# HEAD START/EALRY HEAD START (BIRTH TO FIVE)

# CELEBRATIONS ACTIVITIES POLICY

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| Policy Number: ED0102 | Effective Date: 7/17/01  Revision Date: 7/28/20 | Policy Council Approval Date: 7/17/01; 8/28/18 |

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE**: To ensure high quality, early education and child development services, including children with disabilities, that promote developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for all children and families who participate in Head Start and Early Head Start. 1302.34(a)(b)(1)(2)(4)(5); 1302.50(a)(b)(1)(2)(3)(4); 1302.51(a)(1)(2)(3)(b); 1302.52(a); 1302.53(a)

**PROCEDURE:** This document will provide general guidelines for staff and parents to follow in planning celebrations in Head Start/Early Head Start. Staff may celebrate developmental milestones, completion of individual child development goals, and Units of Study, as well as children and family achievements, taking into consideration individual families and following the guidelines listed below.

# General guidelines that apply to all holidays and celebrations:

1. All celebrations must be events that can be supported by every family in our program. We should not plan activities that exclude children or families.
2. All celebrations must support basic early childhood values of health and safety, good nutrition, sound mental health, multi-cultural inclusiveness and individual differences.
3. Celebration activities must fit into the overall curriculum to stimulate the children’s interest, wrap up a Unit of Study or reward successful completion of tasks, efforts and achievements.

# Specific Activities:

1. Gifts to the children from community organizations may be received by the children enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start. The FRS/Home Visitor/Family Advocate will collaborate with community organizations to ensure all children may receive age appropriate, donated gifts. Staff will request that items are given in boxes or plain bags, with no wrapping paper.
2. Consistent with our curriculum, commonly recognized holidays such as Christmas, Halloween, Valentine’s Day, Easter, etc. will not be celebrated in the classrooms or at socializations.
3. EARLY HEAD START ONLY: Special Activities may be planned by the parent with the Home Visitor to occur during Home Visits that supports the child’s individual development.

**Birthday** **Celebrations:**

1. Teachers may plan age appropriate alternate activities in the classroom on a child’s birthday. Examples: make a special badge, hat or other item; plan special games and activities for the day.
2. All children will be recognized and celebrated for their birthday. If a child’s birthday lands on a day there is no school the classroom will celebrate the week prior or after.
3. Parents may plan age appropriate activities to celebrate their child’s birthday and coordinate with the teacher that include non-food items such as pencils, party favors, stickers, etc.
4. Party favors must follow age appropriate guidelines for 3-5 year olds; any items that pose a choking hazard and are not age appropriate will be returned to the parent.
5. Food items may not be brought to school and will be sent back home and/or returned to the parent.
6. Private birthday invitations will not be given out on Head Start or Early Head Start premises.

# STEM Olympics (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math):

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1. All classrooms will host a STEM Olympics event for the program at least once per year.
2. Teachers, center staff, and community volunteers will plan the event to include a variety of activities and encourage family participation.
3. Centers will network and promote community involvement when possible (this may vary according to location). Ex: Missouri Extension Office, Lowe’s/Home Depot, Archery Club, FHA classes at your local public school; 4-H; Cub Scouts; and various community groups.

# End-of-the-Year Celebrations:

# All classrooms and centers will host an end-of-the-year celebration.

1. Teachers will plan the celebration event to include age appropriate activities and family participation.
2. Activities may involve lunch participation or can occur before or after lunch. If children will be picked up and/or dismissed before the meal, make sure kitchen staff are aware.
3. Celebrations involving a meal: All meal components must be offered in order for a meal to meet CACFP guidelines.
4. End-of-the-Year Celebrations may include:
   * Picnics
   * Short programs (finger plays, songs, dramatic story telling, etc.)
   * Outdoor water play with sprinklers, water squirt bottles, bubbles, etc.
   * Obstacle Course, relays and games
   * Field Day activities
   * Cap & Gown Pictures (for pictures only)