weight its selection criteria to reflect local needs. Each Sure Start Advisory Committee will use the following additional criteria to further prioritize selection of students within each priority band. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Application Score Sheet](#).

- Child is in a one-parent family.
- Child has a parent who did not graduate from high school.
- Child's biological parent was a teenager when the first child in the family was born.
- Child has one parent whose primary language is not English.
- Child was of low birth weight (less than 5 lbs., 8 oz.).
- Child has a parent who has separated from the family because of military reassignments, giving the remaining parent an extension at the present locale. (Documentation of reassignment or deployment will be required).
- Child has three or more siblings within five years of age.
- Child has a sibling with a diagnosed severe disability.
- Child is from a dual military family.

Children with disabilities who do not meet the designated criteria for selection cannot be enrolled in the Sure Start program except as noted above. However, it is important to note that Sure Start does not exclude children with disabilities; children with disabilities are in the program because they have qualified for eligibility on the basis of the requirements cited above. Children with disabilities enrolled in Sure Start receive services in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and DoDEA special education policies. Sure Start teachers are to be the general education teacher representative at CSC meetings. A child may not be dually enrolled in Sure Start and PSCD; enrollment will be in the Sure Start classroom and services will be provided as indicated on the IEP.

Children may be placed in the Sure Start classroom only by the Sure Start Advisory Committee. When all other criteria are equal, the Sure Start Advisory Committee will prioritize the order of selection.

### The Sure Start Alternate Calendar

Sure Start programs use a required alternate calendar each year. It provides for students beginning the year later and ending the year earlier than other students.

The extra twelve days at the beginning of the school year allow Sure Start teachers time, in addition to the three regularly allotted teacher work days, to do the following:

- Work with the Sure Start Advisory Committee to complete student selection.
- Write the Sure Start Program Component Plan.
- Notify parents.
- Finalize the waiting list.
- Conduct home visits ([Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#)).
- Attend the required annual Sure Start training.
- Work on classroom arrangement.
- Enter student data in [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Other beginning-of-year duties.
- Option to implement staggered start.

The extra week at the end of the school year allows time to do the following:

- Tabulate parent surveys. ([Parent Questionnaire and Family Questionnaire Summary Form](#))
- Conduct final home visits or parent conferences. ([Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#))
- Complete inventories. ([Sure Start Inventory List Form](#))
- Review Program Continuous Improvement Plans.  
([Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#))
- Complete the [Annual Sure Start Report](#).
- Arrange August Sure Start Advisory Committee meeting.
- Contact community representative, promote and advertise the program.
- File [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) Development and Learning Reports.

For new programs, a three week delay is acceptable to support additional preparations (i.e., site preparation, forming committees, publicity, writing the component plans, etc.).

To better support young children's transitions from the home environment to the school environment, it is recommended the principal support a staggered start for Sure Start students, if the teacher requests. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways—for example, half the class begins on Day 1(day before first official day), the other half begins on Day 2(first official day), all students attend on Day 3(second official day); on Days 1 and 2, selected students come to school with parents at specific times, on Day 3 all students attend a full day; On days 1, 2, and 3, a third of the class will attend with parents, and all students begin attending without parents on Day 4. If a staggered start is implemented all students must in attendance on the first official day of Sure Start.

In addition to the initial Home Visits, three other individual contact visits with parents are required. A detailed example can be found in [Chapter 5, Home Visits and Parent Conferences](#). These home visits and in-school conferences should be scheduled according to the Sure Start program timeline. Sure Start parent conferences take longer than conferences in other grade levels; this is a required time for the Sure Start teacher to work directly with parents, to share reports, to share student work, and to develop and review individualized plans for students. Teachers should plan up to an hour for each conference. In the case that school-wide release days do not allow enough time for the required home visits or in-school conferences, the principal will release Sure Start students for the necessary days to allow the teacher and paraprofessional to complete required home visits or in-school conferences (two days for in-school conferences and five days for home visits- the number of days is based on actual enrollment). Teachers must work with principals and district offices to schedule these days prior to the start of the school year.

Releasing Sure Start students five days before the end of the school year is necessary so staff can do the following:

- Conduct final home visits and/or parent conferences. ([Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#))
- Facilitate transition activities.
- Prepare end-of-year documentation.
- Meet with the Sure Start Advisory Committee.
- Meet with community agencies to recruit incoming students.
- Complete the final student narrative reports.
- Complete the [Annual Sure Start Report](#).
- Move files as necessary.

### **Length of the Sure Start Day and Planning Time**

The Sure Start program is a full-day program and normally coincides with the elementary school day. A 45-minute teacher planning time without students must be included. This can result in the Sure Start students' day being 45 minutes shorter than other students' day. The shortened Sure Start students' day should only be an option if it results in no additional transportation costs. In addition, there should be no requirement for parents to transport students who would normally receive transportation

services from DoDEA. Other options for incorporating a planning time are detailed in [Chapter 1: Length of the Sure Start Day and Planning Time](#).

## Site Selection

The best placement for the Sure Start program is in the elementary school, near groups of other young children, such as those in the Pre-K or the PSCD program. This proximity will allow for joint programming and play opportunities with others of about the same age. Like all DoDEA classrooms, the Sure Start classroom must meet the National Fire Safety Protection code 101 for educational occupancy.

The Sure Start classroom must be large enough to provide a minimum of 35 square feet of usable space per child, which is the NAEYC standard for facilities. (Note: for a group of 18, it is recommended that the classroom be at least 900 square feet, excluding cabinets, shelving, hallways, and so on. The typical empty Sure Start classroom is 1,200 square feet.) Classrooms should have running water, built-in toileting facilities, and access to a kitchen. Furniture must be child-sized (typically no higher than 30 inches) and allow for visual supervision at all times. In new 21<sup>st</sup> century buildings the total usable classroom space includes shared community space in the neighborhoods.

An outdoor play area with equipment appropriate for four-year-olds must be readily accessible. Because most elementary school playgrounds are designed with older children in mind, the playgrounds and equipment must be inspected before use to ensure that Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) safety standards for preschoolers are being met. The CPSC guidelines are available from the district office safety officer/POC or DoDEA HQ.

Playgrounds also must meet the accessibility standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If programs are not able to meet these standards, they must work out accommodations with the DSO.

There is much initial preparation and planning necessary when establishing a Sure Start program in a new location. Ideally, preparation for the new Sure Start program should begin in the spring of the preceding school year because hiring staff, ordering equipment, and convening the Sure Start Advisory Committee early helps set the stage for a successful beginning of the school year.

Once a Sure Start program is established and ongoing, set-up times are typically reduced and procedures streamlined. The expectations for new and established programs are the same. A suggested implementation plan is presented below.

## Responsibilities for Program Start-up

### Administrator

- Hire new staff if a vacancy occurs.
- Ensure the Sure Start site, including outdoor play area, meets the program facility and safety standards. (This is done with the teacher and the district facilities representative.)
- Order any needed furnishings, supplies, and equipment. (This is done with the teacher and paraprofessional and the DSO ECE POC).

- Arrange for teacher and paraprofessional to attend annual Sure Start training for new and experienced staff.
- Solicit Sure Start Advisory Committee representatives from the base community in collaboration with the Sure Start teacher.

### Teacher and Paraprofessional

- Attend training(s) for the Sure Start program.
- Set up classroom according to curriculum guidelines.
- Convene Sure Start Advisory Committee meeting in August to select children.
- Contact parents concerning status of application for enrollment (acceptance for enrollment or waiting pool).
- Schedule and conduct initial home visits. ([Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#))
- Prepare for parent orientation meeting, to include necessary paperwork.
- Conduct parent orientation meeting.
- Create files for each child.
- Enter student data in the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Create staggered schedule for first days of school (if applicable).
- Prepare lesson plans.
- Conduct health and safety inspection of classroom and playground using the [DoDEA Space and Safety Checklist](#).
- Attend required CPR and first aid training, if available.

### Sure Start Advisory Committee

- Coordinate dental and medical screening schedules (POC: school nurse).
- Select children and families for Sure Start program.
- For new programs: Write Sure Start Program Component Plan using example and template. ([Sample Sure Start Program Component Plan](#) and [Sure Start Program Component Plan](#))
- For established programs: Review and, if necessary, revise the [Sure Start Program Component Plan](#).
- Advertise for Sure Start openings.

### Recordkeeping

During the two- to three-week period before the opening of Sure Start, procedures for completing administrative tasks and recordkeeping should be established. Refer to the [Assessment and Program Evaluation Timeline Sample](#) in the Appendix. Click the link to download the [Sure Start Assessment & Program Evaluation Timeline Form](#).

Access to the Sure Start records should be limited to the principal, the teacher, the paraprofessional, and others who have a documented “need to know.” Sure Start student records are maintained in a secure location. Refer to the [Sure Start Records Table](#) in the Appendix.

### General Program Information Records

All general program records should be maintained in the Sure Start classroom. Duplicate copies of the component plans should also be filed in the administrator's office. At the end of the school year, all general records should be securely stored, per school policy. General records include the following:

- Installation/community POC.
- Sure Start component plans as developed and approved by the Sure Start Advisory Committee.
- Notes and agendas from Sure Start Advisory Committee and parent education meetings.
- Program Evaluation forms: [The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R), [DoDEA Space and Safety Checklist](#), and the [Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan](#).
- DoDEA memoranda.
- Inventory of classroom supplies and equipment. ([Sure Start Inventory List](#))
- List of materials to be replenished or new items desired.
- Copy of the daily schedule. ([Sample Daily Schedule](#))
- Information for substitute teacher/paraprofessional.

### Child/Family Records

Child/family records are sensitive, and care must be taken to maintain privacy. At the end of the school year, teachers are to maintain three files for each child: confidential records, permanent records, and a parent folder.

- The confidential records contain information normally not disclosed to others (e.g., income verification, [Sure Start Application](#), referrals to agencies, home visit documentation, individual and family goals) and are of a sensitive and/or confidential nature. Parents, however, have open access to their own records, with three day's written notice. Confidential records are to be given to the local administration at the end of the school year and kept in a locked and secure location. These records are to be kept for three years from date of exit. The records should be marked to be destroyed after three years.
- Permanent records, also known as 901 files, are maintained according to the procedures in place for other grades. These records include semester progress reports, health screenings, or other assessments (e.g., originals of developmental and/or learning checklists), and accident or serious injury reports. Maintenance of these records should follow the protocol of the school's permanent record files. The permanent record file should include the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) "Development and Learning Report."
- The parent folder houses materials that are to be returned to families. Included in this folder are portfolios of student work and copies of developmental reports.

In summary, staff should maintain the paperwork listed in Sure Start Records. Refer to [Sure Start Records Table](#) in the Appendix.

Maintaining paperwork and administrative aspects of the Sure Start programs is essential to operating a successful Sure Start classroom. Records serve many purposes, from justifying funding to determining

the future educational placement of the children enrolled. The importance of keeping records accurate and up to date cannot be overemphasized. Student files must be kept confidential from parents.

Sure Start records and information may be shared with the DSO and with HQ as needed for district accreditation and program monitoring.

### Extra-Duty Compensation

As stated in the description of program administrator responsibilities, Sure Start teachers will be entitled to extra-duty compensation for position-specific tasks that go beyond the duty day. Examples include evening home visits to accommodate family work schedules and parent meetings, commissary shopping, as well as the completion of the necessary record keeping that is above what is expected in general education. This policy should be clarified at the start of the year when extra duties are assigned to the school faculty as a whole. It is the teacher's responsibility to log hours accurately, to complete an extra-duty contract, and submit it to the principal. The entitlement for these extra duties falls under the 40-79-hour band in the extra-duty schedule. Funding has been provided to each district/school who hosts a Sure Start Program. Click the link to download the [Extra-Curricular \(EDC - Information\)](#).

### Sure Start Month by Month

The following chart describes major Sure Start operations month by month.

#### AUGUST

- Teachers report to duty.
- Plan and procure resources for curricular cooking/snack prior to GPC cutoff
- Convene Sure Start Advisory Committee and select students based on [Sure Start Application Score sheet](#) and selection criteria.
- Review/revise [Sure Start Program Component Plan](#) with assistance from Sure Start Advisory Committee, as needed/required.
- Arrange for initial Health Screenings (POC: school nurse).
- Attend Sure Start annual training.
- Set up and label classroom.
- Complete Initial Home Visits prior to students' first day.
- Enter student information in [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) and create class.

#### SEPTEMBER

- Conduct home visits. ([Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form](#))
- Inspect playground.
- Develop initial lesson plans using *Creative Curriculum* teaching materials.
- Conduct Open House to welcome students to classroom (with a staggered start, if applicable).
- Conduct parent orientation meeting.
- Schedule parent meetings (four are required per year, but more are encouraged).
- Begin assessing students using observation.
- Begin administration of the ESI-R.
- Begin collecting student work and making observations for portfolios Using [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) is encouraged.



**OCTOBER**

- Continue assessing students with general documentation.
- Complete Early Screening Inventory – Revised within 45 days.
- Complete Health Screenings (POC: school nurse).
- Add to children’s portfolios.
- Complete [DoDEA Space and Safety Checklist](#).
- Complete [The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R).
- Convene first parent education meeting.
- Administer parent survey.

**NOVEMBER**

- End of first quarter; enter preliminary checkpoints for all students in [Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Develop Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan, using information from [The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised](#) (ECERS-R) and [DoDEA Space and Safety Checklist](#); share with school administrator and DSO POC no later than the last Friday in November.
- Continue assessing students with general documentation.
- Add to portfolios.
- Prepare Development and Learning Reports in [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Conduct parent conferences in conjunction with school and plan for the [Parent Questionnaire and Family Questionnaire Summary Form](#) individual student goals.

**DECEMBER**

- Continue assessing students with general documentation.
- Add to portfolios.
- Monitor implementation of Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan.

**JANUARY**

- Convene parent meeting #2 (four meetings per year required).
- Add to portfolios.
- Continue assessing students with general documentation.
- Monitor implementation of Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan.
- Enter and finalize winter checkpoint data in [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).

**FEBRUARY**

- Add to portfolios.
- Conduct Home Visit or In-School Conference and review child’s progress with families.
- Continue assessing students and adding documentation to [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Monitor implementation of Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan.

**MARCH**

- Continue assessing students and adding documentation to [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Monitor implementation of Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan.
- Add to portfolios.
- Advertise Sure Start program for the coming school year.
- Possibly convene parent education meeting #3 (four meetings per year are required).

**APRIL**

- Advertise Sure Start program for the coming school year.
- Continue assessing students and adding documentation to [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Enter and finalize spring checkpoint data in [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Share child's progress report with family.
- Continue implementation of Program Progress Plan.
- Conduct home visit or in-school conference using the [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) Development and Learning reports.
- Add to portfolios.
- Begin accepting applications for next school year.

**MAY**

- Possibly convene 4<sup>th</sup> parent education meeting (Last required parent meeting. Can be an activity for families and should also address transitional issues and summer activities).
- Accept applications for next school year.
- Continue assessing students and adding documentation to [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Complete portfolios.
- Conduct transition activities for children entering kindergarten in the fall.

**JUNE**

- Complete student assessment with general documentation.
- Enter and finalize summer checkpoint data in [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#).
- Conduct annual Parent Survey.
- Conduct final home visit or parent-teacher conference and share [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) Development and Learning reports.
- Provide families with children's work and related materials.
- Brief summer staff on application procedures.
- Promote program in the community
- Plan for initial procurement of resources for curricular cooking/snack that will occur upon return to school in August.
- Accept applications for next school year.
- Conduct end-of-year review of Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan.
- Place a copy each child's [MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) Development and Learning reports in his/her Cumulative Folder (901 file) in the main office.
- Complete DoDEA Annual Report; share with administrator and submit to the DSO Sure Start POC.
- Complete yearly inventory to support conversations about program needs.
- Provide letters to Sure Start Advisory Committee members for dates of August meeting.
- Prepare for Sure Start Advisory Committee to convene in August.



## Chapter 8: Frequently Asked Questions

### Eligibility and Enrollment



**Q: Do Sure Start students register for school?**

Once notified of acceptance into the program, Sure Start students register just like any other student. The Sure Start Advisory Committee should establish guidance for the maximum number of days that a classroom slot may be held for a child away on leave. For example, a student is selected and the family is away on leave until Thanksgiving, the family should be notified that their child's slot will be given to the next qualified applicant and their application will be placed back on the waiting pool. If a parent notifies the school that they will return within one to two weeks of Sure Start student start date, the parent should retain the slot and be allowed to enroll in the program.

**Q: Can children be admitted to Sure Start if they are only a few days shy of the cutoff age (e.g., they turn four on November 3 of the enrolling year) and there are open slots in a program?**

No. Absolutely no age exceptions whatsoever are made in the Sure Start program. Parents cannot request special testing or special consideration. Insistent parents or those with children who meet all qualifications except age can be referred to the DoDEA Web site, which offers CCRSP that may allow them to work with their child at home during this waiting year. Sure Start teachers can also suggest the CDC or off-base preschools in the area for interaction with other children.

**Q: How many children in a Sure Start classroom should have a sponsor with rank of E1-4?**

To meet the intent for the program, 51% of the students enrolled should have a sponsor with a rank of E1-4. Programs should maintain an enrollment of 18 students at all time; students should meet the eligibility criteria. You should exhaust your applicant pool of qualified applicants to maintain full enrollment.

**Q: When determining eligibility the fourth band is E8-9, GS6-8 or NAF 4. If you have enrolled all applicants in this fourth band and still have not filled your class, does this mean that you stop enrolling students?**

Yes. Sure Start was designed to serve children and family serving in the lower ranks of the military. The program was originally created to provide an environment for enlisted parents where they would feel free to make choices, decisions, and express feelings about their child's education. In order to ensure we are meeting the needs of enlisted families, Sure Start must remain a program that serves enlisted ranks or rank equivalents.

**Q: Is there ever a time when a child whose sponsor is above an E9 would be accepted into the program?**

The only time a child with a sponsor above E9 would be accepted into the program, would be based on an emergency placement by a chaplain or Family Advocacy. Remember Sure Start can potentially

service 20 students (with the last two slots being reserved for emergency placements). The only exception to this is in Cuba where all students are accepted into the program regardless of rank.

**Q: How would you determine the NAF rank equivalent for E5 and GS5, Second Priority for Sure Start eligibility? For E6-7 and GS5-6, Third Priority for Sure Start eligibility? For E8-9 and GS6-8, Fourth Priority for Sure Start eligibility?**

The Sure Start Advisory Committee would have to request the salary level for the NAF Level 2 sponsor. The salary level should not be above that of E5 or GS5 to qualify for Second Priority eligibility. The salary level should not be above that of E6-7 or GS5-6 to qualify for the Third Priority eligibility. The salary level should not be above that of the E8-9 or GS6-8 to qualify for the Fourth Priority eligibility. This is necessary because the NAF Level pay bands are not equivalent to the same Enlisted and GS range.

**Q: The Chaplain's Office wants to place an officer's child in Sure Start on an emergency basis. Doesn't this go against income guidelines?**

As a general rule, this does go against Sure Start guidelines, which give priority to children of sponsors in the E1 to E4 (or GS1 to GS4) range. However, under the "emergency placement" policy, if the Chaplain's Office or another family service office strongly believes that a child would be best served by Sure Start, the child is recommended to the Sure Start Advisory Committee for emergency placement. If the Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendation, the rank requirement may be waived.

**Q: How critical is it that Sure Start enrollment remains at 18 students?**

Student enrollment numbers in Sure Start are monitored closely at the district and DoDEA HQ levels. The program was designed to service 18 children. It is critical that schools continue advertising the program within their communities and network with agencies on the base (WIC, Family Support Center, CDC) throughout the year to ensure an applicant pool is ready for selecting children as openings occur.

**Q: What happens when a student already selected and enrolled in a Sure Start class transfers to another DoDEA school that has a Sure Start program?**

When a Sure Start student is already selected and enrolled in a Sure Start program and transfers to another school with a Sure Start program, he/she will automatically be placed in the Sure Start program at their new school, regardless of how they rank in the "new" class grouping. So, if a selected child with an E9 sponsor was transferred to another program where the highest rank was an E4 and there was a waiting list of E5's and E6's, the child would still have automatic placement in the program since he/she was already in another Sure Start program. It follows the thinking that once a student starts a program, the child is never (even if he/she transfers) dropped from that program. This also means that the enrollment of a Sure Start program could increase to 19 or 20 temporarily until another child Permanent Change of Station (PCS) from the program. If the classroom already has an enrollment of 20, the student will have first priority for placement when an opening becomes available.

**Q: Is it ever appropriate to suspend a child from the Sure Start program or shorten their school day?**

The Sure Start program is designed as an early intervention program for a targeted population for “at risk” children and families. Rarely, if ever, is it appropriate to suspend a Sure Start child or shorten his/her school day. When children experience behavioral difficulties, the school should work collaboratively with school and community resources to ensure a plan is in place to address the child/family needs. Having a child remain at home out of school rarely is in the best interest of the child.

**Q: I have four families who absolutely refuse the home visit. What should I do?**

Sure Start is a complete program with specific components and requirements. If parents are unable to meet a requirement (e.g., home visits), they should not enroll their child in the program. Home visits are a part of parent participation and are vital to the success of the program as well as the child’s experience. Families must agree to the home visits upon registering their child for school.

**Q. I have a family that is having difficulty completing their parent participation hours. What should I do?**

Sure Start is designed to educate parents, as well as the students. Parents should sign a Statement of Understanding regarding participation hours. If parents are not making progress toward the completion of their participation hours then you should hold a conference and discuss the possibility of alternate times or activities that they can participate in to complete their hours. If there is still a lack of participation, request another conference with the parents and school administrator and as a last resort have the principal contact the sponsor’s command to request additional support.

## **Scheduling**

**Q: Is it appropriate for a specialist to service Sure Start children?**

Collaboration between the Sure Start teacher and specialists is vital to the success of the program, and collaboration, rather than full participation in specials, ensures that Sure Start program standards are not compromised. On an as-needed basis, specialists can work with various-sized groups of students in interest areas (indoors or outdoors), providing instruction related to their areas. Following are several example scenarios:

- A music teacher could speak to the whole class during center time for a short time about the similarities of rhythm to patterns and demonstrate clapping to make some patterns. Then she/he could introduce some simple rhythm instruments and put them in a center for students to explore. The music teacher could remain in the Sure Start classroom and be at the center with the instruments and interact with small groups of students who choose to participate and show an interest in that center and learning more about rhythm, patterns, etc.
- A PE teacher could introduce a hopping game to children as a whole group during outdoor play and then interact with small groups of children who are interested in continuing to play the game or extend their learning around this concept.

- A speech therapist could work with a group of students reinforcing the concept of positional words or play an appropriate game.
- In general, a Sure Start teacher would want to have a time period when all centers are open and the specialists could position themselves in a center that most closely aligns with their area. While the specialists are there, they can observe the children's interactions with the materials and interact with the children and the materials.

It is important to remember that Sure Start enrollment is not included in the school population when determining their school's staffing ratio for specialists. Depending on school size and scheduling, the involvement of the specialist with the Sure Start program may vary. Due to the staffing ratio used for specialists, Sure Start should not be included in the school's specialist rotation. While the examples given above show how specialists may work with Sure Start students, it is anticipated that the majority of support will be consultation with the Sure Start teacher.

**Q: Are Sure Start students eligible for ESL services?**

Sure Start classrooms are designed as language rich environments. Children whose native language is not English will benefit from the variety of activities and interactions with adults and peers that occurs in a Sure Start classroom. ESL staffing at elementary schools is based on the grades K-6 student population and does not include Sure Start or Pre-K enrollments. The ESL teacher at a school can serve as a resource or provide consultation if time permits. In some schools it may be possible for the ESL teacher to spend some time in the Sure Start classroom working with students in an inclusive model, however, rarely or if ever is it appropriate for a Sure Start child to be seen by an ESL teacher in a pull-out model.

**Q: Are Sure Start students eligible for guidance counselor services?**

Guidance counselors are there to meet the needs of all DoDEA students. It is in the best interest of the students to work collaboratively with the guidance counselor to design a program that supports student needs. Some examples may include; consultative basis, biweekly or monthly lessons, collaborative lessons, etc.

## **Assessment/Behavior**

**Q: When a Sure Start child transfers to another Sure Start Program, what needs to be done to transfer the child's data on *MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD*?**

If the Sure Start child transfers to another Sure Start program within the district, the teacher should contact the district office representative. If the child transfers to another Sure Start program outside of the district, the district POC should contact the DoDEA HQ representative and request transfer of data to enrolling school.

**Q: If a Sure Start student transfers to a school that does not have a Sure Start program, should their file be deleted?**

At the end of the school year, the student's Sure Start file should be deleted.

**Q: What procedure should I follow if, through screening, a child appears to be having some difficulties?**

Follow normal school referral policies. Usually, the first step is to consult the PSCD teacher.

**Q: What happens if a child is determined to have a disability during the school year?**

The child's CSC makes a determination of the services the child needs. In most cases, the child can remain in the Sure Start program, with minor modifications and support from the PSCD teacher. It should be noted that a child cannot, however, be jointly enrolled in Aspen in Sure Start and PSCD. The Sure Start teacher would be the homeroom/general education teacher and the PSCD teacher would be the special education teacher to provide services according to the child's IEP.

**Q: One of my children has a real behavior problem. Where can I go to get help with this child? Can I dismiss the child from the program?**

Once accepted, a child cannot be dismissed from the Sure Start program for any reason whatsoever (see [Chapter 4, The Social Services Component](#)). First, check with the child's family to see if anything at home has changed. Often, an upset in the child's routine can cause some problems with the child. Sit down with the parents and see if you can come up with some suggestions for ideas that have worked with the child before.

- Check your classroom routines. Has something changed at school, or are the behavioral expectations too high for the child's developmental level?
- One of the best resources to assist is your school's guidance counselor or psychologist. They have a toolbox of resources and strategies to help.
- Consult with your DSO ECE POC. They should be able to provide strategies in the area of appropriate guidance for preschool age children.
- A concerted effort between home and school is always in the child's best interests. Be sure to share children's successes—both big and small—with parents. Often, families feel they are to blame for their child's behavior and need reassurance that Sure Start staff will work with them to help their child control his or her behavior.

Although at times removal from the program might seem in the child's best interest, often it is only postponing a problem until the child begins kindergarten. Because the goal is to ensure that all children are ready to learn in kindergarten, dealing with the problem and solving it now would be most helpful, albeit more challenging. If, after trying the above, nothing seems to be working, referring the child to the school's CSC through the regular referral process will enable you to find out if the child has a disability that could be contributing to the behavior problem. They will then determine how the child's needs can best be met.



## Materials/Funding

**Q: Isn't Sure Start a special program? How is it funded? How do I go about ensuring I get the materials and equipment that I need?**

Sure Start is funded in the same way that other school programs are. Each year, the school receives a certain amount of money per child that is used to fund the program. Of course, this amount covers utilities, custodial services, field trips, and so on—so not all money can go to supplies. It is a good idea to determine what items in your classroom you need to replace, what additional items you would like to purchase, and how much you need to purchase cooking items from the commissary. Then sit down and discuss the program's needs with the principal. Each school is different. Schools purchase snacks from the school lunch program. Some schools received a large sum to purchase materials before start-up, and others received materials from schools drawing down. No one set amount or formula covers all schools. Good communication is the key. Inviting the district's Sure Start POC to be part of the discussion might help when both the principal and the teacher are new to the program.

**Q: Can I use rice as a substitute for sand in my sand and water table? I**

No, food is not used for art or play purposes because the Sure Start program respects that food is often sacred or scarce in many cultures and should be used only for consumption. The adopted curriculum has many recipe cards which are appropriate for use, to include play-dough.

## Additional Questions

**Q: Where are Sure Start health records kept?**

The originals of health records are kept in the school health office. Every Sure Start teacher should have a list of allergies, medical concerns and emergency phone numbers for each child in the program. This is especially critical when the Sure Start program is not located in the elementary school building. Emergency procedures should be set up for programs not located in the school.

**Q: Can a child repeat or be retained in Sure Start?**

No. A repeating Sure Start child would break age guidelines in the second year.

**Q: My school has no PSCD or Pre-K, but only Sure Start and kindergarten. A family with a developmentally delayed three-and-a-half-year-old has recently PCS'd, and via Family Advocacy and our school special education department, there is a proposal for early intervention and partial inclusion in my Sure Start class. Is this permitted? What are my responsibilities?**

The Sure Start program is funded to provide services for only those students who meet the criteria. Sure Start is not a universal Pre-K/general education program and cannot be used as such. The CSC at the incoming school would determine how to best meet the student's needs, but they should not place them in the Sure Start classroom. Once the child meets the eligibility requirements, he/she could then be enrolled in the program.

**Q: Some of my families live on the economy. My home visits require me to drive off base to locations over an hour away from the base site in heavy, foreign traffic. Can I request a military van/driver? If I use my own vehicle, is there a mileage form I can submit for reimbursement for the cost of gas?**

Teachers should always be reimbursed using a local mileage reimbursement form if they are using their personally operated vehicle (POV) for DoDEA-directed school business. Use of military vehicles/drivers is under local governance and is a site-based decision. This may be a reasonable option given local geography or if the Sure Start teacher does not have a POV. Mileage can be claimed using SF1164 form and filed according to local guidance.

**Q: For safety and liability issues, I am more comfortable going on the home visit with another adult from the school. What are my options?**

It is a requirement that the program paraprofessional accompany the teacher to ALL home visits. Under no circumstances should a teacher be required to make a visit without the program paraprofessional. If a program paraprofessional is unavailable for any reason, it is a requirement that the teacher be accompanied by another DoDEA employee (e.g., principal, school secretary, or nurse).

**Q: I've just arrived at a new Sure Start program, and I notice that past practice has been to schedule the program paraprofessional beginning the first student day of school and no earlier. Are there any provisions, directives, or allocations for Sure Start paraprofessionals to start earlier, since there are so many tasks involved in preparing for the start of the year?**

Sure Start program paraprofessionals are required to be on duty during the same teacher duty time that the Sure Start teacher is to report. The program paraprofessional hours are provided by HQ to ensure this requirement and cannot be used in any other way.

**Q: The entire school is having a Halloween Day party and parade, and I was told that Sure Start teachers cannot address holidays or celebrate them. I have some angry parents. What should I do?**

Teachers may refer parents to the section of this guide that states that holidays are to be celebrated in the home and not inside the Sure Start classroom. In the same light, graduation ceremonies for any grade other than high school seniors are discouraged. Refer to the earlier portion of this guide for a more detailed explanation of this position. To alleviate requests for holiday celebrations, teachers should share the guidelines with parents at the orientation meeting.

**Q: I have a child who is in no way toilet trained and soils her pants almost daily. She has no IEP or doctor's report of a physical problem. What should I do? Can she remain in school?**

A child cannot be denied admission based on lack of toilet training. First, any child who is not toilet trained should be immediately referred to the school nurse. The nurse should work with the parents and pediatrician to rule out any physical problems or developmental delays. The school nurse should then develop an action plan with parents and Sure Start staff to begin immediate toilet training.

**Q: I have a mother who insists on bringing along her disruptive two-year-old when she volunteers in the classroom. She said she has no child care. I see this as a liability issue and a disruption to the routine in my class. What should I do?**

It is Sure Start guidance that only children who are enrolled in the Sure Start program should be present during the instructional day. Parents should make alternate arrangements for siblings. This allows parents to focus on being fully engaged without the worry of caring for their other children. If finding alternate childcare is difficult then suggestions for other volunteer opportunities should be made, e.g. doing laundry, preparing things at home, or after the instructional day to assist with sanitizing the interest area toys and materials.

**Q: I have a child who is repeatedly absent. Are there a maximum number of days before a child is dis-enrolled to allow another eligible family into the program?**

Sure Start students are under the same attendance requirements as all DoDEA children. If a child is absent more than one week without a doctor's excuse, he or she should be referred to the administrator. If a child has excessive absences per quarter, the administrator should be notified. See [DoDEA Regulation 2095.01](#).

**Q: The Child Development Center (CDC) is under renovation and wants to use my Sure Start classroom for after-school care for K-5 children. Is this permitted, or is it up to my administrator?**

Because the Sure Start classroom has strict sanitation and environmental requirements, every effort should be made not to use the Sure Start facility for any other purposes. If the local decision is to use the Sure Start classroom, those using the facility must fulfill the sanitation requirements (e.g., using bleach solution for disinfecting toys, tabletop, cleaning restrooms, etc.).

**Q: I know that program assistants are evaluated almost like teachers. How much of the evaluation is my responsibility, if any? Also, should I as the teacher be permitted to sit in on interviews and give input on who the program assistant should be?**

Although program assistants take direction from the teachers, the administrator is responsible for evaluating them. Administrators may invite the Sure Start teacher to sit in on program paraprofessional interviews and to provide input for evaluations.

**Q: Why don't kindergarten or general preschool programs have similar guidelines for program administration as Sure Start?**

Sure Start is a totally self-contained program for targeted population of children; it is separate from those general or special education program and teaching positions in DoDEA and has separate job descriptions. The Sure Start model strives for excellence by following strict ECE guidelines from the foremost early childhood philosophies in the world. This program was funded and given to DoDEA by the Office of the Secretary of Defense with established program standards and requirements that are to be maintained and developed.

**Q: How are the Sure Start classrooms and the CDC program alike and different? Are Sure Start classrooms required to follow CDC regulations (e.g., video surveillance cameras in the classroom)?**

Although both the Sure Start program and the CDC offer quality preschool and early childhood programs and may have similarities, they are distinctly separate programs run under different DOD regulations and guidelines. Whereas the CDC is open to all children on a sliding-pay-scale basis, the Sure Start program is free to all DOD-eligible families who meet the criteria outlined in this Guide. The Sure Start classroom is staffed by DoDEA personnel who must follow the regulations and policies of the schools and the additional program standards and regulations contained in this Guide. The mission of Sure Start is to prepare targeted students for future academic and social success. Therefore, Sure Start teachers and classrooms are not required to follow the CDC regulations such as video surveillance in the classroom.



## Appendix

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## Sample Sure Start Program Component Plan

EDUCATION COMPONENT			
<b>Beginning of the Year:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with Sure Start Advisory Committee to select children for the program</li> <li>Notify Parents</li> <li>Schedule and conduct the initial home visit</li> <li>Take pictures (at the initial home visit) of the family to display in the classroom</li> <li>Organize open house for parents and children</li> <li>Conduct a parent orientation meeting</li> <li>Review DoDEA Sure Start Guide</li> <li>Review CCRSP Objectives for Development &amp; Learning</li> <li>Enter Class information into <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a></li> <li>Develop a lesson plan format or use the one from <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a></li> <li>Create a daily schedule (words and pictures) and post for student use</li> <li>Review component plans</li> <li>Review fire, security, and bomb procedures</li> <li>Prepare a letter to the commander explaining the program and the parents' participation responsibilities</li> <li>Meet with lunch staff to discuss schedule and program menu needs</li> <li>Set up cleaning schedule</li> <li>Label the classroom</li> <li>Plan and procure curricular cooking/snack resources.</li> </ul>			
<i>Enter Site Specific Information Here; e.g. contingency plan in the event that there is not a substitute available, when 2<sup>nd</sup> home visit will occur, CSC procedures, etc.</i>			
QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess each child using the ESI-R</li> <li>Collect authentic samples of student work; pictures, anecdotal notes, etc. and enter into <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a></li> <li>Set up dates for parent meetings</li> <li>Have parents complete the parent Questionnaire</li> <li>Coordinate with parents on ways to complete participation hours</li> <li>Complete ECERS</li> <li>Develop improvement plan for program using data from Classroom environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the Sure Start Program Standards and use the Objectives for Development and Learning to improve student performance and growth</li> <li>Conduct ongoing evaluation of children making adjustments as needed, using <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a> for guiding instruction</li> <li>Revise daily schedule as needed</li> <li>Monitor and adjust educational goals for each child</li> <li>Collect work samples for each child's portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the DoDEA CCRSP</li> <li>Continue planning, monitoring, and adjusting student goals</li> <li>Collect work samples for each child's portfolio</li> <li>Enter and finalize spring checkpoints in <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a></li> <li>Review the ECERS assessment and program improvement plan with Administrator</li> <li>Revise and update educational goals at parent-conference/home visit based on the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the DoDEA CCRSP</li> <li>Continue planning, monitoring, and adjusting as in the second quarter</li> <li>Collect work samples for each child's portfolio</li> <li>Reactivate the Sure Start Advisory Committee in order to begin selection for children for the following year</li> <li>Finalize all summer checkpoints for students</li> <li>Review the Classroom Environment* assessment and update plan</li> <li>Plan and implement transition activities</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assessment</li> <li>Complete weekly lesson plans</li> <li>Enter preliminary fall checkpoints in <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a></li> <li>Determine individual goals for each child with parent during scheduled conference at the end of the first quarter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate parent quarterly meeting</li> <li>Enter finalized winter checkpoints in <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a></li> <li>Complete Development and Learning Report on each student</li> <li>Conduct second home visit or in-school parent conference</li> <li>Complete weekly lesson plans</li> <li>Monitor parent participation hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and Learning report.</li> <li>Facilitate parent quarterly meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct final home visit or have parent conferences to share the final Development and Learning Report</li> <li>Complete Sure Start Annual Report; send to District Sure Start POC</li> <li>Set up date with Sure Start Advisory Committee for beginning of next year</li> </ul>
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## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Task	Responsibility	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate a member for the Sure Start Advisory Committee</li> <li>Schedule dental screening for each child in the Sure Start program</li> <li>Provide follow-up visits needed for children as required</li> <li>Provide support services for the Sure Start program</li> <li>Present at a parent meeting, if requested</li> </ul>	Base Dental Clinic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate a member for the Sure Start Advisory Committee</li> <li>Schedule dental screening for each child in the Sure Start program</li> <li>Provide follow-up visits needed for children as required</li> <li>Provide support services for the Sure Start program</li> <li>Present at a parent meeting, if requested</li> <li>Provide training in Child/infant CPR and First Aid (if the local installation provides it)</li> </ul>	Base Hospital/ Medical Treatment Facility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct training for staff on child abuse procedures</li> <li>Work with parents as required</li> <li>Recommend intervention programs and consult with teacher, parents, and children as needed</li> <li>Maintain confidential records as required</li> </ul>	School Counselor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision and hearing screening</li> <li>Height and weight screening</li> <li>Support ill or injured children</li> <li>Maintain electronic records of office visits/health related encounters via the DoDEA approved Student Information System</li> <li>Contact parents with health issues/concerns</li> <li>Consult with parents to answer health related questions</li> <li>Maintain a school health folder for each child that contains student health information and any applicable medical records provided by the parents</li> </ul>	School Nurse	Screenings to be completed within 45 calendar days of enrollment



PARENT INVOLVEMENT		
Task	Responsibility	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with command via letter stating required parent participation hours</li> <li>Provide letter and parent names to units regarding the required parent participation hours</li> </ul>	School Administrator	Upon student being selected for the program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule orientation meeting for enrolled parents and send invites</li> <li>Brainstorm topics for parent meetings with parents during orientation meeting</li> <li>Schedule home visits</li> <li>Set date and time schedule for parent meeting with parents</li> <li>Provide training to parent participants in the classroom</li> <li>Monitor and maintain parent participation hours</li> <li>Provide a variety of options for parents to complete participation hours</li> <li>Complete at least two (2) home visits a year, one prior to program start-up and one during the year</li> </ul>	Sure Start Teacher and Paraprofessional	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend scheduled parent meetings</li> <li>Participate in the Sure Start classroom for 30 hours per parent</li> <li>Assist the teacher and paraprofessional in developing agendas for quarterly meetings</li> <li>Help make educational goals for their child</li> </ul>	Sure Start Parents	
SOCIAL SERVICES		
Task	Agency	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate a social services member for the Sure Start Advisory Committee</li> <li>Distribute Sure Start information and application to various community organizations</li> <li>Advertise in the community for recruitment of eligible children</li> <li>Maintain a master list of services provided and available to families from military organizations</li> <li>Consult with nurse, administrator, and parents as needed</li> <li>Assist families to improve family life (e.g. parenting, budgeting, planning, counseling)</li> </ul>	Family Service Center	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the social service representative to ensure families have services they require</li> <li>Follow established school guidelines for referring families to agencies that provide for crisis intervention and emergency assistance</li> <li>Maintain confidential records as required</li> </ul>	Sure Start Teacher and Paraprofessional	
SURE START TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL		
Task: additional items that the committee agrees to be included		Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. if necessary, collaborate with local CDC regarding transportation of students</li> </ul>		Prior to first day of Sure Start

## Recommitment Letter

### *Recommitment Letter Sample*

The purpose of this letter is to reinforce \_\_\_\_\_ COMMAND NAME's \_\_\_\_\_  
Support for the \_\_\_\_\_ School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sure Start Program.

Due to the large number of children in the targeted population at \_\_\_\_\_ Base Name \_\_\_\_\_, I  
recognize the benefit of the program, not only to the child but the family as a whole.

All services at \_\_\_\_\_ BASE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ that support the Sure Start program will continue. These  
services include medical, dental, and developmental screening of each child as well as social service  
programs.

Point of contact for this action is \_\_\_\_\_ SLO NAME \_\_\_\_\_, at XXX-XXXX (phone number).

Signature Block of Commander

## Sample Daily Schedule

**NOTE:** Role of Support Specialist refers to SLP, Counselor, MFLAC, Special Ed, EDIS, Education Technologist, IS, School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist & Physical Therapist, PSCD.

Approximate Time	Activity Comments	Role of Teacher & Paraprofessional	Role of Support Specialist
30 minutes	Teacher Planning Time	Teacher and paraprofessional meet to go over day's plans. Teachers conduct health and safety checks (e.g., check bathroom supplies; make sure dangerous items are out of children's reach). Teachers make sure all needed materials are available to children.	Collaboration/ consultation about student needs. Planning for class visits, SST process, designing interventions, and checking progress.
<b>SURE START SESSION BEGINS</b>  10 minutes	Arrival: Parents and children who walk or drive arrive at the program. If bus transportation is used, buses arrive and unload children.  Food (e.g., a plate of orange slices) is available so that hungry children can serve themselves. Quiet areas, such as table toys and library corner, are available.	Greet parents and children individually. Share information with parents. Help children store belongings and select an activity.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	Greeting students, building relationships, assisting with transition to classroom.
20 minutes	Group Meeting Time: Talk about what children did the night before or over the weekend. Teacher takes attendance and children count who is present and who is absent. Teacher assigns jobs to children for the day. Teacher reads aloud a story or introduces a song or finger-play. Children do rhyming activities and other phonemic awareness word-play. Teacher goes over the daily schedule, and children predict "what comes next." Teacher may complete a shared reading, choral reading, song, or group writing activity related to current concepts and themes.	Teacher leads circle time. Teacher-directed instruction takes place. Teacher leads counting and phonemic awareness activities. Paraprofessional responds to individual children who are not ready for large-group activities.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	May co-teach or facilitate a small group, or help to model and support students in activity or lesson.  May be taking supporting documentation, for observations, interventions or noting progress.

Approximate Time	Activity Comments	Role of Teacher & Paraprofessional	Role of Support Specialist
60 minutes	Indoor Choice Time: Children choose to participate in interest areas and/or a small-group activity. Children solve problems and conduct “research” about the project the class is currently investigating. Children may explore in depth materials or concepts introduced at morning meeting. Children clean up and put on jackets, if needed, for going outdoors.	Teacher and paraprofessional interact with individual children in ways that extend play and learning. Paraprofessional or parent participant leads a small-group activity that builds on children’s skills and interests and/or is related to the current project study. Teachers encourage children to clean up as they play.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	Circulates through centers working with students and assisting with needs.  May have small group (for short periods of time) with students needing support in area of expertise.
45-60 minutes	Outdoor Choice Time: Children choose to play on swings, climbers, and slides, ride trikes, jump rope, or participate in ball games. Some children may prefer quiet activities such as reading a book, playing with sidewalk chalk, or tending a garden.	Gross-motor play needs to be carefully supervised. Teachers can lead small-group activities.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	May observe, join in or support students with needs to engage, join groups, and participate in play activities.
<b>NOTE: Morning and afternoon snacks are incorporated into either indoor or outdoor choice time. Snacks are available to students throughout the day upon request.</b>			
15 minutes	Story and Lunch Preparation: Teacher reads story aloud to the class, while student helpers work with paraprofessional and parent to set tables. Children use toilet and wash hands.	Teacher reads a story using props. Paraprofessional oversees children setting out placemats, dishes, glasses, silverware, and napkins. Adults fill serving dishes and place bowls of food on tables. Staff oversees use of bathroom facilities and hand washing. Staff help children settle in for lunch.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	

Approximate Time	Activity Comments	Role of Teacher & Paraprofessional	Role of Support Specialist
45 minutes	Lunch: Children and adults enjoy a family-style meal. Children clean up, wash hands, brush teeth, get mats out, and get ready for rest time.	Adults sitting at tables with children encourage conversations about nutrition and topics of interest to the children. Teachers guide children to clean up, wash hands, brush teeth, and get ready for rest time. Adults help children set out mats.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	
60 minutes	Rest time: Children sleep or rest quietly on mats. Non-sleepers can be given a book box, puzzles, or paper and markers.	Staff help children relax, if needed, so they can fall asleep. Teacher and paraprofessional take turns going on duty-free lunch.	
60 minutes	Indoor or Outdoor Child Choice: Children choose their own activities as they wake up then transition to outside activities. Children conduct small-group investigations as part of project work.	Paraprofessional or parent participants help children with investigations. Second “open snack” opportunity. Teacher interacts with children individually.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	
15 minutes	Afternoon Meeting: Teacher and children review day’s activities summarize and apply content studied. Children clean up and get ready to go home.	Teacher leads circle. Staff help children clean up and prepare to go home.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	

Approximate Time	Activity Comments	Role of Teacher & Paraprofessional	Role of Support Specialist
15 minutes  SURE START SESSION ENDS FOR THE DAY	Departure: Parents pick up children, or children walk to the bus.	Staff greets parents and provides positive information about what children did during the day. Staff says goodbye to individual children and their parents, making sure those children take home what is in their cubbies.  *Anecdotal notes taken; <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD Plus</a> teach/assess when appropriate.	
30 minutes	Planning Period	Staff discusses day's events—what worked well, what might need to be changed. Staff discusses activities and progress of individual children—skills, needs, interests. Staff plans for the future—the next day, week, and month. Interest areas are readied for the next day. Staff hangs children's artwork. Teachers work on portfolios, enter online assessment data, and do other paperwork.	

## Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan Example

AREA OF FOCUS	DESCRIPTION
Space and Furnishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place order for new rug</li> </ul>
Personal Care Routines (Health and Nutrition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post a healthy snack calendar</li> <li>Post hand washing visual aid as a reminder to students</li> </ul>
Language and Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotate books to support studies.</li> <li>Place open ended prompting questions in the interest areas to assist parents when they are working with students.</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a yearly plan for using Creative Curriculum Teaching Guides</li> </ul>
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with guidance counselor on conflict resolution lessons.</li> </ul>
Program Structure (Schedule)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan time weekly for small group instruction and time for observations and strive to follow through with the plan</li> </ul>
Parents and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a weekly newsletter to parents</li> </ul>
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate SmartBoard activities regularly into themes</li> <li>Learn new <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a> assessment system</li> </ul>



## Examples of Effective Instruction

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children playing with a rich assortment of literacy materials (e.g., books, lotto games, lapboards, flannel boards, magnetic letters, alphabet strips, etc.). Staff encouraging alphabet and letter-sound knowledge through tactile, oral, and various other methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are motivated to learn to read and write when they understand that written letters and words have meaning. Activities like these help children to learn about the alphabet and letters in meaningful ways. Alphabet knowledge is historically one of the best predictors of a child's future literary successes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff engaging children in activities related to number and math concepts (e.g., measuring ingredients for a baking project, comparing lengths of Cuisenaire rods, and tracing sandpaper numerals using their fingers).</li> <li>Children and staff working in small groups on cooperative activities (e.g., building a bridge with blocks, carrying equipment outdoors, and playing restaurant in the dramatic play area).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preschool children develop understandings of mathematical concepts through play with toys and objects they can classify, compare, measure, and order. These activities also help them learn that math is all around them. They may already know how to count by rote, but they need many opportunities to play and work with materials to understand that numerals are symbols of numbers.</li> <li>Most preschool children are ready to engage in cooperative play. They discuss with one another what they will play, they assign roles, they decide what tasks to undertake, and they work toward a common goal. Playing cooperatively helps children develop the social skills they need to get along with their peers and to develop friendships.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children at circle time writing a group story or brainstorming ideas to use in a project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some learning activities should be introduced by the teacher to the full group. Participating in projects is one of the best ways for children to master content in a functional way.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers reading a book out loud to the whole class or small groups, encouraging children to rhyme words and engage in phonemic awareness activities. Choral poetry, songs, and chants being led by teacher or paraprofessional in a print-rich environment. Children sorting pictures or objects by characteristics or initial-consonant sound.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research shows that the best thing teachers can do to help children learn to read and enjoy reading is to read aloud every day and help children attend to the sounds of language. In addition, a pre-reader's letter-name knowledge is a strong predictor of success in early reading achievement.</li> </ul>

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children working individually on tasks or activities they have chosen for themselves (e.g., putting together a puzzle, painting the sidewalk with water, and listening to music or audio books).</li> <li>Children and staff playing with blocks, experimenting with sand and water, sorting and classifying materials, drawing and painting, and observing changes around them.</li> <li>Children and staff engaging in activities that use and develop their gross-motor skills (e.g., jumping on one foot, running around the playground, and riding tricycles).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes preschool children like to work alone on tasks. A child might want to be alone for a while, need a break from group activities, or have a strong interest in a particular activity. Self-selection is a great motivator for learning.</li> <li>Learning takes place when children can try out their ideas and see for themselves the results of their actions. Each of these activities provides opportunities for children to learn new concepts.</li> <li>Physical and mental health development depends on opportunities to continually practice and refine new motor skills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and staff engaging in activities that use and develop their fine-motor skills (e.g., placing pegs in a board, rolling play-dough, finger painting, and constructing with small blocks).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These activities help children develop and practice their small-muscle skills, which they will use to perform refined tasks, such as writing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and staff engaging in activities that allow them to use their imaginations and to express themselves (e.g., making collages, telling stories, and participating in dramatic play).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By using creative methods to represent their ideas, children learn to think abstractly, building reading-readiness skills. To read, children must understand that words represent ideas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff reading and writing with children during individual, small-group, and large-group activities.</li> <li>Children and staff working together on joint projects (e.g., making a mural, planning an event, building a city in a block corner, or preparing a meal).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children need to “see” themselves as readers and writers during all types of activities in the classroom.</li> <li>Working together helps children learn to respect the ideas of others, contribute to joint efforts, solve problems, and develop social skills. Project work enables children to investigate concepts at a high level of thinking.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff involving small groups of children in a task (such as making play-dough, planting seeds, or playing a classification game.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities initiated by children should be supplemented with activities initiated by staff. It is important that children are actively involved.</li> </ul>

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children floating objects in the water table to see if the objects will sink, planting seeds in different areas of the classroom to see where they grow best, or adding different amounts of yeast to bread dough to see which rises most, while teachers ask lots of open-ended questions.</li> <li>▪ Staff introducing new equipment such as a microscope or a digital camera to small groups of four to six children.</li> <li>▪ Staff/children/parents playing a computer game or using a literacy or math program.</li> <li>▪ Staff asking children open-ended questions designed to encourage them to think and express their ideas; staff accepting more than one answer as correct and encouraging creative thinking.</li> <li>▪ Staff continually observing children, interacting to facilitate children's use of materials, and making suggestions that extend children's play.</li> <li>▪ Staff sitting together daily to plan purposeful activities for children based on their observations of the children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children learn best when they know how to solve problems. Using inquiry to experiment allows children to compare and contrast results. Teachers can facilitate this process by asking probing questions.</li> <li>▪ Before adding breakable or expensive equipment to the classroom, children need to know how to use equipment responsibly. Direct instruction is usually the most helpful approach for this.</li> <li>▪ An important goal during the preschool years is to help children develop the self-confidence to think creatively. When staff respects children's responses, children are more eager to freely share their ideas.</li> <li>▪ The primary role of staff is to facilitate learning. They help young children learn by observing and stepping in at appropriate times to guide and extend children's learning, by talking to them about what they are doing, not telling them the answers or what to do.</li> <li>▪ The primary reason for observing children is to learn where each child is developmentally so that teachers can plan how to help each child make progress. Observations should be shared with children's families so that their input can be incorporated into both short- and long-range planning. Staff can use observations to make plans for both individual children and the group as a whole.</li> </ul>

## Sensory Table Ideas

Environmental	Recycled	Water, Wet, and Messy	Store-Bought and Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaves</li> <li>Soil and plastic bugs</li> <li>Soil and rubber worms</li> <li>Soil and silk flowers</li> <li>Hay</li> <li>Rocks</li> <li>Pebbles</li> <li>Twigs</li> <li>Bird seed</li> <li>Fresh flowers</li> <li>Pine cones</li> <li>Grass seed</li> <li>Grass clippings</li> <li>Cedar chips</li> <li>Sand</li> <li>Colored sand</li> <li>Kinetic sand</li> <li>Pine needles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packing peanuts</li> <li>Corks</li> <li>Corks and pipe cleaners</li> <li>Wallpaper and scissors</li> <li>Wallpaper for tearing</li> <li>Shredded paper</li> <li>Scraps of materials</li> <li>Scraps of felt</li> <li>Scraps of fun foam</li> <li>Scraps of paper</li> <li>Carpet samples</li> <li>Sand paper pieces</li> <li>Junk mail</li> <li>Shredded newspaper</li> <li>Old keys</li> <li>Old CDs</li> <li>Paper tubes</li> <li>Scraps of bulletin board borders</li> <li>Old puzzle pieces</li> <li>Foam meat trays and milk caps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ice and water</li> <li>Bubble mix</li> <li>Water and Corks</li> <li>Ping pong balls, water and aquarium fish nets</li> <li>Colored ice cubes and water</li> <li>Colored ice cubes and paper</li> <li>Shaving cream</li> <li>Tray of ice</li> <li>Rubber ducks</li> <li>Sink and float activities</li> <li>Water and plastic fish</li> <li>Dolls, wash cloth and soapy water</li> <li>Plastic dishes, sponges and soapy water</li> <li>Snow</li> <li>Colored water</li> <li>Water and foam letters</li> <li>Boats</li> <li>Plastic frogs</li> <li>Dirt</li> <li>Mud</li> <li>Clean mud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrapping paper</li> <li>Straws</li> <li>Cotton</li> <li>Sponges</li> <li>Present bows</li> <li>Aquarium rocks</li> <li>Ping pong balls</li> <li>Ball pit balls</li> <li>Golf balls</li> <li>Pom, poms, tongs and cups</li> <li>Feathers</li> <li>Garland</li> <li>Plastic eggs</li> <li>Large beads</li> <li>Dough and cookie cutters</li> <li>Magnets</li> <li>Small blocks</li> <li>Sponges</li> <li>Yarn</li> <li>Stamps and paper</li> <li>Pillow filling</li> <li>Sand and plastic jewels</li> <li>Ribbon pieces</li> <li>Buttons</li> <li>Tissue paper pieces</li> <li>Aluminum foil</li> <li>Colorful tape and paper</li> <li>Plastic animals</li> <li>Plastic people</li> </ul>

## Recipes

TYPE	INGREDIENTS	INSTRUCTIONS
Bubbles	1 cup water 1/3 cups dish soap 2 Tablespoons of light corn syrup	Combine ingredients.  Try using different objects as a bubble wand
Colored Bubbles	1 cup soap powder 1 qt. warm water Liquid food coloring	Dissolve soap in warm water, stir in food coloring.  Fill sensory table, give each child a straw to blow the bubbles.
Colored Sand	Sand Ziploc bag Food coloring	Pour sand into a Ziploc bag, add a few drops of food coloring. Mix and add food coloring until you have the desired color.
Great Goop	2 cups water ½ cup corn starch Food coloring	Boil water in sauce pan, add corn starch stirring until smooth, add food coloring, stir. Remove from heat and cool. Children can play with on any plastic covered surface.
Whipped Snow	2 cups warm water 1 cup pure laundry soap Electric mixer	Put water and soap in large bowl and beat with mixer until very fluffy. Add food coloring if desired. This can be molded into shapes and left to dry
Clean Mud	Toilet paper 1-2 white soap bars Water Cheese grater	Put torn up rolls of toilet paper in the sensory table, peel/grate bars of white soap into the sensory table, add warm water, dig in!

## Examples of Daily Routines

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A balance of active and quiet times (e.g., outdoor time and music activities alternate with story time and rest periods).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young children need lots of active play, but they also tire easily. The schedule should provide for both expending and recouping energy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many opportunities for children to be in small groups or to work individually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young children learn best in small groups, where they can participate actively and receive more individual attention than is possible in large groups.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers talking to children during routines (such as meals and preparations for rest periods).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routines provide excellent opportunities for learning new concepts and skills and for staff to engage children in conversation to get to know them better.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children playing outdoors for at least 45 minutes, twice a day, and having alternatives during inclement weather.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children need fresh air and a place to run, jump, and play actively. Learning experiences should incorporate the outdoors.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time periods appropriate to the developmental abilities of children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior problems can be averted by adjusting the schedule to the children's abilities. Pre-K children cannot be expected to sit still for 45 minutes of circle time; 15 to 20 minutes is much more appropriate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient time allocated for children to select their own activities and play for an extended time (e.g., at least one hour of self-selected activities in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children learn best when they can select activities that interest them and when they have time to see projects through to completion. Increasingly complex thinking skills develop when children are given time to fully explore and experience.</li> </ul>

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children performing tasks individually or in small groups (e.g., washing hands and preparing for outdoor time) rather than the whole group going at once.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When children complete tasks in small groups, the routine goes more smoothly because of less waiting time.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children meaningfully involved in transition activities such as washing paintbrushes, setting tables for a meal, or getting out their mats for rest time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These housekeeping chores help children learn and give them an important role in maintaining the room, which helps them feel competent and builds their self-esteem.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A relaxed atmosphere at meals, with the teacher and paraprofessional sitting and engaging in conversations with the children, and no one rushing or being required to finish everything.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children need time to digest their food in a calm environment and to learn about different foods. Some children need more or less food than others, so children should not be required to finish everything. Children learn many social skills during meals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children serving themselves family style (from bowls passed around the table) and being encouraged, but not forced, to try everything.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When children serve themselves they learn how much they can eat, they develop fine-motor control, and they build self-confidence.</li> </ul>



## Transitions

“Transitional times can be relaxed and provide opportunities for learning and reinforcing concepts and skills, but they also can be chaotic.”

Source: *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool Volume 1: The Foundation*

TRANSITIONS	WHY
Give children notice.	Give children five minutes to finish activity before clean-up time. Talk to children in the interest centers to let them know what they will be able to do in the remaining time. Block center/Home family center may need to start cleaning up sooner.
Allow sufficient time.	Let children have an appropriate time so they are not rushed.
Give children specific tasks.	Be specific about the tasks you are asking a child to complete.
Be clear and consistent.	Give children clear directions that are age appropriate. Having consistent routines helps children learn what is expected of them.
Be flexible.	If needed, give children extra time to complete special activities.
Meet individual needs.	Give children who are finished another task, such as getting a book, while other children are completing their activities.
Use transitions as opportunities to teach.	Examples: Children who are wearing red to move to the next activity; Children whose name begins with the /b/ move to the next activity.
*Children who have difficulty with transitions.	Be sure children know what is expected of them and have sufficient time to transition.

## Descriptions of Sure Start Classroom Environments

### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noisy areas separated from quiet areas (e.g., blocks and dramatic play located near each other, separated from books and table toys).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most children cannot focus on quiet activities if they are distracted by noise from neighboring centers. Separating the areas allows children to get the most out of both types of activities and to play undisturbed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low furniture (such as bookshelves, tables and chairs, and dividers) and floor coverings (such as carpeting and linoleum) used to create work areas and work surfaces for small-group activities (30-inch-height-maximum regulation).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using low furniture to define workspaces helps children concentrate, because they are not distracted by activities in other areas. At the same time, Sure Start staff can watch over the children to ensure their safety and respond to their needs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor areas set up for 10 different kinds of self-selected activities (interest areas), as noted Creative Curriculum Volume 2- Interest Areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An important goal of ECE is to help children learn to make their own choices. Sure Start staff should set up the interest areas so that the choices are clear to children and so that children can select from a variety of quiet and other kinds of activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials displayed on low shelves labeled with pictures and words, where children can reach what they need and replace items when they are finished.</li> <li>Digital photos of centers and shelves that allow children to replace items correctly; labels on shelves (e.g., a picture of a fire hat laminated and affixed where the fire hat should be stored, or block-shaped cut-outs on shelves for sorting).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When materials are readily accessible, children can choose what they want to use. Labeling the place where each object belongs helps the children maintain the environment and learn that orderliness is valued. This helps children take responsibility for their environment and develop independence and self-esteem. The cleanup process promotes cognitive skills such as sorting and matching.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labels and signs written in English plus the children's home languages and the language of the host nation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children feel valued when they see writing in their home language. All children will pick up vocabulary in a second language when it is so featured. Experts recommend scattering labels and signs in the different languages in a functional way around the room. Thus one container might be labeled "chalk" and another "las tijeras."</li> </ul>

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toys with small pieces stored in dishpans or plastic storage containers labeled with pictures or photos of what is inside.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This keeps the shelves attractive and inviting and also allows children to find and use what they need without assistance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private hideaways and soft spaces where children can relax and be alone or with chosen friends (e.g., large pillows, rugs, rocking chairs, lofts, &amp; couches).</li> <li>▪ Logically organized materials displayed on low shelves near the area where children use them (e.g., crayons and markers with drawing paper, pegs with the pegboards, blocks and accessories in the block area). Markers and paint should be provided in colors that reflect multicultural skin tones as well as basic colors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children who spend long hours in a Sure Start program need a soft and comfortable place to relax and get away from noise and over-stimulating activities. Being able to recoup their energy contributes to the children's emotional well-being and encourages positive behavior.</li> <li>▪ This tells children which materials belong together, suggests how materials can be used, and supports complex play. Logical grouping of materials promotes their appropriate use. Multicultural art supplies show a respect and understanding for cultural diversity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pictures and photos hung on the walls and on the backs and sides of room dividers at the children's eye level (e.g., children's work, photographs of children and their families, and other pictures relevant to the children's interests).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children are unlikely to notice pictures that are hung far above their eye level. Displaying their work conveys respect for their efforts and gives them pride in their accomplishments. Ask children which of their paintings, drawings, and writing samples they would like to display in the classroom and which they would like to take home.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An area set up with equipment such as a climber or balance beam or used for movement activities that allow children to use their large muscles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Young children need many opportunities to exercise their large muscles. Children develop many physical skills during the preschool years that they will use throughout their lives. Physical development contributes to positive self-esteem as children learn to feel good about their bodies and their gross-motor skills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A safe, well-organized outdoor play area that includes a variety of surfaces, equipment, and materials for large-muscle play and space for activities such as painting, woodworking, and playing with water that might also take place indoors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The outdoors provides a new world for children to explore and room for them to release pent-up energy. Activities that might take place indoors are enjoyed by children in different ways when conducted outdoors.</li> </ul>

## Examples of Effective Classroom Atmosphere

### CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff responding quickly and positively to children's needs and questions, comforting distressed children, and helping them deal with their problems constructively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children develop a sense of trust and self-esteem when adults respond to their needs. Being comforted helps children learn that they are important and cared for.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff bending, kneeling, or sitting down to establish eye contact when talking to children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eye contact promotes good communication. Children feel more respected when adults are at their level.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff showing respect for children's feelings and ideas, even while disagreeing with them or when children misbehave.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's feelings and concerns are important and should be honored; children learn that they are valued, and their self-esteem is enhanced when they are afforded respect.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff establishing clear rules and limits for behavior and applying them consistently and calmly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are likely to cooperate with the rules and limits in the room when they know what is expected of them and when they feel the rules and limits are enforced fairly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff describing the behavior they would like to see—not just complaining about the behavior they want stopped.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When staff give children a clear understanding about what they can do as well as about what behavior is not acceptable, children learn what is expected of them and change their behavior accordingly.</li> </ul>

What You Should See	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff helping children discuss and resolve their conflicts. Staff redirecting children to make other choices when they are inappropriately interacting with other children or materials (e.g., not using the slide safely or correctly).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is not easy for children to live and work in a group setting. Many times, their needs and desires conflict with those of other children in the room. Staff can help children develop social skills (such as cooperation, negotiation, and problem solving) that will allow them to develop their own solutions to conflicts. When children resolve their own conflicts, they feel competent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff praising children for cooperative behavior and encouraging them to work together, to help one another, and to care for one another.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When children acquire skills in working with others, their self-esteem grows and their behavior improves. They also gain a sense of community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff helping children to understand other people's points of view and to accept individual differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ability to see things from another's perspective is an important cognitive skill and critical to living successfully in a group.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff providing encouragement and suggestions to enable children to solve problems on their own, to complete challenging tasks, and to learn from their mistakes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encouragement and support boost children's confidence, self-esteem, and understanding of new concepts. Children who feel good about themselves are likely to try new challenges, which will help them develop new skills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers and paraprofessionals helping children make friends and supporting each child's efforts to renegotiate friendships when necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ability to make friends and renegotiate friendships is central to children's mental health. Children who leave the preschool years feeling friendless are likely to experience social and learning problems later in life.</li> </ul>

## Daily Interactions Chart

Why	How This Looks in Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help children develop a sense of trust in adults and their world.</li> <li>▪ Relationships are built on personal knowledge and interactions over time.</li> <li>▪ Build individual and personal relationships with each child and their family.</li> <li>▪ Show respect for children's feelings even if you feel differently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequently interact with each child one-on-one in order to develop a warm, positive relationship.</li> <li>▪ Model self-talk which supports children's thinking.</li> <li>▪ Speaking to children quietly and at eye level when possible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help children learn how to have a friend and be a friend.</li> <li>▪ Social interactions are crucial to children's learning.</li> <li>▪ Support children who need assistance in finding play partners.</li> <li>▪ Children are more likely to use pro-social behaviors when their teachers use positive guidance strategies and emphasize the value of community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach children positive strategies for entering and participating in group activities.</li> <li>▪ Offer opportunities for children to work together and learn social skills. Pair more advanced learners with less advanced peers.</li> <li>▪ Help children detect and interpret cues about how others feel.</li> <li>▪ Model and teach friendship skills such as sharing, apologizing, taking turns, conversing and entering and exiting play.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and give descriptive feedback to children who exhibit friendship skills.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help children develop self-regulation skills.</li> <li>▪ Self-regulation is more likely to occur during open-ended activities, especially dramatic play, than in activities with predetermined goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach children to recognize, label, and manage their emotions.</li> <li>▪ Clearly define limits of acceptable behavior.</li> <li>▪ Support children as they learn to control their impulses and to make thoughtful choices about their behaviors.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help children learn to embrace challenges and resolve problems.</li> <li>▪ Emphasize the process instead of the product.</li> <li>▪ Reframe mistakes as learning opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Embrace problems as challenges to be conquered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Model self-talk which supports children's thinking.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate respect for children's ideas and efforts to solve problems.</li> <li>▪ Validate children's efforts by acknowledging what children did and how they did it.</li> <li>▪ Encourage children to talk about problems and provide language to help them do so.</li> </ul>

Why	How This Looks in Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help children accept and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.</li> <li>▪ This builds children's sense of self within the classroom community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach children to see from the perspective of others.</li> <li>▪ Celebrate the unique contributions of each individual in the community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help children construction knowledge through action.</li> <li>▪ Children must engage in tasks actively in order to learn.</li> <li>▪ Children seek and process information based on what they already know (assimilation).</li> <li>▪ The physical environment helps children know what is important, what they are to do, and how they might do it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build upon interests of children. Give many choices and chances to investigate.</li> <li>▪ Allow children ample time to explore and experiment with a variety of materials in interest areas.</li> <li>▪ Encourage children to share materials as they explore.</li> </ul>



## Assessment and Program Evaluation Timeline Sample

*MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD system is referenced as GOLD in the table below.*

Aug/Sept/Oct	Nov*	Jan	Mar/Apr	May/June
<p>Conduct beginning of year home visit (conducted <b>BEFORE</b> school begins).</p> <p>Enter students into the <a href="#">GOLD</a> system.</p> <p>DoDEA Regulation <a href="#">1307.01</a> requires two (2) home visits during the school year. Districts or schools can determine time frame of second home visit.</p>	<p>Prepare for parent conference using <a href="#">GOLD</a> <i>Development and Learning Report</i>.</p> <p><b>*NOTE:</b> Finalized Checkpoints are optional for the first quarter (November).</p>	<p>Finalized Winter Progress Checkpoints completed for all students NLT <b>QTR 2 Teacher Workday</b>.</p>	<p>Update the children's progress using Finalized Spring Checkpoints NLT <b>QTR 3 Teacher Workday</b>.</p>	<p>Finalized Summer Progress Checkpoints completed for all students NLT <b>QTR 4 Teacher Workday</b>.</p>
<p>Begin assessing children with general documentation, <i>on the spot</i> observations and/or Assessment Opportunity Cards from <a href="#">GOLD</a>.</p> <p>Enter <b>preliminary</b> Checkpoints for all students NLT <b>QTR 1 teacher workday</b>.</p> <p><i>Finalized checkpoints optional.</i></p>		<p>Progress report provided to parents: <i>Development and Learning Report</i> from <a href="#">GOLD</a>.</p>	<p>Progress report provided to parents: <i>Development and Learning Report</i> from <a href="#">GOLD</a>.</p>	<p>Progress report provided to parents: <i>Development and Learning Report</i> from <a href="#">GOLD</a>.</p>
<p>Complete educational screenings NLT <b>45 calendar days</b> of child entering the Sure Start program.</p> <p>Educational Screening: ESI-R</p>	<p>Conduct in-school conference to set individual student goals with families.</p>	<p>Conduct second home visit or a school conference and update the Family Conference form.</p>	<p>Conduct second home visit or a school conference and update the Family Conference form.</p>	<p>Conduct final home visit or an in-school conference &amp; share <i>Development and Learning Report</i> from <a href="#">GOLD</a>.</p>
<p>Complete Medical/Dental screenings NLT <b>45 calendar days</b> of child entering the Sure Start program.</p>				<p>Print each child's <i>Development and Learning Report</i> from <a href="#">GOLD</a> to share with the following year's teacher &amp; file in Cumulative Folder (901 File) in main office.</p>
<p>Complete program evaluation using <i>Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R)</i>.</p> <p>Complete the Sure Start Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) based on the results no later than the last Friday in November.</p>	<p>Develop Sure Start CIP by end of 1<sup>st</sup> QTR and share with principal.</p>	<p>Conduct midyear review of Sure Start CIP to check for progress on program improvements</p>		<p>Conduct end-of-year review of Sure Start CIP to reflect and make changes to improve the program.</p>
				<p>Annual Summary Report due <b>XX XX</b> to District POC. <b>XX XX XX</b> Districts Offices run <a href="#">GOLD</a> data extraction.</p>

## Sure Start Program Cleaning Schedule

AREA	CLEAN	SANITIZE	FREQUENCY
Classroom/Food Areas			
Countertops/tabletops	X	X	Clean after each use and at the end of the day. Sanitize at the end of the day.
Floors	X		Mopped daily and swept as needed, especially after lunch is served. Broom sweeping is the desired method for removal of food scraps on the floor/carpet areas when children are present.
Food preparation and service surfaces	X	X	Before and after contact with food activity; between preparation of raw and cooked foods.
Carpets and large area rugs	X		Vacuum daily when children are not present. Clean carpets only when children are not present. Carpet must have adequate time to dry before children arrive. Clean carpets at least twice a year; spot clean as needed. <b>*School cleaning contracts must include bi-annual deep carpet cleaning.</b>
Small rugs	X		Shake outdoors daily or vacuum daily. Launder as needed.
Utensils, surfaces, and toys that go into the mouth or have been in contact with saliva or other body fluids	X	X	Clean after each child's use, or use disposable, single-use utensils. <b>**Single-use utensils should only be used for snacks or in special circumstances, such as when dishwashers are broken or unavailable.</b>
Toys that are not contaminated with body fluids; dress-up clothes not worn on the head	X	X	Weekly and when visibly soiled.
Sheets and pillowcases, blankets, combs or hairbrushes	X	X	Weekly.
Sleeping mats		X	Weekly and whenever soiled or wet.
Water tables	X	X	Bleached daily
Sand tables	X	X	Sand tables are required to have lids if located in an outside area. Sand needs to be replaced as needed. The bleach-water solution must be sprayed on the sand weekly to maintain cleanliness.
Trash cans	X	X	Empty after lunch and at the end of the day. Clean when soiled. Sanitize frequently to eliminate odors.

Toilet Areas			
Hand-washing sinks, faucets, surrounding counters, soap dispensers, door knobs	X	X	Daily and when soiled.
Toilet, floors, walls in bathrooms	X	X	Daily, or immediately if visibly soiled.
General Facility			
Any surface contaminated with body fluids (saliva, mucus, vomit, urine, stool, or blood)	X	X	Immediately, using the appropriate bleach solution.
Playground area	X		Cleaning contract should include removal of leaves, debris, snow, and ice as needed. Teacher/paraprofessional is required to inspect and remove items that may harm children before the start of the school day.

## Sample Sure Start Weekly Snack Menu

\*\*Be aware of sugar content in processed foods.

MORNING SNACK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week 1	Fresh pear Tiscuit crackers	Banana slices Whole grain crackers with cream cheese	Lowfat cottage cheese Strawberries	Hummus Baby carrots and broccoli	Plain yogurt with whole grain tortilla
Week 2	Red grapes Oatmeal muffin Squares	Strawberries Whole grain pancakes	Apples slices and whole grain goldfish crackers	Avacado slices Grape tomatoes Whole grain tortilla	Plain yogurt Fresh berries
Week 3	Bean dip Whole grain tortilla chips	Cottage cheese Peaches	Plain yogurt Frozen berries	String cheese Mandarin oranges	Sun nut butter Apple slices
Week 4	Strawberries Whole grain crackers	Colby jack cheese Grapes	Dip for fresh veggies Carrots, broccoli and celery	Kix Cereal Milk Fresh fruit	Pineapple slices Whole grain goldfish crackers
Week 5	Applesauce Graham crackers	Boiled egg Whole grain crackers	Fresh fruit Cheese cubes	Italian Kabobs Cherry tomatoes, olives, cheese	Whole grain waffle Nut butter
AFTERNOON SNACK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week 1	Mandarin Oranges Mini Bagel	Mozzarella string cheese and tomato slices	Plain Yogurt Fish cracker & pretzel sticks	Apple smiles Banana bread squares	Bean dip Whole grain tortilla chips
Week 2	Natural Cheddar cheese Cantaloupe	Black bean hummus Whole grain pita wedges	Creamy dip Cucumber slices with whole wheat triscuits	Apple circles Pretzel sticks	String cheese kiwi
Week 3	String cheese strawberries	Lowfat yogurt Raisins Apple slices Banana slices Whole grain tortilla	Hummus Bell pepper strips	Kiwi wedges Whole grain mini bagel Light cream cheese	Yogurt Banana slices
Week 4	Cottage cheese Pears	Salsa (homemade) Whole grain tortilla chips	String cheese Pineapple	Vanilla yogurt Apple slices	Apple juice Whole grain mini bagel with cream cheese
Week 5	Chex mix (student prepared) banana	Oranges slices cheese	Graham Crackers Nut butter	Hummus Whole grain pita chips	Yogurt Fresh berries

## Sure Start Shopping List

The items below are suggested items to support the Sure Start program requirements. However, you are not limited to this list.

Non-Food Items <sup>3</sup>	Food Items <sup>4</sup>	Not authorized for purchase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liquid hand soap (check to see if provided by school supply)</li> <li>▪ Toothbrushes (only when unavailable through GSA)</li> <li>▪ Toothpaste</li> <li>▪ Small cups to rinse mouth</li> <li>▪ Some type of disposable wet wipe for soiling accidents</li> <li>▪ Napkins (if not provided by school)</li> <li>▪ Paper towels (if not provided by school)</li> <li>▪ Paper plates/plastic forks, etc. (Used for emergencies when school dishwasher is broken, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Dish washing detergent for dishwashers (if applicable)</li> <li>▪ Sponges/cloths for washing dishes</li> <li>▪ Dish towels</li> <li>▪ Liquid Dish Detergent</li> <li>▪ Bleach</li> <li>▪ Plastic gloves (for dishwashing/using bleach)</li> <li>▪ Cleansers that would be used for kitchens</li> <li>▪ Plastic zip bags for food storage</li> <li>▪ Clear wrap for food storage</li> <li>▪ Aluminum foil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fruit (fresh, canned, frozen, dried)</li> <li>▪ Vegetables/Legumes (fresh, canned, frozen, dried)</li> <li>▪ 100% fruit juices</li> <li>▪ Applesauce</li> <li>▪ Eggs</li> <li>▪ Milk</li> <li>▪ Cream</li> <li>▪ Yogurt</li> <li>▪ Cheese (all kinds)</li> <li>▪ Tofu</li> <li>▪ Meat (ground, cold cuts, canned)</li> <li>▪ Nuts/seeds</li> <li>▪ Nut butters/Sunflower butter</li> <li>▪ Butter, oils, cooking sprays</li> <li>▪ Bread (all kinds to include bread mixes, chilled &amp; frozen doughs)</li> <li>▪ Low sugar Breakfast Cereals (hot &amp; cold)</li> <li>▪ Pretzels/Tortilla chips</li> <li>▪ Crackers (variety)</li> <li>▪ Rice Cakes</li> <li>▪ Granola</li> <li>▪ Pasta</li> <li>▪ Rice</li> <li>▪ Baking Items (flour, corn starch, baking soda, yeast, etc)</li> <li>▪ Dry Mixes (cakes, puddings, muffin, pancake, etc)</li> <li>▪ Jelly/jam (low sugar)</li> <li>▪ Condiments/Sauces/Spices/Seasoning/extracts/food coloring</li> <li>▪ Broths/bullions</li> <li>▪ Sugar (all kinds)</li> <li>▪ Maple syrup/honey</li> <li>▪ Food appropriate for cooking activities</li> <li>▪ Food appropriate for teaching executive functions/self-regulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High-fat snack foods</li> <li>▪ Sugared cereals</li> <li>▪ Sodas</li> <li>▪ Cookies</li> <li>▪ Ice Cream</li> <li>▪ Sherbet</li> <li>▪ Popcorn</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Please note that the non-food items should only be purchased if they are not available through other supply avenues.

<sup>4</sup> Part of the Sure Start curriculum requires cooking activities. All food items needed for these activities will not be listed here. If there are questions concerning requests, please contact your District ECE ISS.

## Services to Families

The Family Service Center and the Sure Start program will work together to provide the following services to Sure Start families.

The Family Service Center	Sure Start Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designate a member to be on the Sure Start Advisory Committee</li> <li>▪ Contact community agencies, ensuring they will provide services to Sure Start families</li> <li>▪ Provide application information to families on an ongoing basis</li> <li>▪ Maintain recruitment for eligible children</li> <li>▪ Help families improve family life (e.g., by providing information about parenting skills, budgeting, planning, counseling)</li> <li>▪ Provide support services for the Sure Start program</li> <li>▪ Be a resource at quarterly parent meetings, if requested</li> <li>▪ Maintain a master list of services provided and available to families</li> <li>▪ Consult with teachers, nurse, administrators and parents as needed</li> <li>▪ Refer families for emergency placement (a family does not need to meet the regular eligibility requirements for an emergency placement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solicit ideas from community agencies on how they can provide support to families</li> <li>▪ Discuss the Social Services component with families and tell them about availability of services</li> <li>▪ Work with the social services representative to ensure families have the services they require.</li> <li>▪ Follow established school guidelines for referring families to counseling</li> <li>▪ Follow established school guidelines for referring families to agencies that provide for crisis intervention and emergency assistance</li> <li>▪ Invite base agencies to tour the program and include them in outreach efforts</li> <li>▪ Maintain confidential records.</li> <li>▪ Contact parents or guardians when attendance becomes irregular. Please review official DoDEA Attendance Policy.</li> <li>▪ Place providers on a special Sure Start email list to receive pertinent program information</li> <li>▪ Request placement on providers' email lists to keep abreast of the providers' activities</li> <li>▪ Develop a media relations program with local press, radio stations, and TV stations</li> </ul>

## Sure Start Records Table

	GENERAL PROGRAM RECORDS	PERMANENT RECORDS (901 FILES)	CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS	PARENT FOLDER
<i>Records</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom inventory</li> <li>Program Progress Plan</li> <li>Component plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developmental checklists</li> <li>Final <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a> "Development &amp; Learning Report"</li> <li>Early Screening Inventory- Revised (ESI-R)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income verification</li> <li><a href="#">Sure Start Application</a></li> <li>Home Visit Forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child portfolio</li> <li>Developmental checklists</li> <li>On-going <a href="#">MyTeachingStrategies/Teaching Strategies GOLD</a> "Development &amp; Learning Report"</li> </ul>
<i>Where records are stored during School Year</i>	<p>Sure Start classroom</p> <p><i>Copies of Sure Start Program Plan and Continuous Sure Start Improvement Plan sent to Administration Office</i></p>	Locked file cabinet	Locked file cabinet	Sure Start classroom
<i>Where records are stored at the end of the year</i>	Administration Office		Permanent Records (901 Files)	Given to parents



## Practical Tips on Conducting Home Visits

Home visits are scheduled two to three times per year, once in September and again in June (see Sure Start Calendar for dates). A third option of either a conference or home visit can be during the second semester (mid-year).

During the visit the teacher is to spend his/her time interacting with the child while the paraprofessional interacts with the parents as they complete the optional home visit questionnaire.

Do not schedule home visits too closely together, three visits in the A.M. and three in the P.M. work well. Tell parents that you'll be there for about 30-60 minutes. You can clarify the purpose of the visit when you make the phone call to arrange a time or, if the family has no phone, by mail.

Here is an example of a phone call made to set up a home visit and to clarify the purpose:

"Hello. Ms. Smith? This is Mary Jones. I am going to be Sam's teacher this year. I am looking forward to coming to visit him in your home. I can either come on Monday or Tuesday. Which day would be best for you? When I come, I won't be staying long – about 30-60 minutes. I will be spending time with Sam so we can get to know each other better. I'm sure you will have some questions, so I will be bringing a form on which you can write them down. Or at the end of the visit, you can let me know your concerns and we can talk about them."

Get clear directions to each house when you make your appointments, and take a map, just in case.

Get the facts straight before the visit. Make sure you know the correct name of the child and the parent. Sometimes, the parent has a different last name.

Do not take a prop or anything to bring on this first meeting with the child. Most teachers who have done home visits for a while feel that a prop or gift diverts the attention away from the visit and the purpose to learn more about the children, their interests and favorite activities.

Often teachers are concerned about how to handle siblings on a home visit. Making clear the expectations of the visit on the phone call and encouraging the parent to plan an activity for the sibling can help prevent possible interference. If the sibling persists, be prepared to say to the sibling directly, "This is my special time to visit with Sam today. I will come and see what you are doing before I leave."

Let the child know when your visit is about to end by suggestion that you have time for one more activity and you will need to leave. "We will play for about five more minutes, and then I will need to chat with your parents before I leave."








Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that some families will refuse or feel uncomfortable about a home visit for a number of reasons. In such cases, the teacher may want to find alternative ways to make special connections with the child and family. One possibility is meeting at a park or some other site away from the home. (Adapted from Young Children, 1994)

## Frequently Used Forms and Resources

Please click the links below to access frequently used forms and resources in the Sure Start Program. The titles of the forms and resources are organized in alphabetical order.

File	Title	Purpose
	<a href="#">About Positive Discipline</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Annual Sure Start Report</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Bathroom Checklist</a>	Checklist
	<a href="#">Behavior-Social Skills Parent Letter</a>	Letter
	<a href="#">Cleaning Schedule</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">DoDEA Space and Safety Checklist</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Extra-Curricular - Sample</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Extra-Curricular (EDC - Information)</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Family Conference Form</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Getting to Know Your Child Questionnaire</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Letter for Applicant placed in Waiting Pool - Sample</a>	Sample Letter
	<a href="#">Letter of Acceptance into the Sure Start Program - Sample</a>	Sample Letter
	<a href="#">Letter to Command - Sample</a>	Sample Letter
	<a href="#">Mileage Reimbursement Form (SF1164) Follow Local Guidance For Claim</a>	Form

File	Title	Purpose
	<a href="#">New Student Checklist</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Parent Participation Assignment</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Parent Questionnaire and Family Questionnaire Summary Sheet</a>	Form
	<a href="#">PCS Checklist</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Planning Forms (Interest Areas)</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Playground Rules</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Possible Sources for Inventory Ordering Needs</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Records Checklist</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Statement of Understanding - Command</a>	Letter
	<a href="#">Statement of Understanding - Parents</a>	Letter
	<a href="#">Studies Planning Form (Teaching Strategies, LLC)</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Sure Start Application</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Sure Start Application Score Sheet</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Sure Start Assessment &amp; Program Evaluation Timeline Checklist Form</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Sure Start Child Medical/Dental Examination</a>	Form

File	Title	Purpose
	<a href="#">Sure Start Home Visit Conference Form</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Sure Start Inventory List</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Sure Start Medical and Dental Evaluation Letter</a>	Letter
	<a href="#">Sure Start Philosophy (Program Information - Commanders' Attachments)</a>	Job Aide
	<a href="#">Sure Start Program Component Plan</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Sure Start Program Continuous Improvement Plan</a>	Form
	<a href="#">Weekly Planning Form-Blank (Teaching Strategies, LLC)</a>	Form

## College and Career Ready Standards for Preschool (CCRSP)

### OBJECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING (ODLs)\*

#### SOCIAL–EMOTIONAL

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
  - a. Manages feelings
  - b. Follows limits and expectations
  - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
  - a. Forms relationships with adults
  - b. Responds to emotional cues
  - c. Interacts with peers
  - d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
  - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
  - b. Solves social problems

#### PHYSICAL

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
  - a. Uses fingers and hands
  - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

#### LANGUAGE

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
  - a. Comprehends language
  - b. Follows directions
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
  - a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
  - b. Speaks clearly
  - c. Uses conventional grammar
  - d. Tells about another time or place
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
  - a. Engages in conversations
  - b. Uses social rules of language

#### COGNITIVE

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
  - a. Attends and engages
  - b. Persists
  - c. Solves problems
  - d. Shows curiosity and motivation
  - e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences
  - a. Recognizes and recalls
  - b. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
  - a. Thinks symbolically
  - b. Engages in sociodramatic play

#### LITERACY

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
  - a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
  - b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
  - c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
  - a. Identifies and names letters
  - b. Uses letter–sound knowledge
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
  - a. Uses and appreciates books
  - b. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
  - a. Interacts during read-alouds and book conversations
  - b. Uses emergent reading skills
  - c. Retells stories
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
  - a. Writes name
  - b. Writes to convey meaning

## MATHEMATICS

- 20. Uses number concepts and operations
  - a. Counts
  - b. Quantifies
  - c. Connects numerals with their quantities
- 21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
  - a. Understands spatial relationships
  - b. Understands shapes
- 22. Compares and measures
- 23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- 24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
- 25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
- 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
- 27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
- 28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

## SOCIAL STUDIES

- 29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
- 30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
- 31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
- 32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

## THE ARTS

- 33. Explores the visual arts
- 34. Explores musical concepts and expression
- 35. Explores dance and movement concepts
- 36. Explores drama through actions and language

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- 37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- 38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

*\*Teaching Strategies GOLD® Objectives for Development & Learning: Birth Through Kindergarten. (2010). Bethesda, MD: Cate Heroman, Diane Burts, Kai-leé Berke, Toni Bickart. Posted with permission of Teaching Strategies, LLC. only for the Department of Defense Education Activity.*

## Glossary

**Curriculum:** a systematically organized written plan that is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn

**Interest Areas:** subdivided space in the classroom that accommodates a few children at a time. An ideal setting for preschoolers to explore, make things, experiment and pursue their interests. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool requires the following ten centers: blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking and computers.

**Program Standards:** the conditions and expectations for quality programming in each of Sure Start's four component areas: education, health and nutrition, social services, and parent involvement.

**College and Career Ready Standards:** grade-by-grade learning expectations for students in grades PK-12 that establish clear, consistent and high learning goals and are more focused on preparing students for success in college and careers. DODEA College and Career Ready Standards for Preschool (CCRSP) are the Teaching Strategies Objectives for Development and Learning.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development.

## Acronyms

AAFES: Army and Air Force Exchange Service  
CCRS: College and Career Ready Standards  
CCRSP: College and Career Ready Standards for Preschool  
CDP: Child Development Programs  
CDC: Child Development Center  
CPR: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation  
CPSC: Consumer Product Safety Commission  
CSC: Case Study Committee  
CSI: Continuous School Improvement  
DSO: District Superintendent's Office  
ECE: Early Childhood Education  
ECS: Early Childhood Specialist  
EDIS: Educational and Developmental Intervention Services  
ET: Education Technologist  
ESL: English as a second language  
GS: General Schedule  
GSA: General Services Administration  
HQ: Headquarters  
IEP: Individualized Education Plan  
IS: Information Specialist  
ISS: Instructional Systems Specialist  
LRE: Least Restrictive Environment  
NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children  
NAF: Non Appropriated Fund  
ODL: Objectives for Development & Learning  
PE: Physical Education  
PCS: Permanent Change of Station  
POC: Point of Contact  
PSCD: Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities  
SLO: School Liaison Officer  
SST: Student Support Team



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