**HEAD START HEAD LICE POLICY**

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Vanderburgh County Health Department all agree:

***HEAD LICE ARE NOT A HEALTH HAZARD OR SIGN OF UN-CLEANLINESS AND ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPREAD OF ANY DISEASE ALTHOUGH THEY ARE HIGHLY CONTAGEOUS.***

Head Start has adopted the following policy used by the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation regarding head lice:

Whenever a student is found to be infested with head lice, the student’s parent or guardian will be notified and asked to pick up their child immediately. The child will be sent home and not be readmitted until the condition is treated appropriately and the parent completes the TREATMENT OF HEADLICE/ PARENTAL VERIFICATION of TREATMENT form. **For the purpose of this guideline, a student is considered infested with head lice if an examination reveals at least one (1) live louse OR multiple nits within 1/4 inch close to the scalp.** However, consistent with the approved guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses, the student need not be completely free of all nits before returning to school as long as appropriate treatment of the condition has taken place.

The child may return to school the next day after he or she has been treated. The child may not ride the bus and must be accompanied by the parent. The Treatment Verification form should be returned to the teacher and the teacher, LSM or other designee will examine the child for the presence of live lice. If no live lice are found, the child may return to the classroom. Transportation will be notified and the child may resume riding the bus.

**TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE** *including* **PARENTAL VERIFICATION OF TREATMENT FORM**

The following is the suggested treatment procedure:

**TREATMENT OF THE CHILD**

1. Apply pediculicide shampoo according to your physician’s instructions or label instructions provided by the drug manufacturer. There are various liquids (shampoos) available for treatment of head lice such as RID, Kwell, Ovide, etc. Kwell and Ovide are available by prescription only; RID and others may be purchased without prescription from the drug/department store.
2. Child should put on clean clothing after treatment.
3. All family members and close friends of your child should be examined. Family members who have evidence of infestation (crawling forms or nits) should be treated. Anyone who shares a bed with a known infested child should be treated, whether or not there is evidence of infestation at the time of examination.,
4. Follow label instructions exactly. Most brands require a re-treatment 7 to 10 days after first treatment to ensure complete effectiveness.

**DECONTAMINATION OF PERSONAL ARTICLES AND ENVIRONMENT**

Since heat is lethal to lice and their eggs, many personal articles can be disinfested by machine washing in **HOT** water and/or drying using the **HOT** cycle of the dryer. Dry articles for at least twenty minutes at this high heat setting.

1. Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with your child within the previous three days.
2. Personal articles of clothing or bedding that cannot be washed or dried may be dry-cleaned or simply left in a plastic bag and sealed for a period of ten days.
3. Combs, brushes and similar items can be disinfested by soaking them in a pan of water heated on the stove to about 150 degrees for five to ten minutes. (caution: heat may damage some combs and brushes).

**NOTIFICATION OF OTHER PARENTS**

You should notify the parents of your child’s closest friends to let them know that their child may also be infested since the children play together. This is particularly important if the children have been at a sleep-over or participated in activities involving frequent body contact such as wrestling, ballet classes, football, etc.

**RETURNING TO SCHOOL**

Your child may return to school the morning after he or she has been treated with a head louse shampoo. Parents must accompany the child on the day they return to school. The Verification Form below should be returned to the teacher and the child will be checked for the presence of live lice before returning to the classroom.

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**PARENTAL VERIFICATION of HEAD LICE TREATMENT**

**Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This is to notify you that my child, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, has been treated for head lice with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on (date)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have begun to remove nits and to do the necessary treatment of the home environment.**

**(Parent or Guardian signature)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NOTIFICATION OF HEAD LICE**

Dear Parent of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your child has been sent home today because he or she was found to have head lice. This is a treatable condition that is generally not associated with any serious complications, but is contagious.

Head lice are usually transmitted through close personal contact with another person who is infested with the lice or through the use of shared combs, brushes and other grooming aids or by sharing caps, hats or coats or by co-mingling with such items at the home of friends, at school or church or at other places.

Many parents have the impression that a person becomes infested with head lice because he or she is unclean. This is not true. Frequent bathing neither prevents head lice nor eliminates the infestation.

Head lice are elongated insects about the size of a pinhead and are grayish-white in color. They do not have wings nor can they jump. They do move very quickly which can make it difficult to find in a child’s hair. A nit is the louse egg. It is tear-shaped, about 1/8” (or less) in length, and varies in color from white to yellowish-brown. Head lice attach each nit to a hair shaft in a water-proof, cement-like substance. This means they cannot be washed or brushed out of the hair or scalp like dandruff and other such particles that sometimes look like nits to the naked eye. Clusters of nits may be found in any section of the hair so a careful examination should be made of the entire scalp.

The attached **TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE** form describes treatment as well as provides a PARENTAL VERIFICATION OF TREATMENT SECTION for you to complete and sign before your child may return to school. If you have any questions, please call. You may wish to consult with your physician or the local health department concerning the treatment. The Vanderburgh County Health Department’s number is (812) 435-5691.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Coordinator of Health Services, Head Start (812) 492-3908

7/22/15 mh