

## **HEAD START COMMUNITY PROGRAM OF MORRIS COUNTY, INC.**

### **TRANSITION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Transition Policy**

This policy and procedures detail the strategies and practices implemented to support successful transitions for children and their families before, during and after transition. Transition is an ongoing process to ensure that children and families will have appropriate information and support whenever there is a change in the child's placement. Transition activities may occur when children enter Early Head Start or Head Start, change placements within Head Start Community Program of Morris County (HSCPMC), or move to another preschool placement or kindergarten. This policy details the planning and support process that takes place with the transition team and direct service staff, which is communicated to all collaborating parties, including the family. Through this process, parents are supported in their involvement in and advocacy for the education and development of their child.

#### **Procedures**

##### **Transition to Kindergarten**

- Transition meeting occurs with officials of local school district of primary population served in spring of each school year.
  - Parents attend meeting and are supported with registration process and facilitation of necessary documents.
  - Appointments are facilitated for registration in school district.
- For districts with lower sending populations, individualized contact is made by HS Social Services office to family's sending school district. Document facilitation includes registration information and proof of residency requirements.
- Throughout transition process, confidentiality of family documents is respected in accordance with *Head Start Confidentiality Policy*.

- Children's records are released to parents upon request.
- Where school district collaborations are applicable, children's academic records will be made available as appropriate.
- By March 30 of the school year, Family Advocates will confirm each kindergarten bound child's home school and school district and note in child's file.
- In accordance with the needs of individual children, the Education/Special Services team will meet with parents of children with identified special needs or IEPs during the school year. Parents will be encouraged to explore available services for kindergarten and to be their child's advocate in the process.
- The Education/Special Services team will meet throughout the school year with school district child study team personnel to exchange information and individualize transition plans for children with identified special needs or IEPs.

**Transition Within Head Start – Transfer (Includes HB to CB, EHS to HS, HS to HS)**

- The *EHS and Head Start Individualized Transition Plan* (ITP) document is the primary tool for sharing information about the child's growth and development, as well as family information, to ensure effective transitions within the program. The various staff members involved in serving the family will work together to share and note information via the ITP. Each member of the transition team signs and dates the ITP document upon completion of their section.
- For transitions from Early Start to Head Start, transition planning for each child and family begins at least six months prior to each child's third birthday. Transitions into Head Start or another program occur as soon after the child's third birthday but permit the child to remain in current placement as necessary for an appropriate transition which takes into account the child's developmental level and health and disability status, as well as current and changing family circumstances.
- Steps in Transition Process:
  - The ITP is generated by the child's designated Family Advocate upon notice of planned transition. Family Advocate is responsible for coordinating internal data management (via Child Plus system) and

printing updated documents (attendance scanning bar code list, sign-in sheets, allergies list, class list, class emergency contact list and individual family contact information form) necessary for the receiving classroom.

- The Family Advocate submits the ITP to the Education Manager, who will direct the ITP to the current teaching staff member.
- The current teaching staff member annotates child's educational and developmental information and returns the ITP to the Education Manager, along with the child's classroom files. The Education Manager directs the ITP to the receiving teaching staff member.
- The receiving teaching staff member reviews the child's information and classroom files and develops the transition plan timeline, completing this section of the ITP. The ITP is then returned to the Education Manager.
- The Special Services/Mental Health Coordinator receives the ITP and completes any information relative to identified special educational or mental health needs, including a copy of child's IEP/IFSP as applicable. Timelines for early developmental screenings (as applicable, ASQ, ASQ-SE, Brigance III) are checked and noted to ensure compliance with requirements.
- The Health Coordinator receives the ITP and completes information pertaining to health needs, allergies, medication, or dietary restrictions. The Health Coordinator shares transition status and appropriate dietary information with nutrition and dietary staff.
- The Family Advocate receives the ITP and meets with the child's parent/family to share information about the transition process and ensure that the needs of the family are fully addressed in collaborative fashion.
- Copies of fully completed ITP are distributed by the Family Services Manager to the receiving teaching staff member for inclusion in the child's classroom file; and to the Education Manager, who will coordinate facilitation of child's transition schedule with the transitioning teaching staff member.

### **Transition From Outside agency to Early Head Start or Head Start**

- A first contact is initiated by the outside agency to the Family Services Manager to make arrangements for the child and family to tour the program with the Family Services Manager and the Education Manager.
- At a scheduled transition meeting, outside agency transition staff provide appropriate developmental, health, mental health and family information, in collaboration with the child's parents.
- After the transition meeting occurs, the family's intake and enrollment process mirrors the intake and enrollment process for children and families entering the program.