

NESD HEAD START RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY:

The NESD Head Start Program, Inc. shall establish and maintain an outreach and recruitment process, which systematically ensures enrollment for funded Center Base and Home Base placements regardless of race, sex, creed, color, disability, age or nation origin. There is no fee for families to participate in Head Start.

RECRUITMENT PLAN PROCEDURES:

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1. Identify the demographic data and needs of the community to determine areas to be targeted for recruitment.
 - a. Review current community needs to determine target areas.
 - b. Review prior year's areas where the Program provided rural transportation.
 - c. Analyze above information and identify specific and general areas for recruitment.

2. The recruitment plan includes the following goals and also to ensure that all areas have an adequate number of enrollees on the waiting list.
 - a. Contact all school districts within the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. area. A letter, along with a Program brochure and Enrollment Policy, will be sent to all School Superintendents informing them of Head Start recruitment for the coming year and requesting lists of age-eligible children. (January)
 - b. Determine the quantity of Program brochures needed and submit an order. (January)
 - c. A News Release will be sent to all newspapers in the thirteen counties served by the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. This release will inform the public of Head Start services and the start of recruitment for the coming year. (January/February)
 - d. A request will be made to the State Collaboration Office for Department of Social Services lists of parents of three and four year olds in the thirteen counties served by the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. (January)
 - e. Proceed with Plan for Active Recruitment

PLAN FOR ACTIVE RECRUITMENT

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1. After January 1, applications for enrollment for the upcoming school year will be accepted.
2. Starting in February and continuing monthly, parent-meeting agendas will include the item: "Recruitment of children for the following year." Current Head Start parents are good sources of names for recruitment, i.e. neighbors, relatives, friends, church and club members, etc.
3. February and March: Personal contact will be made with local Department of Social Service agency supervisors, especially Offices of Child Protection; Public Health and WIC offices; pediatricians' offices and at local agency meetings. Program brochures will be given out to above agency people and placed for distribution in local libraries, courthouses, and other public places.
4. The Family Services Coordinators will attend Public School preschool screenings held in their area in order to contact parents who may have children with disabilities.
5. The previous year's recruitment lists and current Kid List will be reviewed to identify age-eligible children for Head Start. (February and March)
6. Open Houses/Application Days will be scheduled at Center and Home Base Units. Open Houses/Application Days will start to be scheduled February through May.
7. A postcard invitation will be sent to prospective parents approximately ten days to two weeks before the date of the Open House. The postcard will include basic information on the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. such as date, time, place of the Open House, and documents needed for income verification on an application for enrollment.
8. In July, a request will be made for a summer (follow-up) from Department of Social Services with a list of families with three and/or four-year-old children. Family Services Coordinators will use this list to contact families who had not been contacted in the Spring.

PUBLICITY

1. Head Start staff and parents will promote public awareness of Head Start through local community activities throughout the year.
2. Recruitment and Open House/Application Day posters will be designed, copied and distributed by Head Start staff and parents starting in January.

Social Service Agencies

Local Schools

Doctor/Dentist Offices

Community Centers, Grocery Stores, Retail Stores

Low-Income Housing Offices

3. Press and media releases: Head Start Staff will work with Parents to get articles in local newspapers, re: Open House and other happenings; Public Service Announcements on local radio and television stations and bulletin boards. Staff and parents are encouraged to speak on local radio shows about Head Start in the community. Announcements will be put on local access TV channels, wherever available. Recruitment announcements will be put in the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. Newsletter (March-May) and other agency newsletters (Extension Service, Foster Parents, Elementary Schools, etc.) will be asked to include a Head Start recruitment announcement.
4. Special invitations should be sent to local city and county officials about the Open House, i.e. Mayor, City or County Commissioners, etc. Others receive special invitations to your Open House: School Superintendents, Principals, Kindergarten teachers, Day Cares and Department of Social Services' personnel.
5. Other strategies to promote public awareness of Head Start:
 - a. Restaurant table toppers
 - b. Grocery bag decorations
 - c. Fliers placed in grocery bags
 - d. Store window display of Head Start children's art work and Open House poster-downtown area or mall.

RECRUITMENT - TAKING THE APPLICATION

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To ensure that prospective Head Start parents are: (1) fully informed of Head Start options and operation; (2) assisted in filling out an application for enrollment in the easiest and most cost and time effective way; and, (3) that the most "at-risk" population is recruited, the following active recruitment steps will be followed:

1. After lists of parents of three and four-year-old children have been received from schools and the Department of Social Services, active recruitment will start. Postcard invitations will go out inviting these parents to attend a local Open House/Application Day.
2. Enrollment applications will be taken at the Open House/Application Days. An in-person interview will be conducted with each family. At this time, income will be verified and parents will be given the opportunity to see Head Start in operation and ask questions.
3. A recruitment tracking system will include the following information regarding each family:
 - Parent/Child Name
 - Age of Child
 - Family Address
 - Phone Number
 - Application Status
 - Number of Attempts to Contact Family
 - Referral from Outside Agencies (Disabilities)
4. Family Services will attempt to contact families by phone who did not attend the Open House/Application Day to see if they are interested in Head Start. At that time, a Home Visit will be scheduled or an application will be sent to the interested family.
5. A Home Visit will be made unless, for the parent's convenience, a meeting is scheduled at another location; i.e., parent's place of employment, public building or Head Start Center. An in-person interview in the parent's/guardian's home is best. You get to know the child's parents/guardians, the child to be enrolled, their family environment and documentation needed for the application can more easily be obtained. Income will be verified with the necessary income documentation, i.e. W-2, 1040 Tax Form, Paystubs, Child Support Documents, Foster Care Reimbursement, yearly disability, TANF, or SSI Statement.

6. An application for enrollment will be mailed to the family, at their request, with a follow up made by Family Services.
7. Follow-up will be done in-person to assist families in completing the enrollment application. If an in-person interview cannot be completed, a phone interview will be conducted by Family Services.
8. Special efforts will be made to recruit children with disabilities, children whose families are receiving services from the Department of Social Services, children referred by the Public School and those children indicated by community agencies to be "at risk". Contacts will be made with the following agencies: Family Support Program, Birth to 3, Parents as Teachers. The NESD Head Start Program, Inc. staff will have established contact with other agencies and schools who are already serving children with disabilities. If concerns are noted by the prospective Head Start parent/guardian, staff will inform parent of local preschool screenings and/or the contact person in their local school district.
9. Detailed information will be given to parents who fill out an application for enrollment regarding:
 - a. Mailed notification on the status of their application;
 - b. Date that HS services to children will begin in September.
 - c. Screenings provided - what and when; immunizations needed
 - d. A home visit will be made by the teacher/home visitor before services begin.
 - e. Parent engagement opportunities
 - f. Family Service Coordinators may refer to the sheet entitled: "Information to be shared with Families during Recruitment". (See attached)
10. Ask parents for names of other families that have three and/or four-year-old children that may be eligible for Head Start.
11. Invite parents to visit a Head Start Center or Home Base Group meeting. They are welcome anytime, not just on Open House/Application Day.

OFFICE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

1302.12

1. The NESD Head Start Program, Inc. staff shall provide the necessary information to families inquiring about Head Start in a clear and non-intrusive manner in order to expedite their child's enrollment.
2. If an enrollment application is to be mailed out, the parent's name, address, phone number, child's name, and age will be documented for follow-up.
3. An information letter of what type of information is needed to complete the application and start the enrollment process will also be mailed with the application.
4. The individual will be told when and where enrollment application forms are available (Head Start Centers, Family Services Coordinators, NESD Head Start Website, and the Aberdeen Head Start Office).
5. Persons wanting detailed information about Center Base and Home Base options or needing individual assistance will be referred to the Family Services Manager or Family Services Coordinator in their local area.
6. Walk-in applications will be taken any time during office/business hours throughout the year.

NESD HEAD START PROGRAM SELECTION CRITERIA

1302.14

Age Eligibility

Children who are three and four years old prior to September 1 are eligible for enrollment in the Head Start Program.

Income Eligibility

90% of the children enrolled in the NESD Head Start Program must be from households with gross incomes corresponding to HHS income guidelines.

10% of children enrolled in the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. may be from households with gross incomes exceeding the HHS income guidelines.

Priorities for Enrollment in the NESD Head Start Program:

First - Children with disabilities who are four years old prior to September 1 who are from households with gross incomes corresponding to HHS income guidelines.

Second - Children who are four years old prior to September 1 from households with gross incomes corresponding to HHS income guidelines.

Third - Children with disabilities who are three years old prior to September 1 who are from households with gross incomes corresponding to HHS income guidelines.

Fourth - Children three years old prior to September 1 from households with gross incomes corresponding to HHS income guidelines.

Fifth - Children with disabilities who are three and four years old prior to September 1 from households with gross incomes between 101-130% of the HHS income guidelines may be enrolled only if over-income enrollment does not exceed the additional allowances for the program.

Sixth - Children who are three and four years old prior to September 1 from households with gross incomes between 101-130% of the HHS income guidelines may be enrolled only if over-income enrollment does not exceed the additional allowances for the program.

Seventh - Children four years old prior to September 1 from households with gross incomes exceeding 130% of the HHS income guidelines may be enrolled only if over-income enrollment does not exceed 10% of total enrollment.

Eighth - Children three years old prior to September 1 from households with gross incomes exceeding 130% of the HHS income guidelines may be enrolled only if over-income enrollment does not exceed 10% of total enrollment.

All points are added and taking the highest number first makes the criteria selection process. When point numbers are the same, the application received first has priority. (Applications are dated when received.)

Priority Points

Repeat Children - 2nd year	500
Income Status:	400
Zero Income (All families receiving TANF, SSI, Homeless, or Foster children are automatically income eligible and will be pointed at the zero income level.)	
Qualifying - Meets Poverty Guidelines:	
4 year olds	250
49%-1% Below Poverty Guidelines	240
100%-50% Below Poverty Guidelines	
3 year olds	100
49%-1% Below Poverty Guidelines	90
100%-50% Below Poverty Guidelines	
Over-Income -Above Poverty Guidelines:	
4 year olds	20
101%-130% Above Poverty Guidelines	15
131% or Above Poverty Guidelines	
3 year olds	10
101%-130% Above Poverty Guidelines	5
131% or Above Poverty Guidelines	
Referrals:	
DSS/Child Protection	20
Other Agencies	15
Disabilities - Diagnosed	
IEP	50
Medical	25
Family Factors:	
Head Start Transfer from another program	20
Single Parent	10
Unemployment - primary parent	10
- secondary parent	5
Incarcerated Parent-each parent	5
Education - No High School Diploma, GED	
or in school/college - each parent	5
Non-English Speaking - each parent	5

NOTE: All priority points are added up on each application. Once all applications are entered into the computer an Enrollment Priority Listing is printed out for each unit and children are then selected for enrollment into the program. A waitlist that ranks children according to the program's selection criteria is developed at the beginning of each enrollment year and maintained throughout the year.

Date Approved by Policy Council: January 9, 2018

Date Approved by Grantee Board: January 16, 2018

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

1302.15

The NESD Head Start Program, Inc. shall systematically have in place an enrollment process which ensures that parents fully understand NESD Head Start requirements for enrolling their child and that the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. staff make every effort to accommodate individual family situations and needs which may interfere with their ability to complete requirements.

1. At the time parents call for information about Head Start, they will be told what information they will need to bring with them in order to fill out the enrollment application or have available if the application is taken in their home.
2. Applications received in the mail or brought in, will be put on the Office Assistant's desk.
3. Each application is stamped with the date it is received and given to the Office Manager.
4. The application is then put in the current year file, by unit, for review. (These files are kept in the Office Manager's office).
5. The Office Manager will go over each application adding a fourth page to determine the enrollment and income eligibility of the applicant. A notation will be placed on the application to indicate its status.
6. Such factors as the child's age, disabilities, previous preschool experiences, family situation, and parents' concerns and wishes will be taken into consideration when assigning a child to a Center Base or Home Base option.
7. Applications are then entered into the computer. Once entered into the computer, applications are sorted by unit and income eligibility and put into prospective files.
8. Any application that indicates the Head Start child has disabilities or is over income will be reviewed by the Executive Director, Education & Disabilities Manager, Family Services Manager, and the Office Manager for acceptance into the program.

9. A file is made for each applicant accepted into the program and put in the current unit file.
10. Parents will be informed of their child's enrollment status in July, or as soon during the school year, as a vacancy exists.
11. Follow-up phone calls, letters, and home visits will be made to families whose enrollment applications are incomplete.
12. Enrollment applications will be taken throughout the school year to ensure that classroom vacancies are filled within 30 days and funded enrollment is maintained.

APPLICATIONS FOR REPEAT CHILDREN

1. Family Services Coordinators will make an **initial phone or personal contact** with the repeat family.
 - a. The Family Services Coordinator will explain to the family that they are sending an application home with their child in the book bag or if the parent requests, it will be mailed.
 - b. In Home Base or when Teachers are doing home visits: an application may be taken to the home by the Teacher or Home Visitor and left for the parent to fill out.
 - c. Briefly explain how the application is to be filled out. Repeat child applications do not need to have income verified the second year. Income will only be verified if the family has a three-year-old child they are applying for.
 - d. Ask the parent to either bring in the application themselves or mail it. The Family Services Coordinator may also offer to make a home visit in order to pick up the application. Remind the parents to please call the Family Services Coordinator if they have any questions.
2. The Family Services Coordinator will have a folder at the Centers with applications and a tracking sheet on which the following information should be recorded by the person taking the request or giving out an application:
 - a. Parent(s) and child's name and date of birth
 - b. Street address or directions to home
 - c. Home and/or work or message phone numbers

HEAD START ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1302.12

1. The following guidelines shall be used to determine eligibility:
 - a. Children must be three or four years old before September 1 of each year.
 - b. The family is potentially eligible if receiving public assistance i.e. TANF or SSI. The child is homeless or if the child is in foster care.
 - c. Ninety percent (90%) of enrolled children must come from families whose income is within the annual Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. Ten percent may come from families who do not meet the income guidelines. Ten percent of available slots must be made available to children with disabilities.
 - d. Up to 35% of children enrolled in the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. may be from households with income between 101%-130%.
 - e. Proof of annual income is required to prove income eligibility.
 - ❖ Income may be determined by:
 - Recent Pay Stubs
 - 1040 Tax
 - W-2
 - Court Ordered Child Support
 - Unemployment Statement
 - SSI/Disability Statements
 - Written/Third Party Statement
 - Foster Care Statement
 - TANF Statement
 - Financial Aid Grant/Scholarships
 - Written Third Party Statement

- ❖ Current situation may be taken in the event of recent job loss, illness, divorce, family situation.

- ❖ When a family claims zero income and has no documentation in support of the statement:
 - The family needs to provide a written statement/self-certification that there is no income.
 - The staff person will inquire into the source of the family's basic needs, such as shelter and food. The staff person will provide a signed statement of this inquiry verifying the zero family income. At the Aberdeen Head Start Office, the Office Manager will also sign the application to verify income eligibility.

- f. Up-to-date immunizations are required prior to services.

- g. Any Program staff who intentionally violate Federal and Program eligibility determinations, including enrolling children not eligible to receive Head Start services, will be placed on an Improvement Plan, describing disciplinary action taken, which could possibly include termination of employment, depending on the circumstances reviewed.

2. Procedure for second year eligibility:

- a. If a child is determined eligible for the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. and is a candidate for a second year of enrollment, they will be admitted the next program year regardless of change in income. Children admitted into Head Start with a diagnosed disability and the family is over-income will be admitted a second year whether the child has an active IEP or is over-income. Siblings of an over-income child (with or without disability) are not automatically eligible for Head Start because the family is not income eligible.

- b. Required enrollment forms (for second year enrollment) will be completed prior to the end of the school year. Parents will not be asked to verify their annual income in order to be eligible for the second year in Head Start.

RECRUITMENT AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

1302.14

POLICY:

To systematically recruit age eligible children in the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. area who have a disability.

PROCEDURES:

1. Children with disabilities will be actively recruited through local Child Find, advertisements, referrals from Local Education Agencies, Birth to Three Agencies, Social Services and other agencies working with children with disabilities. Head Start staff members will participate in interagency planning by attending monthly meetings in communities where they are active. The following guidelines shall be used to determine eligibility:
 - a. Child must be three or four years old before September 1 of each year.
 - b. Child must meet the criteria set forth by Head Start and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).
 - c. Proof of annual income is required to prove income eligibility.
 - d. Up-to-date immunizations are required prior to services.

2. The NESD Head Start Program, Inc. will not deny enrollment to any child on the basis of a Disability or chronic health condition or its severity.

WAITING LIST POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1302.14

POLICY:

The NESD Head Start Program, Inc., shall accept applications for enrollment throughout the program year and will maintain a waiting list of eligible children and fill vacancies within 30 days.

PROCEDURES:

1. A waiting list will be established for each Center Base and Home Base Unit. Names will be prioritized according to age of child, family income, special needs of child and/or family, and date the application is received in the office.

Each application is further prioritized according to the selection criteria. This list and the points assigned is reviewed and approved by the NESD Head Start Program, Inc. Policy Council annually. (See Selection Criteria Policy.)

2. Children transferring from one Center Base Unit or Home Base Unit to another are given priority in placement.
3. Only age eligible children with complete applications may be placed on the waiting list.
4. When an opening occurs in a Head Start Unit and there are few or no eligible children on the waiting list, the following shall take place:
 - a. Parents who have not completed the enrollment process shall be notified and encouraged to complete their application.
 - b. Parents who did not apply, but left their name, address and phone number will be contacted to see if they are now interested.
 - c. Recruitment efforts will begin targeting the area(s) with insufficient enrollment and/or waiting lists.

INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH FAMILIES DURING RECRUITMENT

Parents who fill out an application for their child will have the following explained to them:

1. An explanation of how the program works: Head Start is a federally funded child development program for preschool children. We have income guidelines that 90% of the families must meet. Discuss with parent: income verification, age requirements, Center Base and Home Base operation and location of Centers and Home Base areas.

Home Base:

- The role of the Home Visitor
- The role of the parent
- The length of home visits -1 ½ hours, longer for 2 children
- Group socializations: parents volunteering, length of group, how often they meet, etc.
- Parent meetings, officers, business meetings, field trips, etc.
- Parent training

Center Base Program:

- Number of hours and days per week that children attend
- Transportation: meals, daily schedule
- Home visits and Parent/Teacher conferences
- Parent meetings, training, business meeting, length, location, purpose, baby-sitters, etc.

The over-all goal of Head Start: social competency for the child

Discuss the content area of the HS program:

- Early Childhood Development and Health Services
 - Child Health and Developmental Services
 - Education and Early Childhood Development
 - Child Health and Safety
 - Child Nutrition
 - Child Mental Health

- Family and Community Partnerships
 - Family partnerships
 - Community Partnerships
- Program Design and Management
 - Program Governance

2. Applications

- Will be processed, prioritized, and accepted during the Spring and Summer months.
- Parents will be notified by letter if their child has been accepted or put on a waiting list.
- Discuss enrollment policy and priorities

3. Screening of the children

- Time frame
- What is covered? Vision, hearing, height, weight, and developmental screenings.
- Immunization records will be needed before children can start in Head Start-4 doses of DPT/DTaP, 3 doses of OPV or IPV, 1 dose of MMR, and 1 dose Varicella.
- Parents will take part in a Child Health interview and the Family Partnership Agreement with their local Family Services Coordinator.

4. Parent engagement: describe local involvement, Policy Council, State and Regional involvement opportunities

- Volunteering in the classroom
- Volunteering outside of the classroom
- Parent input into curriculum and special classroom activities

5. Policy Council:

- When does PC meet? Second Tuesday of each month
- How can parents be involved? Elected locally
- Reimbursement of expenses- mileage, lunch, and child care stipend

6. In-kind:

- What is it? A local match of 20% of the \$2,580,850.00
- Why is it important?
- How to fill out in-kind forms