

Family Handbook



BI-CAP Head Start



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Welcome to BI-CAP Head Start



Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Welcome to the BI-CAP Head Start: Prenatal to Five Program! We're thrilled that you've chosen to join our family, and we look forward to being a part of your child's incredible journey. These early years are full of wonder and discovery, and our program is designed to nurture, support, and celebrate every milestone along the way.

At BI-CAP, we believe that every child is unique, and we are committed to creating a warm, inclusive, and engaging environment where learning comes naturally. Our caring and dedicated team is here to walk with you and your child through each step of their growth, providing the love, encouragement, and security that are so important during these formative years.

We are excited to welcome you into our community, and we're here to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free to reach out to me at 218-333-9873. Together, let's embark on this wonderful adventure of growth and discovery!

Warm regards,



Michele Andringa

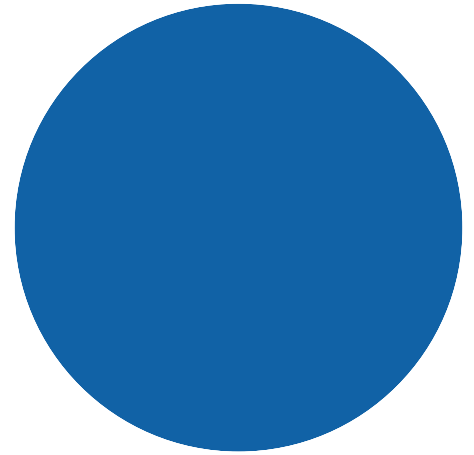
BI-CAP Head Start Director



Vision, Mission, and Educational Philosophy

Our Mission

Our mission at BI-CAP Head Start is to give children and families a head start for kindergarten and for life.



Child Development

We believe that:

- All families and children deserve respect.
- Healthy and happy children learn better.
- Children learn best by playing and doing.
- Children learn best when they are interested.
- Children learn best when activities are related to their experiences.
- Children need to feel safe to be able to learn well.
- Children need the opportunity to make reasonable choices.
- Children are learning to control their actions.
- Children need to know that it is okay to make a mistake.
- Children learn self-control with consistent routines, structure and appropriate rules.
- Children learn from others around them.
- Every child should grow to be the best they can be.

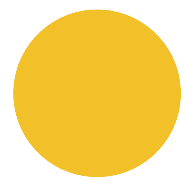
You are your child's first teacher:

Whether you are new to parenting and BI-CAP Head Start or are the parent of children who have been in a program, you are your child's first teacher.

Because you are so important to your child, they pay attention to what you say and do. Children learn by watching and listening to you and other family members every day.



Program Options



BI-CAP Head Start: Prenatal to Five offers a variety of program options for children ages birth to five and pregnant parents which include home visits and classroom experiences. Children are given the opportunity to learn in various settings as to meet your family's needs. Our program is licensed and serves more than 206 children and families each year.

BELTRAMI COUNTY BEMIDJI

PRESCHOOL CENTER BASE:

Classroom 4 days per week, school year
(2 home visits and 2 conferences/year)
Licensed to serve up to 98 children in
5 classrooms.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 7:45-3:30 M-TH

TODDLER CENTER BASE:

Classroom 4 days per week, year round
(2 home visits and 2 conferences/year)
Licensed to serve up to 24 children in
3 classrooms.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 7:45-3:30 M-TH

CASS COUNTY WALKER

PRESCHOOL CENTER BASE:

Classroom 4 days per week, school year
(2 home visits and 2 conferences/year)
Licensed to serve up to 20 children in
1 classroom.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 8:15 - 3:05 M-TH

PINE RIVER

PRESCHOOL CENTER BASE:

Classroom 4 days per week, school year
(2 home visits and 2 conferences/year)
Licensed to serve up to 18 children in
1 classroom.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 8:00 - 3:05 M-TH

BELTRAMI COUNTY BLACKDUCK

PRESCHOOL CENTER BASE:

Classroom 4 days per week, school year
(2 home visits and 2 conferences/year)
Licensed to serve up to 40 children in
2 classrooms.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 8:00 - 3:45 T-F, Some M

TODDLER CENTER BASE:

Classroom 4 days per week, year round
(2 home visits and 2 conferences/year)
Licensed to serve up to 10 children in
1 classroom.

HOURS OF OPERATION: 8:00 - 3:45 T-F, Some M

BELTRAMI AND CASS COUNTY HOME VISITS

FAMILY COACHES (2)

Each serving 10 children/families
46 home visits per year
22 PALS (Play and Learn) per year locally

FAMILY ADVOCATES (5)

Each serving up to 40 enrolled families
3 home visits per year HS
4 home visits per year EHS

BEMIDJI

YOUNG PARENT PROGRAM:

- Classroom 4 days per Week (September through May)
- Parent Engagement Requirements
- Home visits (12) June through August
- Licensed to serve 8 children (infants & toddlers)

HOURS OF OPERATION: 7:45-3:30 M-TH



Preparing Your Family for Head Start Experiences

BI-CAP Head Start can be an exciting time, one that can provide new opportunities for your child and family. It also can be a time of great change and adjustment. Your child or family may need to get used to:

- new teachers, staff, children
- different schedules, daily routines
- new classroom activities
- new options for family involvement
- new evaluations and technical terms
- how to advocate for your child when necessary
- some separation anxiety from your child and possibly you
- some stress, this can be normal in new environments



Some ideas that families have used to get ready for the change are:

- Plan ahead. Give yourself and your family time to make decisions and get used to the changes that will occur.
- Realize that stress, uncertainty and separation anxiety are normal emotions. Many, if not all, parents experience these feelings when their child starts a new program.
- Share information with the staff about your child, family, resources, priorities, and any concerns that you may have.
- Talk with members of your family about the change.
- Try to identify things about the new class/center that may be different or difficult for your child and give your child experiences with these things before the new program begins. For example, if you think that your child will have trouble working or playing alone, you might give your child the opportunity to play alone for short periods of time each day.

BI-CAP Head Start Children Must Have:

- MN State law requires that immunizations MUST be up-to-date to be in a classroom
- A physical exam, which includes lead and hemoglobin blood tests, that follows current Child/Teen Checkup recommendations
- Lead screenings are due at 9-15 months and again at 16-36 month well-child checks
- Vision, hearing, speech and developmental screenings
- Infants and Toddlers follow the well child exam schedule required at: 2 weeks & 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, 30, and 36 months
- A completed dental exam for children 1 year and older

Curriculum & Teaching Methods



SCHOOL READINESS GOALS



Science & Discovery

Approaches to Learning

Children will develop and increase skills in self-regulation, creativity, independence, persistence and curiosity.



Social & Emotional Development

Social and Emotional Development

Children will create and sustain positive relationships with adults and other children and manage their emotions.



Fine & Gross Motor Skills

Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

Children will develop and increase skills in perception, motor, personal care and healthy and safe behaviors.



Language & Literacy

Language and Literacy

Children will develop and increase skills in receptive (Attending and Understanding) and expressive language (Communicating and Speaking) and emergent literacy.



Early Math & Problem-Solving

Cognition

Children will develop and increase skills in exploration, discovery, using memory, reasoning and problem solving. Children will develop and increase skills in emergent mathematical thinking and scientific inquiry.



Creativity & Imagination



ATTENDANCE

Please contact the classroom and notify your classroom teachers prior to the start of class time when your child will be absent. Contact your Family Coach or Family Advocate at least one hour before the scheduled appointment if your family cannot make a home visit. Regular home visits and/or classroom attendance is an important part of the BI-CAP Head Start Prenatal to Five Program.

If your child is absent and the program has not been notified within one hour of start time, this will be considered an unexcused absence. We will attempt to contact you to ensure the child's well-being and discuss absence reasons. After two absences without contact, our Family Advocate will contact you to discover any barriers that are keeping your child/family from participating and develop an attendance support plan. An attendance support plan without follow through will put your child's enrollment in Head Start at risk.

Please keep in contact with us if you are having problems getting your child to class, or keeping home visits.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.

Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten

Build the Habit of Good Attendance



Did you know?

Showing up on time, every day possible, is important to your child's learning and well-being from preschool forward.

Missing 10% of school (2 days each month) can make it harder to:

- Gain early reading and math skills.
- Build **relationships**.
- Develop good attendance habits.

Preschool and kindergarten have many benefits!

- The routines your child develops will continue throughout school.
- Regular attendance helps your child **gain confidence, delight in learning** and make **new friends**.



What you can do

Work with your child and their teacher to develop your child's strong attendance.

Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!

- Set a **regular** bedtime and morning **routine**.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks **the night before**.
- Share ideas with **other parents** for getting to school on time.

Before the school year starts

- Find out what **day school starts** and begin a countdown!
- Make sure your child has the **required immunizations**.
- Attend orientation with your child to **meet teachers** and **classmates** and find out about health and safety procedures.

Ready, Set, GO!

- If you are concerned your child may have a contagious illness, **call** your school or health-care provider **for advice**. Ask for resources to continue learning at home.
- Ask family members or neighbors for assistance **if you need help**.
- Try to schedule **nonurgent medical appointments** and extended trips when school is not in session.
- **If** your child seems **anxious** about going to school, **talk to the** teacher, program director, your doctor or other parents **for advice**. Make sure the program is a good fit for your child.

October 2025

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!



At BI-CAP Head Start, we provide a nurturing and structured environment that supports the unique needs of every child. Our classrooms are designed to encourage socialization, exploration, and individualized attention, ensuring that each child receives the best possible start to their educational journey.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Conscious Discipline and The Pyramid Model are our framework for nurturing the social and emotional development of every child. Our goal is to create a classroom environment where every child feels excited and safe to learn. We achieve this by:

- Designing classrooms that foster engaging, hands on learning experiences.
- Building positive relationships among children, families, and staff.
- Working as a team to clearly communicate behavior expectations.
- Providing social emotional skills instruction and individualized support for those who need it.



Angry



Scared



Sad



Happy

Behavior Guidance

To promote children's mental health and positive behavior, parents, staff, and volunteers will:

- Model positive nurturing
- Have realistic expectations for children's behavior and set limits based on their age and stage of development
- Teach children about feelings and empathy
- Speak to children on their level with a calm voice
- Use a problem-solving approach to reduce conflict
- Keep children and others safe in the home and classroom
- Use routines and schedules
- Parents and Staff may give immediate consequences for unacceptable behavior

The unacceptable actions to guide children's behavior that will not be used by BI-CAP Head Start are: physical punishment, threatening and shaming language, punishment for toileting accidents, withholding food or other necessities from children, physically holding a child (unless it's needed to protect the child or others from harm) and preventing children from participation in daily activities (i.e. outside time).

If a child's unsafe behavior continues in the classroom, staff will:

- Observe and record behavior
- Provide appropriate supports and changes in the environment
- Notify parents
- Develop a Behavior Intervention Plan with parents, staff, and other professionals as needed

A child will only be separated from the classroom group if other means of guidance have not worked. The child will remain in an area where the child can be seen and heard by staff. When the child is able to regulate behavior to be safe, they will return to the group.

Volunteers are not responsible for responding to, correcting, or documenting challenging behavior in the classroom.

Mental Health

Mental health is an important part of your child's development. A child's mental health helps increase their ability to regulate and express emotions, form secure relationships, explore their environment, and learn.

BI-CAP Head Start has been collaborating with Lake Country Associates for over 22 years to provide mental health support for our families. This includes a mental health professional. Along with an onsite mental health professional to develop strategies that help promote positive behaviors and healthy interactions.

These services include:

- Child and classroom observations
- Parent consultations
- Parent and staff training
- Emotional support planning
- Monthly group sessions with teachers and family support staff
- Diagnostic Assessments



Families can request to meet with the Mental Health Professional at any time.

Mental health services can help families with:

- Stress
- Managing and improving behaviors
- Expressing feelings
- Setting limits
- Abuse, neglect, or separation from parents
- Family changes (death, divorce, etc.)



Special Needs

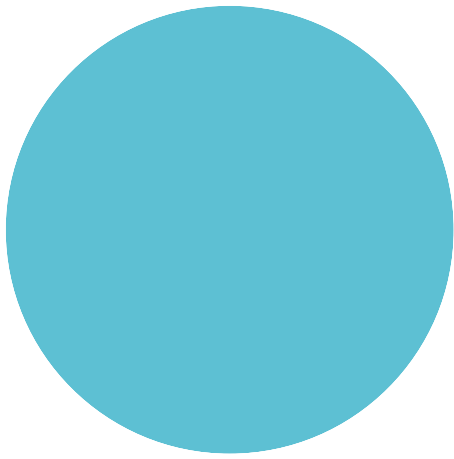
All children are unique and learn in different ways. Children are identified for a potential special education referral based on the results of their developmental and social emotional screening. If the child does not pass the screening, a meeting will be scheduled with the family to discuss further steps and to begin the referral process. If your child qualifies for special education services, BI-CAP Head Start will be part of the special education team. We will support your family through the process of developing a plan to meet your child's educational needs.

Social Emotional Screening

The ASQ-SE is a family-completed questionnaire that helps identify children's strengths and needs in their social emotional development. This tool is completed incrementally based on the child's age. You will be informed of the results.

Developmental Screening

A developmental screening is required for all children to be completed once, after age three and before entrance to kindergarten. Parents are encouraged to sign up for their districts preschool screening dates. If they are unable to attend a Classroom Coordinator will screen a child within 45 days of programming, to see how your child's development is progressing. In EHS, Family Coaches or Classroom Teacher will complete the ASQ with you periodically throughout the school year. You will be informed of the results.



Class Structure & Classroom Setup

Daily Schedule Overview

Time	Activity	Description
7:45 – 8:15 AM	Arrival	Arrival, Handwashing, Toothbrushing
8:15 – 8:30 AM	Table Activities	Journals, Table Activities
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast	Handwashing, Breakfast
9:00 – 9:30 AM	Small Groups	Bathroom, Small Group Activities
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Free Choice	Art, Dramatic Play, Table Activities, Blocks
10:30 – 10:40 AM	Clean Up	Clean Up
10:40 – 11:40 AM	Large Motor	Outside/Large Motor Room
11:40 – 12:15 PM	Lunch	Hand Washing, Lunch
12:15 – 12:30 PM	Bathroom Break	Toothbrushing, Bathroom, Books on Cot
12:30 – 1:00 PM	Nap	Rest on Cot
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Quiet Activities	Small Group Table Activities
2:00 – 2:30 PM	Snack	Closing Circle and Preparation for Pick-up
2:30 – 3:30 PM	Free Play/ Pick up	Sensory Play, Art, Small Group, Parent Pick-up

Classroom Information

At BI-CAP Head Start, our educators use a combination of structured instruction and free play to create a well-balanced learning experience. Here is some helpful information to assist in the transition from home to school.



01 Transitioning to the Classroom

Staff will work with you and your child to help your child feel comfortable with the classroom.

The process of separation from the caregiver as the child enters and attends class is one of the most important accomplishments of the child.

At each age level, a child will react differently. As children grow they begin to see themselves as independent from their parents. In separating from you, your child is learning an important new skill.

BI-CAP Head Start staff will visit with you and your child to get to know what your child needs for the transition to the classroom.

Let us know if your child has a special blanket, toy or routine that helps them separate from you.

03 What Should My Child Wear?

Dress your child in clothes that allow freedom for movement and activity. Although paint shirts are used, sometimes your child's clothing may still get messy. Tennis shoes or rubber-soled shoes are the best footwear.

Help your child come to school ready for inside and outdoor play. Children at all centers will go outside daily when the temperature (including wind chill) is above zero. During cold weather, please send a hat, mittens, boots, snow pants, and a warm jacket or snowsuit.

Please label your child's clothing.

Please send a change of clothing including socks and underwear to keep at school. If your child has changed clothing during the day, please take home the soiled items and replace them the next day.

02 Daily Schedules & Routines

All classrooms use Creative Curriculum Preschool or Creative Curriculum Infant, Toddlers and Twos to set up classrooms, schedules, routines and support child development.

Infant & Toddler classrooms focus on routines and experiences. Children learn as they explore their environment.

Preschool classrooms have a more structured schedule focusing on school readiness.

A daily schedule is posted in each classroom. Make sure to check the schedule so you know what your child will be doing during the day.

04 Personal Belongings

Please have children leave their own toys and valuables home. Items brought could be broken or lost and are hard to share with other children.

06 Rest Time

Rest time is a part of our daily schedule. After 30 minutes, children who are not sleeping will be provided quiet table activities.



08 Classroom Orientation

Prior to your child's first day of class your Classroom Teacher will reach out to schedule a required orientation. This will include a tour of the classroom/building, meeting the classroom teachers and family advocate, reviewing paperwork needed for entry into the classroom and classroom schedules and routines.

09 Conferences

Your child's developmental progress will be shared at least three times per year. Family/Teacher conference are required two times per year. During conferences your child's Teacher or Family Coach will discuss your child's learning and progress. They will work with you to set school readiness goals for your child that you can help support at home. There will also be time for you to ask any questions you may have. Family/Teacher conferences are a great way to build a partnership that supports your child's learning!

05 Learning Genie

Please sign up for the parent communications APP (Learning Genie) during classroom orientation time. This will give you access to classroom happenings and updates. Along with parent volunteer/in-kind opportunities.



07 Toileting

Our goal is to support children in learning to use the toilet. We provide store-brand diapers, diaper ointment and wipes while your child is in our care. We will work as a team with you to determine the best plan for helping your child learn these self-care skills.



10 Child Abuse Reporting

Under Minnesota law all of our staff are considered mandated reporters. We must report all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to keep children safe. BI-CAP Head Start's goal is to support families and to make sure that each child's basic needs are met.

11 Pets

Parents will be informed of any permitted pets in the classroom. Visiting pets will be allowed only with approval from the Classroom Coordinator and Health Specialist and in consideration of known allergies. A signed permission slip will be required.

12 No Smoking Policy

To promote a healthy and safe environment for all children and families smoking is strictly prohibited on any Head Start property. This policy applies to staff, parents and volunteers. This includes:

- All areas of BI-CAP Head Start property at all times including the parking lots.
- Field trips, social gatherings, and family meetings associated with the program.
- Any time children are present, including during outdoor activities, regardless of location.

This policy covers all forms of smoking: cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vaping devices.

13 Safety & Crisis Management

A Crisis Management Plan has been developed to ensure that all children, families, and staff are safe. Staff are responsible to know what to do in the event of a fire, tornado or other crisis.

Parents will be informed where to pick up their child in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Plans are sent out via Learning Genie App upon enrollment and available to parents upon request.





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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL - LICENSING DIVISION

Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting

This policy is for all child care centers certified by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

What to report

- Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to [Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03](#), and pages 2-5 of this document. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

Who must report

- If you work in a certified program, you are a “mandated reporter” and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your certified program.
- In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

Where to report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities certified by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families Licensing Division, should be made to the DCYF Central Intake line at 651-539-8222.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, in a child foster residence setting, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to the local county social services agency at _____ or local law enforcement at _____.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of a child related to a Children’s Residential Facility (CRF), Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), or a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment facility should be made to the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of a child in a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) should be made to the Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Health Facility Complaints at health.ohfc-complaints@state.mn.us.

When to report

- Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

Information to report

- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible certification violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a certified facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

Failure to report

- A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in [Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03](#).

Retaliation prohibited

- An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at):
 - an employee for making a report in good faith; or
 - a child who is the subject of the report.
- If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

Staff Training

All certification holders must inform all mandated reporters of the reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota statutes, chapter 260E) and certified child care centers must provide training to all staff persons as required in Minnesota Statutes chapter 142C. Their certification holder must document the provisions of this training in individual personnel records and monitor implementation by staff.

16 Transportation



Personal transportation:

If you are providing transportation for your child, please park in a designated parking space and walk your child to and from the classroom. You will need to do a person-to-person hand off with the teacher and electronically sign your child in or out.

State law requires that children be placed in child safety seats. If you need assistance with obtaining a child safety seat, talk to your Family Advocate.

Authorized adults will be listed on the Consent Form for emergency contact/pick-up. You are responsible for keeping phone numbers and addresses up to date and providing two emergency contacts for your child.

Anyone picking up a child must be on the emergency contact list for that child. Children will not be released to anyone who is not an authorized adult on the Emergency Contact Form unless verbal notification is given to staff prior to pickup. A safe word and photo ID will be checked upon pick up.

BI-CAP Head Start Staff cannot refuse to release a BI-CAP Head Start child to the child's parent without legal documentation restricting the parent's access to their child, unless the parents were never married and no legal custody arrangement is in place (Minnesota Statute 257.541), in which case the mother, father, or caregiver has sole legal and physical custody.

If you fail to pick your child up at the scheduled ending time of class, staff will attempt to contact you or someone on your emergency contact list. If we cannot reach someone within a half hour, our last option will be to call law enforcement. More than 2 failed pickups (meaning late pickup without parent communication) within a month will result in a report being made to Child Protection Services.



Public school bussing is provided at the following locations:

Blackduck (4 years old)
Pine River/Backus (4 yrs old)
Walker (4 years old).

For the safety of your child, an authorized responsible person must greet the bus. This person may be required to show identification.

17 Weather Related / Other Cancellations

When public school is canceled, all classes will be canceled. When public school starts late, all classrooms will start late. Early release due to weather will follow the school district's release time. Review your school district website or listen to local radio stations for cancellation information.

18 Holidays

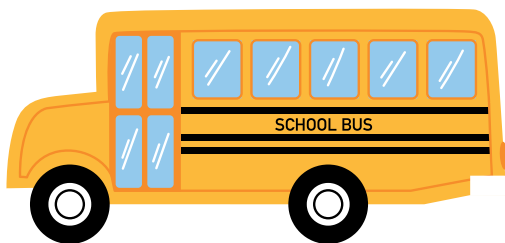
BI-CAP Head Start strives to respect all families' individual traditions. Events or activities specifically in celebration of traditional holidays will not be practiced. However, there may be activities offered in the classroom that pertain to the specific time of the year and include some holiday-like projects or materials. If you have specific wishes or concerns regarding holidays and their celebration, please share them with your child's Teacher or Family Coach.



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Staying Safe in a Vehicle

- Buckle up as soon as you get in the car.
- Keep the noise down so you can hear sirens or other dangers on the road.
- Keep your eyes on the road.
- Do not text or be on your phone.
- Be understanding of other drivers and traffic.
- Don't allow kids to unbuckle or move around in the vehicle.
- Make it a routine to buckle everyone in!



Boarding and Leaving Vehicles

- Holding your child's hand walk your child to and from the vehicle.
- When getting in and out, always be there for your young child.
- Teach older kids to stand by the side of the car until an adult is out of the car.
- Be aware of your surroundings and teach your children the same.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY



Staying Safe Boarding the Bus

- When you get on, make sure the bus is stopped, the lights are flashing, and the arm is out.
- Cross the street only when: all vehicles have stopped, the Bus Driver waves you across, and you've looked both ways.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- Always walk, never run.
- Never go back for something you've dropped.
- Listen for the Bus Driver's horn. That means to stop because there is danger.



Parent Involvement Opportunities



We offer various ways for parents to be actively engaged in their child's educational experience.

Home Visits

Home visits focus on supporting your child's development and your family's goals. Your Family Coach, Family Advocate, or Classroom Teacher will work with you through regular visits—Family Coaches with 46 weekly sessions, Family Advocates with 3-4 annual visits, and Classroom Teachers with 2 visits per year—to help give your child a strong start in school and life. During the 90 minute home visit:

BI-CAP Head Start staff will:

Get to know your family and learn about your child. Listen, ask questions, offer suggestions, and demonstrate activities to support your child's growth.

Parents are encouraged to:

Minimize digital distractions during visits. Share observations about your child's learning and your family's traditions. Actively participate in activities and notify Head Start staff in advance if you need to reschedule.

Together, you will plan and review activities, set school readiness goals, complete necessary paperwork, and establish family goals for continued success

Family & Community Engagement

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) supports families in fostering children's learning and development by recognizing each family's unique needs and goals. The seven PFCE outcomes include:

01 Family Well-Being

Ensuring families are safe, healthy, and financially secure.

02 Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Building warm, nurturing bonds from the start of parenthood.

03 Families as Lifelong Educators

Actively guiding and participating in everyday learning at home, school, and in the community.

04 Families as Learners

Advancing personal education and training to support parenting, careers, and life goals.

05 Family Engagement in Transitions

Supporting and advocating for smooth transitions across different learning environments.

06 Family Connections to Peer and Community

Forming supportive social networks that enhance community and social well-being.

07 Families as Advocates and Leaders

Engaging in leadership and decision-making to improve children's learning experiences.

Family Engagement Opportunities



Family Involvement is the key to success for you and your child in BI-CAP Head Start. There are many opportunities to learn new things and gain new skills. In addition to home visits and classroom volunteering, you will gain new skills by attending parent trainings, parent/child activities, and/or serving on the Policy Council.

Policy Council

The Policy Council is a group of BI-CAP Head Start and Early Head Start parents and community members who help lead and make decisions about our program. Policy Council members are elected by the parents of children enrolled in the program.

The Policy Council meets regularly as a group. Members can serve for one year at a time, and for up to five years. They work closely with the program's Leadership team and Board of Directors to provide overall direction for the program.

Through the Policy Council, parents have a voice in decisions about how the program spends money, what children do in their classrooms, and how the program works with community partners.

Parents can become more confident, gain skills, and connect with other parents and staff. Parents learn about the strengths, interests, and needs of the children, families, and community they serve.

Visiting the Classroom

Family members are welcome and encouraged to visit Head Start any time when class is in session. Everyone must follow local check-in procedures for their center.

It is helpful if you let your child's teacher know when you would like to visit so they can include you in special events, plan activities that interest you, or include you in meal/snack times.

Siblings of enrolled children may visit the classroom with a parent or guardian.



Volunteering & In-Kind Contributions

As a requirement of our federal funding, BI-CAP is required to obtain a match equal to 25% of its federal dollars. This is called matching funds or In-Kind. For every hour you spend volunteering for Head Start or working with your child on educational activities, you are donating dollars to your child's program!

Some ways you as a parent/caregiver can help:

- Time spent attending Policy Council meetings as a Policy Council member
- Planning and working on special committees
- Attending parent meetings
- Working on school readiness goals, home learning plans and reading with your child
- Field trips
- Volunteering in the classroom
- Providing special entertainment or presentations for children and families

Family Engagement Opportunities

*It is a proven fact that the more time you spend interacting with your child, the better they do later on in life socially and academically.
When families and schools work together, children are more successful.*

Family Partnerships

BI-CAP Head Start staff will partner with you to access community resources. We then can work together toward meeting your needs. We will also partner with you in:

- Identifying what is going well for your family
- Setting and reaching your goals
- Your role as a caregiver

A Family Advocate will help you with initial Family Goals and update these every three months during a family service home visit. Together you will set goals, identify strengths and plan the steps you will take toward achieving your goals. We would like to know if you are working on personal goals with another agency. If so, we will partner with them in supporting your goals.

Monthly Family Child Activities

These happen in your child's classroom, with the teaching staff. Parents join their child in the classroom to do a learning activity, and it is a time to connect with other parents in your classroom, forming more relationships.

Make-it/Take-it Activities

An opportunity to create fun and engaging tools to use in the home. i.e. calm down routines, visual routines, social emotional supports, bed time/morning routines.

Family Fun Nights

A fun evening event at the Head Start center or in your child's classroom.

Parent/Caregiver Trainings

Parents choose topics that they are wanting to learn and take home skills to teach their family i.e., Positive Solutions, budgeting, food/nutrition, ect.

Parent/Caregiver Meetings

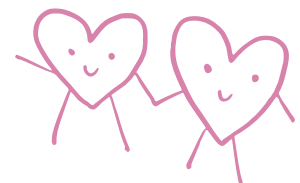
3-4 meetings per year to learn about changes happening at your center and updates on classrooms and education, policy council information, upcoming events, trainings and to give your own feedback.

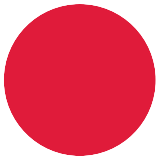
PALS (Play and Learning Socialization)

PALS is a fun opportunity for you and your child to get together with other families as a group. These are times for you to play with your child and observe what they are learning in a different setting. PALS are offered twice a month.

PALS gives parents a chance to:

- Help with activities in the classroom
- Follow your child's lead in play
- Build on the school readiness goals you set during home visits
- Share what you know and learn with other parents
- Learn that you are not alone in the challenges and joys of raising a young child
- Strengthen your relationship with your child





Health & Safety Policies



Classroom Health



We care about your child's health! BI-CAP Head Start works with families to help children stay healthy. We also help families learn how to take care of their health at home.

Good Health and Safety Habits

At school, children will practice healthy habits like:

- Washing hands when they come in, after the bathroom, and before eating
- Brushing their teeth two times every day
- Learning about health, safety, and healthy foods through fun activities
- Staying home when they are sick or have head lice



Immunization & Health Records

To keep everyone safe, we need:

Up-to-date shots
before your child
starts school

A recent well-child
check / physical

A dental exam every year
for children aged 1 and
older

Dentals

Children aged 1 and older need to see a dentist once a year.

- If you don't have a dentist, we can help you find one
- Dental records must be turned in within 90 days after your child starts

Physicals

Your child needs a well-child check / physical.

- This can be done by a doctor, clinic, or public health nurse
- It must be turned in within 30 days after starting school
- Your child must stay up to date with check-ups
- You can get your medical records from your doctor's computer or APP and give them to your school

A WIC visit does not count as a physical exam.

Medication Policy

It is best if children take medicine at home when they can.

If your child needs medicine at school, please tell the teacher.

If medicine must be given at school, we need:

- Written instructions from a doctor or dentist (This includes things like cough syrup, lip balm, and other over-the-counter medicine)
- Written permission from a parent or guardian
- Medicine in the original container

The medicine label must include:

- Child's name
- Name of the medicine
- Dose (how much to give)
- Expiration date
- Directions for use
- Doctor's name
- Date the medicine was given
- Pharmacy name and address



Other important notes:

- We will not use medicine that does not follow these rules
- Any medicine in a broken or damaged container will be sent home
- If poisoning is suspected, we will call the Minnesota Poison Center (1-800-222-1222)

Emergencies and Injuries

Emergencies & Injuries

Our staff will take care of children if they get hurt at school.

- Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid
- Staff will give first aid until medical help arrives
- We treat small cuts and scrapes at school

We must have your permission to give emergency medical care.

Please fill out the Emergency Medical/Dental form and keep it up to date.

We also keep records about your child's allergies and health needs.

Ask your teacher if you need help with forms.

Reporting Accidents & Injuries

If a child gets hurt, staff will write an Incident Report.

This report includes:

- The child's name and age
- Where and when it happened
- What kind of injury it was
- What staff did to help

Parents will get a copy of this report.

If the injury is serious and needs a doctor, the Department of Human Services will also be notified. *Contact information on Concerns or Complaints page 31.

Classroom Health



If a child in the classroom has a sickness that can spread to others, we will tell all parents within 24 hours. We will also share what symptoms to watch for. If you have questions, please contact our BI-CAP Head Start Health Specialist.

Parents must tell the teacher within 24 hours if their child is diagnosed with a sickness that can spread, such as lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, or chickenpox. BI-CAP Head Start will let other parents know if their child may have been exposed.

Only a licensed health care provider can diagnose an illness or give treatment. Please contact the Health Specialist if you need more information.

Illness Policy

Your child's health and safety are very important to us. We want to help prevent sickness.

When To Keep Your Child At Home & Reasons Your Child Will Be Sent Home

Children will be sent home if they have:

Fever (100°F or higher) without medicine. They can return after being fever-free for 24 hours without medicine.

Vomiting – They can return after no vomiting for 24 hours.

Skin rash or sores that are not diagnosed. They may return when the rash is gone, or a doctor has checked it.

Runny nose, eye, or ear drainage (yellow or green) with a fever or feeling sick. They can return when symptoms are gone or after a doctor visit.

Diarrhea – They can return after no diarrhea for 24 hours.

Trouble breathing or shortness of breath.

Very tired or not acting like themselves.

Head lice with live bugs for Bemidji, Blackduck and Walker schools. Pine River will follow their school policy.

A diagnosed sickness (like strep throat, pink eye, etc.) and have not had at least 24 hours of medicine.

Symptoms that stop them from joining normal classroom activities.

*Note: If your child is out sick for more than 3 days, we may ask for a doctor's note.



BI-CAP Head Start: Prenatal To Five
WHEN TO KEEP MY CHILD HOME



I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...

I HAVE A FEVER	I AM VOMITING	I HAVE DIARRHEA	I HAVE A RASH	I HAVE AN INFECTION	I HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL
					
Temperature of 100 F or higher	Within the past 24 hours	Within the past 24 hours	Body rash with itching or fever	Redness, itching, and/or draining from eye or nose	Hospital stay and/or emergency room visit

I am ready to go back to school when I am...

Fever free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours <i>(i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, Advil)</i>	Free from vomiting for 24 hours	Free from diarrhea for 24 hours	Free from undiagnosed rash, itching or fever. I have been evaluated by my doctor.	Free from drainage and/or have been evaluated by my doctor	Release by my doctor to return to school

If your child has strep throat or another bacterial infection, he/she should stay home until the antibiotic has been given for at least 24 hours. We encourage you to seek medical attention when your child is sick and to follow your health care provider's recommendations about returning to school and other activities.



Nutrition & Food Policies

Classroom Nutrition

Food is an important part of our program. Healthy habits, like eating good foods and brushing teeth, help children stay strong and ready to learn at school, at home, and during visits.

To keep children safe and healthy, all food is made and served following safety rules. All kitchen staff and helpers are told about any food allergies the children have.



No outside food or drinks are allowed in the center.

BI-CAP Head Start will share ideas and tips for healthy meals and snacks at home. We want families to help children grow strong, happy, and ready to learn.

Meals & Snacks

Each classroom has a set meal schedule. Children who stay all day will get:

Breakfast

Lunch

Afternoon snack

We encourage children to try all foods, but we do not force them to eat. We will follow any special diet needs from a doctor.

Families will get a menu each month. Meals are served family-style.

All meals and snacks meet USDA and CACFP food guidelines. A snack will also be served during Play and Learning Socialization (PALS).

Food must be eaten at the center or at a Head Start family event.

Food cannot be taken out of the building.

Healthy food helps children grow and learn. Good habits start early!



Sample Meal Schedule

All staff are trained in EpiPen administration and allergy response.

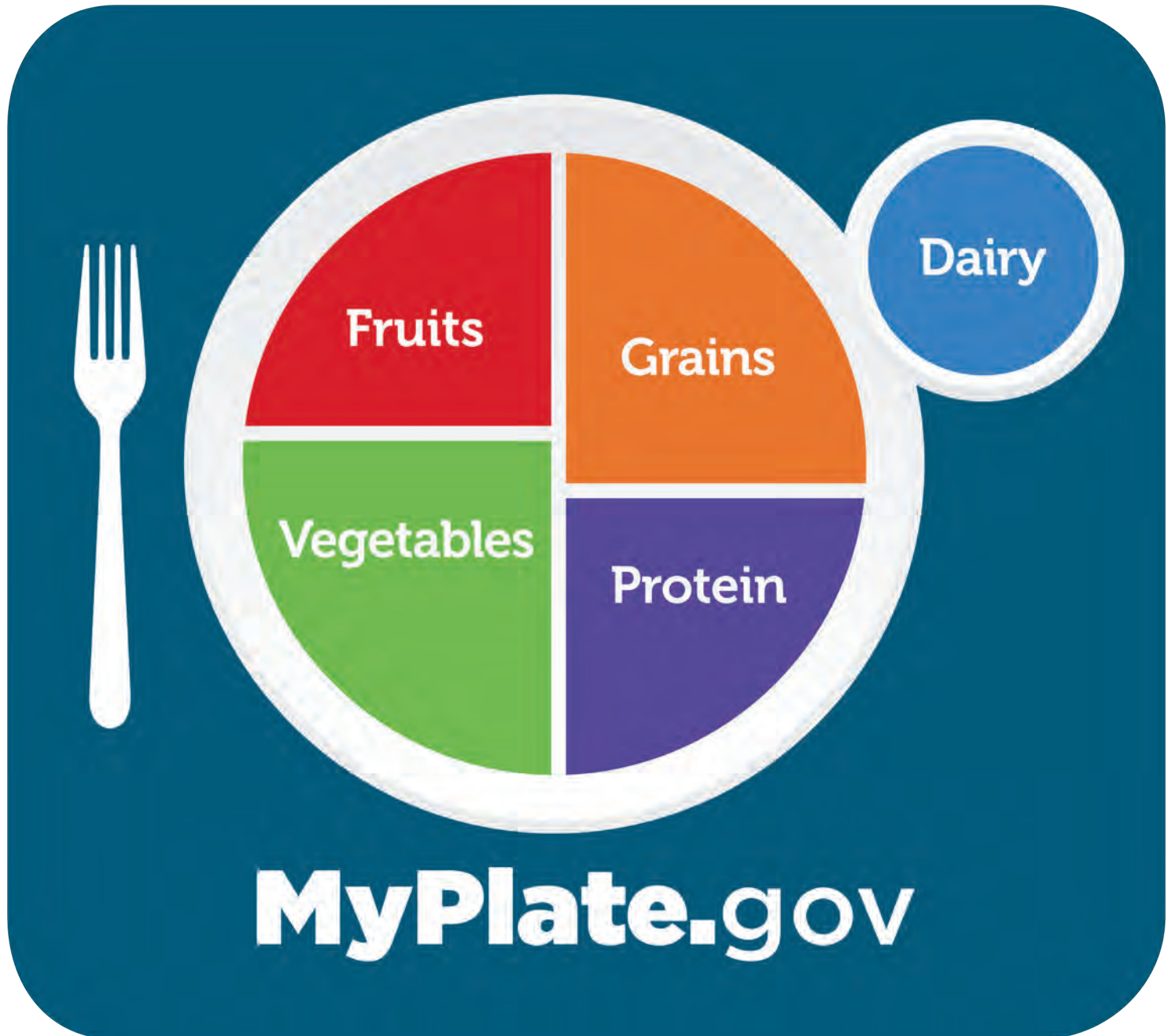
Time	Meal	Example
8:30 AM	Breakfast	Fresh Fruit, Whole Grain, Cereal, Milk
11:30 PM	Lunch	Cheeseburger, Baked Beans, Fruit, Whole Grain, Milk
2:00 PM	Snack	Crackers, Cheese Stick, Water/Milk

Parents may request meal modifications for dietary or religious reasons.

Food made at our center does not include peanuts or peanut butter. However, some food we buy from outside may come from places that use peanuts. Because of this, we cannot promise all food is completely peanut-free. *This does not include meals provided by the school districts.



Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

March 2024



Concerns or Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint about something in our BI-CAP Head Start Program, please talk to BI-CAP Head Start staff. If you are unable to work out a solution you may contact the BI-CAP Head Start Director at:

Michele Andringa
Head Start Director
P.O. Box 579
Bemidji, MN 56619
218-333-9873

The BI-CAP Head Start Director will talk with you and try to resolve the complaint or concern. If you are not satisfied, the written complaint will be forwarded to the Executive Director, the BI-CAP Head Start Policy Council Chairperson, and finally the BI-CAP Board of Directors for final resolution.

If you have a concern or complaint about your child's care in our program, you may contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services at:

MN Department of Human Services
Division of Licensing
PO Box 64242
St. Paul, MN 55164-0242
(651) 296-3971

If you have a concern or complaint about child maltreatment, you may also contact Social Services at:

Beltrami County Social Services
Community Services Center
616 America Ave. NW
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-333-8300

Cass County Health, Human, and
Veteran's Services
P. O. Box 519
Walker, MN 56484
218-547-1340

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Writing to Area Legislators

Emails and letters to your elected officials are the best way to make your opinion heard about programs like BI-CAP Head Start and other issues that you care about. You can write a powerful email in almost no time at all by following these guidelines:

Greet them with Dear Representative _____:
or Dear Senator _____:

1. ASK FOR SOMETHING

- Use your own words
- Hand written is just great-be sure it is legible
- Be sincere and polite

2. GIVE A REASON

- Tell about how a service or program has affected you personally or why it matters to you

3. ADD THANKS AND REQUEST A RESPONSE

- Include your address-email
- Offer to give more information if requested

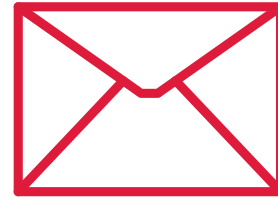
The most effective letters are short and to the point. Don't be afraid, nervous or shy. They want to hear from you. You can email/write to the Senator, Representative who serves your district and Governor or President.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Voting is THE MOST IMPORTANT way you can voice your opinion. Read local newspapers and attend local meetings to find out what your local candidates stand for.

If you are not already a registered voter, you may contact your county auditor or treasurer or talk to a BI-CAP Head Start staff or go to the website listed below.

<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/>



Area Legislators

To find your legislators:

<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/get-involved/contact-your-elected-representatives/>

PRESIDENT

Donald Trump (R)
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500
202-456-1111
www.whitehouse.gov

VICE PRESIDENT

JD Vance (R)
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500
202-456-1111
www.whitehouse.gov

GOVERNOR

Tim Walz (D)
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-201-3400 or
800-657-3717
www.mn.gov

U.S. SENATOR

Tina Smith (D)
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-5641
www.smith.senate.gov

STATE SENATOR 02

Sen. Steve Green (R)
95 University Avenue W
Minnesota Senate Bldg, Room
2319
St. Paul, MN 55155
Sen.steve.green@senate.mn.gov

U.S. SENATOR

Amy Klobuchar (D)
425 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3244
888-224-9043
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

STATE SENATOR 05

Sen. Paul J. Utke (R)
MN Senate Bldg, Rm. 2403
St. Paul, MN 55155
Sen.paul.utke@senate.mn

STATE SENATOR 06

Keri Heintzeman (R)
95 University Avenue W
Minnesota Senate Bldg
Room 2235
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-7079
www.senate.mn

U.S. HOUSE 7TH DISTRICT

Michelle Fischbach (R)
2204 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
www.michellefischbach.house.gov

U.S. HOUSE 8TH DISTRICT

Pete Stauber (R)
126 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6211
www.stauber.house.gov

STATE HOUSE 05B

Rep. Mike Wiener (R)
327 State Office Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155
rep.like.weiner@house.mn.gov

STATE HOUSE 02B

Rep. Matt Bliss (R)
437 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155
rep.matt.bliss@house.mn

STATE HOUSE 06A

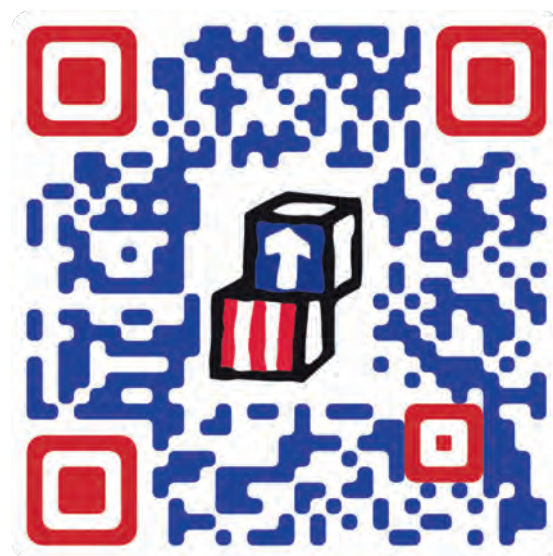
Rep. Ben Davis (R)
227 State Office Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155
Rep.ben.davis@house.mn.gov

STATE HOUSE 05A

Sen. Krista Knudsen (R)
225 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
Rep.krista.knudsen@house.mn.gov

Community Resources

You can find Community Resources listed on our website www.bicap.org. Look for the RESOURCES title at the top of the page and click. You will find links for Beltrami and Cass Counties and many other resource links on the page.



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