

HEAD START COMMUNITY PROGRAM OF MORRIS COUNTY, INC.

TRANSITION POLICY AND PLAN

Vision Statement

Head Start Community Program of Morris County, in partnership with parents, encourages all of its children to develop a love and enthusiasm for learning. This yields substantial developmental gains. Children are eager to go to school, happy and industrious in their learning, in large part due to the strong parent-school partnership formed at Head Start. A carefully planned transition and monitoring program coordinates the structures and services successful at Early Head Start and Head Start with those of the receiving local education associations so that children continue to find learning challenging and productive and parents continue to be an integral part of their child's progress.

The Head Start Community Program of Morris County will work directly with Early Head Start and Head Start staff, parents, Early Intervention, public schools, and local education agencies to ensure smooth transitions beginning with Early Head Start pregnant women through the Early Head Start home-based and center-based programs, the Head Start center-based program, and into Kindergarten.

1304.41(c) (1)

(c) Transition Services

(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Early Head Start or Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school, a Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act preschool program, or other child care settings. These procedures must include:

1304.41(c) (1)(i)

Coordinating with the schools or other agencies to ensure that individual Early Head Start or Head Start children's relevant records are transferred to the school or next placement in which a child will enroll or from earlier placements to Early Head Start or Head Start;

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

Parents of children entering Early Head Start or Head Start will be asked for children's records from any previous placement. These records will become part of the child's Head Start records. Children's relevant records will be transferred from Early Head Start to Head Start or another childcare program and from Head Start to the public schools or other education agencies.

Parents of children going into Kindergarten will receive a copy of their child's immunization record and be informed of the physical examinations and immunizations their child will need for Kindergarten registration. Parents will receive a Health Summary Report on their child in the spring. Parents will play an active role in forwarding documents to their child's school by signing an updated Release of Information Authorization form in January. Parents must sign release of information forms prior to any transfer of individual child health records and progress reports by Head Start to any other school or agency.

1304.41(c) (1)(ii)

Outreach to encourage communication between Early Head Start or Head Start staff and their counterparts in the schools and other childcare settings including principals, teachers, social workers and health staff to facilitate continuity of programming;

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

Principals, Kindergarten teachers, social workers and health staff from the schools and other childcare settings will be invited to come to Head Start once a year to meet our staff. Early Head Start staff and Head Start staff will meet annually during an in-service day.

1304.41(c) (1)(iii)

Initiating meetings involving Head Start teachers and parents and Kindergarten or elementary school teachers to discuss the development, progress and abilities of individual children; and

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

Head Start teachers schedule end-of-year meetings with each child's parent(s) to report on each child's progress and individual needs as s/he transitions to Kindergarten. Progress reports are given to parents and parents are encouraged to share their child's progress report with the child's Kindergarten teacher. Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings are held to include the child's parent, teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, and members of the district child study team (CST) to discuss individual needs of students receiving special education and related services.

1304.41(c) (1)(iv)

Initiating joint transition related training for Early Head Start or Head Start staff and school or other child development staff.

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

Head Start and Early Head Start staff members regularly participate in workshops and training sessions incorporating all aspects of child development. Written transition strategies are provided for staff. An invitation to these trainings is sent to local child development partners.

1304.41(c) (2)

To ensure the most appropriate placement services following participation in Early Head Start, transition planning must be undertaken for each child and family at least six months prior to the child's third birthday. The process must take into account: the child's health status and developmental level, progress made by the child and family while in Early Head Start, current and changing family circumstances, and the availability of Head Start and other child development or child care services in the community. As appropriate, a child may remain in Early Head Start following his or her third birthday, for additional months until he or she can transition into Head Start or another program.

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

- 1) At age 2 ½ the Family Advocate will give the parent(s) a Head Start application and any other necessary transition documents. The Family Advocate will meet with the parent(s) and assist them with completing the application package. The application will be screened by Social Services.
- 2) The Early Head Start teacher, in partnership with the child's family, will complete the Early Head Start Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) and the appropriate Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), which will be shared at the case management meeting. The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE are research-based questionnaires designed to help parents check their child's development, and results can be used to help parents talk with pediatricians, teachers or other professionals about their child's progress. The ITP and ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE will be transferred to the child's Head Start teacher when the child is enrolled. The Head Start Family Advocate will conduct the intake.
- 3) If the family is income eligible when an opening occurs:
 - The Disabilities Coordinator will schedule a case management meeting. The meeting will include the child's Early Head Start teacher, the Head Start teacher, the Early Head Start and Head Start Family Advocate, the Education Manager, Health Coordinator (as needed), and the Disabilities Coordinator. They will discuss whether the child is developmentally ready to transition and the best way to transition the child.

- The Family Advocate will begin the intake process.
- The Head Start teacher will make a home visit.
- The child and parent will be given two or more opportunities to visit the Head Start classroom as needed.
- During the first week of enrollment, the parent may accompany the child and the child may attend for less than the full day.
- All Early Head Start files will be transferred to Head Start.

4) If the family is not income eligible:

- The Family Advocate will refer them to other local childcare centers; preferably those that have a sliding fee scale.
- The Early Head Start teacher will complete the Early Head Start Individualized Transition Plan and the ASQ and ASQ-SE, which will be given to the parent(s) to pass along to the new placement.
- All of the child's health and other records will be given to the parent(s) so they may give them to the new placement.

5) If there are no openings by the child's third birthday, the Family Advocate will refer the family to other local childcare centers, preferably those that have a sliding fee scale.

6) The child may stay in Early Head Start until an appropriate placement is found or until September of the coming school year.

1304.41(c) (3) See 45 CFR 1304.40(h)

1304.40(h) (1-4)

(h) Parent involvement in transition activities.

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must assist parents in becoming their children's advocate as they transition both into Early Head Start or Head Start from the home or other child care setting, and from Head Start to elementary school, a Title 1 or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act preschool program or a child care setting.**

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

Early Head Start and Head Start staff provide families with information about the importance of parent involvement at the time of registration. Early Head Start and Head Start teachers and family advocates conduct home visits during the weeks before school begins in order to develop a rapport with the child and family. Parents are invited to participate in all levels of transition. Pregnant women are invited to a home-based socialization group. Home visitors visit the center-based classrooms with the child and his/her parent(s) for a period of time before the child transitions into the center-based option. During the first week of school, the parents and/or home visitor may stay with the child for part of the day to help the child transition into the classroom. The home visitor may visit the classroom on subsequent days until the child feels comfortable in the classroom.

Early Head Start children and children transitioning from home or other child care settings will visit Head Start classrooms for an individualized number of days prior to entering Head Start to ensure the child adapts to his/her new classroom. Parents receive Head Start information before the child enters Head Start via a Parent Orientation and home visits by teachers and family advocates.

Meetings are held for Head Start parents of all children who will enter Kindergarten in September. The parent is given information on Kindergarten round up dates and documents needed for Kindergarten registration. Assistance is offered to parents in completing paperwork for Kindergarten registration. A review of the prerequisite skills is discussed with parents so that they may continue working with their child prior to entering Kindergarten. A question and answer session is an important component of the meeting. Family advocates follow up with families to confirm the completion of Kindergarten registration.

- (2) Staff must work to prepare parents to become their children’s advocate through transition periods by providing that, at a minimum, a staff-parent meeting is held toward the end of the child’s participation in the program to enable parents to understand the child’s progress while enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start.**

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

This transition process is ongoing throughout the year. Twice a year, at the middle and end of the school year, parents meet with their child’s teacher to review their child’s progress and to discuss their child’s strengths and areas for improvement. The child’s portfolio is shared with the parent. The Early Head Start portfolio consists of the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE, Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment documentation, which is completed four times per year, and samples of their child’s artwork and writings. The Head Start portfolio consists of the Brigance developmental screening results, “Picture of Me” (created three times per year), Teaching Strategies GOLD (completed three times per year), and samples of their child’s artwork and writings. Parents are encouraged to share their child’s portfolio with the Kindergarten teacher in September.

In a more general way, parents learn about child development and their child’s education at Head Start during monthly parent curriculum meetings and from Head Start newsletter articles.

Head Start parents are provided with activities for their child to complete over the summer so that each child may continue make progress.

- (3) To promote the continued involvement of Head Start Parents in the education and development of their children upon transition to school, grantee and delegate agencies must:**
 - (i) Provide education and training to parents to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the school setting; and**
 - (ii) Assist parents to communicate with teachers and other school personnel so those parents can participate in decisions related to their children’s education.**

WHAT OUR POLICY MEANS FOR FAMILIES

Head Start promotes active parental involvement in all aspects of their child's education. Prior to entering Kindergarten, parents are provided information on transitioning to Kindergarten, parental rights and responsibilities, and the pamphlet, *Parental Rights in Special Education* (PRISE). Parent meetings are held in the spring of each year. The meetings include discussions on a parent's right to access their child's school records and understanding that decisions about their child cannot occur without their consent.

Parents of students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) receive the pamphlet, *Parental Rights in Special Education* (PRISE) by their child's school district case manager.