

Transition for Children with Special Needs

Head Start Program Performance Standard

§ 1302.70

§ 1302.71

Policy

Community Action Head Start staff are committed to supporting parent(s)/guardian(s) of children with special needs as they transition from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to Kindergarten. Transition planning is addressed in the Evergreen Interagency Agreement with the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D) regarding children with special needs.

Each child who is currently receiving services from Early Intervention (EI) and Early Childhood Special Education services (ECSE) and has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) will receive transition services. In Head Start, children with special needs are assigned to an Early Intervention/Early Childhood Education Specialist (EI/ECES) who serves as the Service Coordinator. Head Start staff are provided the child's Statement of Eligibility, multi-disciplinary team evaluation, and the IFSP.

Transition Process

Transition from Early Head Start to Head Start

- Planning for a transition from EI to ECSE will begin at least six months before the child's third birthday. If a child turns three years old after September 1, the child will continue to receive services in Early Head Start.
- The Service Coordinator schedules an evaluation with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine if the child qualifies for ECSE.
- If the child is determined eligible for ECSE, the Service Coordinator notifies the Disabilities and Mental Health (D&MH) Supervisor and the Teacher/Home Visitor. The Service Coordinator schedules the IFSP meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to which the child's Teacher/Home Visitor is invited to attend.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of Early Head Start children with special needs must submit an application for Head Start including an updated proof of income to determine if they meet enrollment criteria. Children with special needs receive additional selection criteria points on their applications.

Transition from Head Start to Kindergarten

To ensure a smooth transition to Kindergarten, a meeting will be held by the school district and will include the parent(s)/guardian(s), Head Start Teacher, and the ECSE Service Coordinator. The Service Coordinator takes the lead on scheduling this meeting. The receiving school district will determine whether the child meets the criteria for Special Education in K-12 before the child leaves Head Start.

**Community Action Head Start
Washington County, Oregon**

The D&MH Supervisor meets annually with enrollment staff to review and monitor the transition process to ensure that children with special needs make up at least ten percent of Head Start enrollment according to Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

If a child with special needs withdraws from the program or moves out of the service area, Head Start staff will notify the D&MH Supervisor. The D&MH Supervisor will support the staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) by providing information about EI/ECSE and Head Start services in the child's new location.