

**TRI-COUNTY COMMUNITY COUNCIL, INC.  
HEAD START**

**ERSEA PLAN**

(ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE)

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**Attendance & Participation**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE 1305.8:** The Head Start program routinely monitors attendance and absenteeism.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** Families whose children are absent from the program will receive appropriate family support. All efforts must be made and documented to encourage regular attendance. Staff needs to be sensitive to circumstances that may influence child's regular attendance such as: illness, family problems, or death of a family member and reasons need to be well documented in family file.

If non-excused absenteeism persists the child's placement is reconsidered and child may be placed back on the waiting list until parents decide they would like their child to return to the program when an opening occurs. In the event of a vacancy, a child who has the greatest need for the program will fill the position.

**APPROACH:**

1. The arrival/departure and attendance policy is explained to the family when the child enters the program and is outlined further in the Parent Handbook.
2. If the average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85 percent during the month, the program will analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis must include a study of child's absences, reasons for absences, and number of consecutive absences.
3. If the absences are a result of illness or are excused absences for other reasons, no special action is required. For all children with three (3) or more consecutive non-excused absences the Family Service Worker will initiate appropriate family support procedures. This must include home visits or other direct contact with the parent. Staff will remain sensitive to any special family circumstances, and the program staff will document all contacts.
4. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and all efforts to work with the family have been well documented the case may be presented to the Head Start Director for consideration of dropping the child from the program. If it is not feasible to include the child in an available program option; the child's slot is considered an enrollment vacancy for a child with a greater need for Head Start services. If the absences are result from other factors, the Family Service Worker will initiate appropriate family support procedures.
5. Family support procedures include but are not limited to: a variety of communication methods such as phone contact, home visits, face to face meeting, and letters via manual delivery.
6. Attendance will be reported to the administration office no later than 12:00 p.m. each morning. Absences will be reviewed daily and a report sent to the Family Services Coordinator monthly, documenting family support procedures.

**Evidence of compliance:** Parent Handbook, family file, waiting list, family service workers monthly report, daily attendance forms.

**Staff responsibility:** Family Service Worker, Family Services Coordinator, Center Coordinator.

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**Recruitment of children**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE** 1305.5: The program enrolls those children in the most need of Head Start services and has an active recruitment process designed to inform families of Head Start eligible children of the available services while encouraging the families to apply for admission into the program.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** Head Start staff will make every effort to recruit eligible families into the Head Start program. Recruitment is an on-going process but prior to the beginning of enrollment year Head Start staff must solicit applications from as many Head Start eligible families as possible.

**APPROACH:**

1. Head Start staff must obtain a number of applications during the recruitment process prior to the beginning of the enrollment year that exceeds the number of anticipated enrollment openings to ensure the selection of children with the greatest need.
2. The Head Start recruitment process includes a variety of methods utilized to locate eligible Head Start families such as flyers, public service announcements, and involvement in community activities.
3. The recruitment process is ongoing. The Head Start recruitment process includes canvassing the local community where families may meet Head Start income guidelines.
4. A waiting list is maintained prioritizing the children with the greatest need.
5. Community partners provide families with information about Head Start and referrals to Head Start when applicable.
6. Head Start parents are encouraged to tell their friends about the program.
7. Head Start staff must assist families in filling out the application form to assure all information needed for selection is completed.
8. Children with disabilities should be actively recruited.

**Evidence of compliance:** Flyers, signs, public service announcements, interviews with parents, referrals, waiting list, parent meeting minutes.

**Staff responsibility:** All Head Start Staff

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**Enrollment and Re-enrollment**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE 1305.7:** Each child enrolled in a Head Start program, except those enrolled in a migrant program, must be allowed to remain in Head Start until kindergarten or first grade is available for the child in the child's community, except that the Head Start program may choose not to enroll a child when there are compelling reasons for the child not to remain in Head Start, such as there is a change in the child's family income and there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** Children receive the greatest benefit from the Head Start program by remaining enrolled until eligible for kindergarten.

**APPROACH:**

1. If a child is found income eligible and is participating in the Head Start program, he or she remains income eligible through that enrollment year and the immediate succeeding enrollment year.
2. An over income child enrolled in Head Start is allowed to remain in Head Start until kindergarten is available if there is not a child with a greater need.
3. Head Start must maintain its funded enrollment level. When a vacancy is determined, Head Start must fill the vacancy within 30 calendar days. Head Start may elect not to fill a vacancy when 60 calendar days or fewer remain in the program's enrollment year.
4. The program may choose not to re-enroll a child when there is significant change in the family's income and there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services.

**Evidence of compliance:** Head Start application and criteria sheet.

**Staff responsibility:** Family Service Coordinator, Center Coordinator, Family Service Worker.

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**Selection Process**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE 1305.6:** The Head Start program has a formal process for selection of children.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** Children who have the greatest need for Head Start services will be selected for enrollment into the program.

**APPROACH:**

1. A Priority Criteria Selection process is used for selecting children with the greatest need into the Head Start program. This selection process takes into consideration the income of the family, age of the child, suspected or identified disabilities, family structure and social service needs of the child.
2. The child's application and eligibility priority criteria information is processed and the selection committee meets to accept eligible children.
3. Additional eligibility criteria points are given towards selection of children whose parents suspect their child to have a disability or when the child has a diagnosed disability.
4. At least 10% of the total number of enrollment opportunities will be made available to children with disabilities or who meet the definition of children with disabilities in Sec. 1305.2 (a).
4. Throughout the year, Head Start flyers and public service announcements encourage the recruitment of children including those with disabilities.
5. Eligible children enter the program when a vacancy occurs from an ongoing waiting list that is maintained by Family Service Coordinator or designated staff member.
6. Eligible children enter the program within 30 days of a vacancy to ensure funded enrollment is maintained.

**Evidence of compliance:** Policy Council minutes, Children's application and criteria forms, Flyers, Newspaper ads and signs.

**Staff Responsibility:** Family Service Coordinator, Center Coordinator, Family Service Worker, all staff.

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**Age of Children and Family Income Eligibility**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE 1305.4:** The program maintains 100% of children to be eligible by age and at least 90% to be at or below the 100% federal poverty guidelines.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** Children with the greatest need will receive Head Start services.

**APPROACH:**

1. All children enrolled in Head Start are at least three years old and not over five years old by September 1st, of the new school year. The child's birth certificate is the documentation used to verify child's age.
2. To ensure that at least 10% of the programs total enrollment are children with disabilities and at least 90% of the children enrolled in Head Start are from low-income families and that less than 10% of the enrolled children are from families that exceed the low-income guidelines, but have met the other criteria and would benefit from Head Start services. The program verifies the family's income before determining a child is eligible to participate in the program in the following manner:
  - The family completes a Head Start application and documents the number of adults and children in the family.
  - The family must provide paycheck stubs, income tax returns for the previous year, or other means to verify income. Income includes child support when applicable.
  - During the application process the income is calculated for a 12-month period to determine eligibility as indicated by Federal Income Guidelines. Families receiving public assistance, AFDC, TANF, or SSI, are considered low-income families for determining eligibility even if income is greater than the federal guidelines.
  - At the time of application the parent/legal guardian signs the application verifying that all information is true and correct.
  - A signed statement by one Head Start employee must be maintained to indicate all enrollment documents were examined and income verification was made.

**Evidence of compliance:** Child's application, criteria sheet, proof of income and child's birth certificate.

**Staff responsibility:** Family Services Coordinator, Center Coordinator, Family Service Worker.

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**Determining Community Strengths and Needs**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE 1305.3:** The Head Start Agency must conduct a Community Assessment every three (3) years.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** The Community Assessment will include a collection and analysis of information which will outline the needs of the children and families who will be considered for recruitment and selection into the Head Start program.

**APPROACH:**

1. The Community Assessment will include a demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families.
2. The Community Assessment will include information on other child developmental programs serving Head Start eligible children and the approximate number of children being served.
3. The Community Assessment will include an estimated number of children with disabilities under the age of four (4) residing in the area.
4. The Community Assessment will include data on education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of the families.
5. The Community Assessment will include community resources that could be used to address the needs of the family.
6. The Community Assessment is used to determine the program's philosophy and long & short term goals.
7. The Community Assessment is used to determine what component services are needed most and options for implementation.
8. The Community Assessment is used to determine appropriate locations for centers.
9. The Community Assessment is conducted every three (3) years with reviews and updates completed periodically in the two years following completion of the assessment.

**Evidence of compliance:** Community Assessment and Updated Material.

**Staff responsibility:** Family Services Coordinator, All Staff.



