

**HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START
ERSEA POLICIES
(Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance)**

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REGION 16 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
Head Start/Early Head Start

Subject: Absentee Follow-up
Program: Head Start/Early Head Start
Policy Council Approval: January 25, 2017

Section: ERSEA
Date Revised: November 7, 2016

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part(s): 1302.16; 1302.22; 1(i)(ii); 2(i)(ii); 3(i)(ii)(d)

Policy:

The Head Start/Early Head Start program keeps track of absenteeism in order to ensure maximum benefits to enrolled children and to ensure the child's well-being.

Procedure:

Parent Handbook/Policies state when a child is absent, the following steps are taken.

1. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being.
2. Family services staff will check attendance weekly.
3. Student attendance reports will be reviewed and analyzed monthly by the Head Start Coordinator.
4. The center administrative assistant will notify the family services assistant, the health aide or the LVN when a child is absent one day.
5. If a student is absent two days, the family services staff, instructional aide or teacher will make a home visit or have direct contact with the parent/guardian to offer support services.
6. Within the first 60 days of program operation and on an ongoing basis thereafter, the use of individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year and develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children, such as direct contact with parents or intensive case management, as necessary.
7. If a child ceases to attend, the program must make appropriate efforts to reengage the family to resume attendance. If the child does not resume, then the program must consider that slot vacant.
8. If absence from the classroom continues, and every effort to resolve issues hindering the child's attendance has been made, the Head Start/Early Head Start Director of Direct Services may consider the child's slot an enrollment vacancy.
9. If the parent cannot be found, or home is vacant, then the child may be withdrawn with approval from the Data Management Assistant.
10. The Head Start program will follow local established attendance school policies for regional center and community based Head Start programs.
11. The Early Head Start program will follow local established attendance child care center policies.

HS/EHS Home-based Program Options

1. Children enrolled in the home-based option should have completed a minimum of 46 home visits and a minimum of 22 GSA's during the year (Early Head Start) or a minimum of 32 home visits and 16 GSA's during the school calendar year (Head Start).
2. Whether the home educator or the family cancels a scheduled visit, and a GSA has been cancelled, a "make-up" home visit and GSA must be rescheduled to take place.
3. The areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, preparing food, and eating in facilities used for GSA's must meet the safety standards.
4. Medical or social service appointments may not replace home visits or GSA's.
5. If a family is absent three consecutive visits, the home educator will investigate and document their attempts to contact family
6. If contact cannot be made by phone, the home educator will make a home visit.
7. If the parent cannot be found, or home is vacant then the child will be withdrawn with supervisor approval.
8. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, the child's slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy with supervisor approval.

REGION 16 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
Head Start/Early Head Start

Subject: Average Daily Attendance
Program: Head Start/Early Head Start
Policy Council Approval: January 25, 2017

Section: ERSEA
Date Revised: November 8, 2016

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part(s): 1302.16(b)

Policy:

In order to ensure that enrolled children achieve maximum benefit from the Head Start/Early Head Start services, the program tracks the average daily attendance rate.

Procedure:

1. Attendance in the center-based option is recorded in the data management system for each child.
2. The designated assistants compile and print a monthly report that shows the average daily attendance for each center.
3. When the monthly average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85%, the designated assistants notify the program coordinator.
4. The program coordinator will send an email to the appropriate center staff notifying them of the attendance rate below 85% and prompting them to complete the required attendance analysis and follow-up.
5. The center staff members will study the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences (for example: child illness, bad weather, parent vacations, etc.) as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. Follow-up documentation is entered into the data management system by the family services staff or Early Head Start teacher. Staff that has provided the follow-up will notify coordinator.
6. When they do not conflict with the Head Start Performance Standards, the Head Start/Early Head Start program will follow the local established school or child care center policies in addition to the ones listed above.

REGION 16 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
Head Start/Early Head Start

Subject:	Daily Attendance Records for Children	Section:	ERSEA
Program:	Head Start/Early Head Start	Date Revised:	November 8, 2016
Policy Council Approval:	January 25, 2017		

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part(s): 1302.16(a)

Policy:

In order to track document enrollments, withdrawals, and attendance for each child, Head Start children, birth to five years old, in the Amarillo program will be signed in and out of the center each day on an appropriate form. Head Start children in public school programs will follow the school district's policy for signing in and out and recording attendance. Head Start and Early Head Start children in contracted childcare centers will follow the childcare center policies.

Procedure:

1. At the start of each day, the teacher will place the classroom attendance form in the designated area.
2. The parent or other responsible person will sign the child in at the beginning of the program day. The parent or other responsible person will sign the child out at the end of the program day. **NOTE: The person who picks up the child must be authorized and must have identification to show the Head Start staff. If an older brother or sister is signing out the child, he/she must be 14 years old or older.**
3. If the teacher does not know the person picking up the child, he/she will ask for photo identification and check the Emergency Contact and Authorized to Pick-up information on the Child Admission Form (HS-122A). **Classroom volunteers will not release children.**
4. The teacher will submit the classroom attendance form to the Head Start center office at the end of each day. Classroom staff will enter attendance into the online database.
5. For Head Start programs in Regional school districts, the Head Start staff will follow the local school district policy for daily attendance records and proper release of children.
6. Early Head Start programs in collaboration with child care centers will follow the center policies and Day Care Minimum Standards on signing children in and out of the program.
7. For all sites, classroom staff will enter attendance into the data management system.

REGION 16 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Head Start/Early Head Start

Subject:	Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection and Enrollment	Section:	ERSEA
Program:	Head Start/Early Head Start	Date Revised:	March 7, 2017
Policy Council Approval:	March 8, 2017		
Governing Body Approval:	June 30, 2017		

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part(s): 1302.12(a)-(k); 1302.13; 1302.14; 1302.15

Policy:

Region 16 Education Service Center, Head Start/Early Head Start will train all governing body, policy council, management, and staff who determine eligibility on applicable federal regulations and program policies and procedures. Staff will conduct an in-person interview to determine, verify and document eligibility. The program will recruit children with the greatest need including children with significant disabilities and other vulnerable children, including homeless and children in foster care.

The program will annually establish selection criteria that weigh the prioritization of selection of participants, based on the community needs identified in the community assessment and including family income, whether the child is homeless, the child is in foster care, the child's age, whether the child is eligible for special education and other related services or early intervention services. The program will maintain funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible.

Procedure:

Eligibility

1. Staff members who interview parents and/or determine eligibility must complete annual training. Newly hired staff members who interview parents and/or determine eligibility must complete training within 90 days of hire and annually thereafter. Newly hired management staff must complete training within 90 days of hire. Newly elected ESC board or policy council members must complete training within 180 days of the beginning of their term.
2. The training will include:
 - how to collect complete and accurate eligibility information from families and third party sources;
 - strategies for treating families with dignity and respect and for dealing with possible issues of domestic violence, stigma, and privacy; and
 - an explanation of the actions taken against staff, families, or participants who intentionally attempt to provide or provide false information.
3. During registration, staff members will complete an application by interviewing the parents face to face. Staff, families, or participants who intentionally attempt to provide or provide false information will face appropriate administrative action which may include termination from the program.

An application will be processed when documentation of child's date of birth and income, TANF, SSI, foster status, or homeless status (as applicable) are submitted and filed with the application. Eligibility documents will be kept for each participant. Ongoing records of eligibility training for staff will also be filed.

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection and Enrollment

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Recruitment

1. Recruitment training for Head Start/Early Head Start staff members will be offered in the spring. Posters, flyers, and brochures will be given to staff for each site.
2. Each site will be encouraged to set a registration day in the spring. Head Start/Early Head Start staff members will complete an application for each interested family.
3. The following media will be used continually to recruit eligible children: posters, flyers, brochures, newsletters, banners, signs, public service announcements, billboards, news releases, and/or door-to-door canvassing. A Head Start administrator must approve all media prior to broadcast, posting, or distribution.
4. Parents and community representatives will be asked to assist in the recruitment effort at sites that are not fully enrolled.
5. Head Start/Early Head Start will collaborate with agencies that serve children with disabilities and other vulnerable children including homeless and foster care.
6. Application information will be entered in the data management system.

Selection

1. Priority lists of eligible children with completed applications will be ranked by need.
2. Children in greatest need will be based on points with the larger number of points indicating greater need.
3. Priority lists will be used to fill full day classes first.

Points for all Head Start/Early Head Start sites:

Eligible for special education or early intervention services	100
Child is homeless/foster	100
Parent attending Jr., Middle, or High School	75
Parent is below 21 years of age	60
More than \$10,000 below poverty/TANF/SSI	60
Between \$10,000 and \$5,001 below poverty	50
Between \$5,000 and \$0 below poverty	40
Parents working/college or trade school more than 20 hours per week	40
Parents working/college or trade school less than 20 hours per week	20
Child Protective Services/Child welfare referral	20
Between \$0 and \$5,000 above poverty	10
Enrolled prior year and met eligibility criteria	10
Child lives in a single parent family	10
Sibling is enrolled in HS/EHS program	10
Family is identified in the Migrant Education Program	10
Parent is on active duty in the military	10
HS child/EHS parent's primary language is not English	5
Staff recommendation based on medical/special needs	5
Between \$5,001 and \$10,000 above poverty	5

Enrollment

1. At least 10% of the enrollment slots will be made available for children with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, by the State or local agency providing services under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
2. For Head Start classes only: By June 30 enrollment slots will be filled up to 100% per the need-based ranking on the priority list. If a classroom for four-year-old children does not have enough eligible four-year-olds by June 30 to fill up to 100% of enrollment slots, eligible three-year-old children will not be placed in the open enrollment slots until the middle of August. (*See item 9 below*). Sites may request that three-year-old children be placed in open enrollment slots before August, if the site has completed applications on all four-year-old children and there are no additional eligible four-year-old.
3. Children will be enrolled in order of greatest need from the priority list. Any enrollment exception from the priority list requires detailed documentation and an approval from the data management administrative assistant.
4. Skipping a student with disabilities on the priority list requires detailed documentation and an approval from the Director of Direct Services.
5. Parents will be notified of the enrollment decisions by the appropriate staff at schools, childcare center partners, or Region 16 Head Start/Early Head Start centers.
6. As vacancies occur during the year, enrollment slots will be filled from the waiting list as soon as possible. The program will make effort to maintain enrollment of eligible children for the following year.
7. The first day a child attends class will be considered the entry date for the center-based option. The first home visit will be considered the entry date for the home-based option.
8. A child must be three years of age as of September 1, of the current school year to be enrolled in a classroom for three-year-old children. Exceptions in Amarillo include children transitioning from Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) or from Early Head Start.
9. A child must be four years of age as of September 1, to be enrolled as a four-year-old child in a classroom for four-year-old children. Classrooms for four-year-old children may take three-year-old children after all eligible four-year-children have been enrolled. A child must be three years of age as of September 1, to be enrolled in a classroom for four-year-old.
10. Since kindergarten is available in all Texas public schools, children who turn five on or before September 1 will not be enrolled in Head Start. Due to regulations in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, programs do **not** have flexibility to enroll children who are old enough to attend kindergarten in their school districts. If the child has an IEP and the ARD recommends the child attend another year of preschool, the child may attend. Principal must be notified of such recommendations.

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11. For Head Start, a child remains income-eligible through the current enrollment year and the immediately succeeding enrollment year. A Head Start child who is enrolled as over income must submit new income information with a new application to be considered for enrollment the following year. For Early Head Start a child remains income-eligible from the current enrollment through transition out of the Early Head Start program. Early Head Start children are not automatically eligible for Head Start and must submit new income information with a new application to be considered for enrollment into Head Start.
12. After all income-eligible and categorically-eligible children have been offered an open enrollment slot, additional open enrollment slots may be offered to families above the poverty guidelines. Up to 35% of the funded enrollment may be children who are between 100% and 130% of poverty. The 100% -130% of poverty will not be accepted until August to ensure only eligible children are accepted first. Up to 10% of the funded enrollment may be children who are above 130% of poverty. Children above 130% of poverty will be accepted after all eligible and the 100-130% enrolled, with the exception of children with disabilities. All children will be ranked by the same system as described above.
13. The Director of Direct Services may reserve one or more enrollment slots for pregnant women, children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care when a vacancy occurs. No more than three percent of a program's funded enrollment slots may be reserved. If the reserved slot is not filled within 30 days, the enrollment slot becomes vacant.

REGION 16 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Head Start/Early Head Start

Subject: Suspension and Expulsion

Section: ERSEA

Program: Head Start/Early Head Start

Date Revised: November 30, 2016

Policy Council Approval: January 25, 2017

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part(s): 1302.17

Policy:

Region 16 Education Service Center, Head Start/Early Head Start will prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension and will not expel or withdraw a child from the program because of a child's behavior.

Procedure: Suspension and expulsion are prohibited unless the child's persistent and serious challenging behavior becomes a safety issue for the child or other enrolled children.

Suspension:

A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. The following steps will be taken to determine if a suspension is necessary.

1. The Student Success Team includes education, disabilities, health, behavior, and family services staff. The team will engage with the parents or guardians and utilize appropriate community resources as needed to determine that there is no other reasonable option that is appropriate.
2. If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary by the Student Success Team and all other parties; parents, teachers and/or community resources such as counselors or mental health providers, the team will continue to provide appropriate services. The team will determine the length of time of the suspension.
3. A written plan of action and support will be written and documented by the Behavioral Specialist.
4. The Behavioral Specialist will provide follow up through home visits or direct contact with the parents and child. If needed, a referral for services with the parent's consent, which may include mental health services, ECI or a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA will be processed.

The Behavioral Specialist will ensure that continued support services are being provided to the parents and child in order to reengage the child back to the classroom.

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Expulsion:

When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, the following steps will take place.

1. The Student Success Team will explore and document all possible steps taken to address such problems and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program.
2. The Behavior Specialist will follow up to ensure the appropriate services are provided to the child and family.
3. If an IFSP or IEP has been completed, the disabilities staff will collaborate, with parental consent, with the responsible agency to ensure the child is receiving the needed services.
4. If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the disabilities staff will collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.
5. If, after the program has explored and documented all possible steps taken to address such problems in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for IDEA (if applicable), and the Student Success Team, and it is determined that the child's continued enrollment presents a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines that the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program will work with agencies to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

**Region 16 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
Head Start/Early Head Start**

Subject:	Transfers	Section:	ERSEA
Program:	Head Start/Early Head Start	Date Revised:	January 9, 2017
Policy Council Approval:	January 25, 2017		

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part(s): 1302. Subpart A

Policy:

To maintain consistent and efficient services to families in the Head Start/Early Head Start program, a transfer procedure will be followed when a child needs to transfer between centers or program options.

Procedure:

1. Upon parent's notification of the need to transfer a Head Start/Early Head Start child to another center or program option, the current administrative assistant or family services staff will contact the receiving administrative assistant to confirm center or other program option openings. The child will be placed on the waiting list if there are no available openings.
2. The current administrative assistant or family services staff will inform the parent of available openings at the new center or home base option and obtain the parent's preference.
3. The current administrative assistant or family services staff will email the receiving administrative assistant to inform her of the parent's preference. Transfer students will be ranked according to the Region 16 ESC Head Start/Early Head Start point system with receiving center's wait list to determine timeline for admittance.
4. The current administrative assistant or family services staff will email the current teacher to inform them that the child is transferring.
5. Staff will give the current administrative assistant the appropriate child documents.
6. The current administrative assistant will complete the withdrawal/transfer information on the data management system.
7. The current administrative assistant will send the appropriate child documents to the receiving center.
8. The current administrative assistant will e-mail the withdrawal/transfer notice to appropriate staff.
9. The receiving administrative assistant will enter the enrollment information into the data management system and disperse child documents to appropriate staff.
10. The receiving administrative assistant will email the enrollment/transfer notice to the appropriate staff.