

When Head Start Develops the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

POLICY:

An Individualized Education Program is developed for each child enrolled in the Head Start program who has been evaluated and found to have a disability.

. This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1308.19

PROCEDURE:

1. When Head Start provides for the evaluation, the multi-disciplinary evaluation team makes the determination whether the child meets the Head Start eligibility criteria. The team assures that the evaluation findings and recommendations, as well as information from the developmental assessment, observations and parent reports, are considered in making the determination whether the child meets Head Start eligibility criteria.
2. Every child receiving services in the Head Start program and who had been evaluated and found to have a disability and in need of special services, must have an IEP before special education and related services are provided to ensure that comprehensive information is used to develop the child's program.
3. If Head Start develops the Individual Education Program (IEP), the IEP takes into account the child's unique needs, strengths, developmental potential and the family strengths and circumstances as well as the child's disabilities. The IEP includes:
 - a. A statement of the child's present level of functioning in the areas of communication status, academic performance, health, vision, hearing and motor abilities, social-emotional, self-help, and cognitive levels of development and the identification of needs in areas requiring specific programming.
 - b. A statement of annual goals, including short term objectives for meeting goals.
 - c. A statement of the specific special education services to be provided to the child and related services necessary for the child to

participate in a Head Start program. This includes services provided by Head Start and services provided by other agencies and non-Head Start professionals.

- d. The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of services.
 - e. A statement of objectives related to the child's disability when they are essential to the child's progress.
4. When Head Start develops the IEP, the team includes:
- a. The Head Start Disability Services Manager or a representative who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education services.
 - b. The child's Teacher or Home visitor.
 - c. One or both of the child's parents or guardians.
 - d. At least one of the professional members of the multidisciplinary team which evaluated the child.
 - e. The LEA representative is invited in writing if Head Start is initiating the request for a meeting.
 - f. Head Start may also invite other individuals at the request of the parents and other individuals at the discretion of Head Start program, including other Head Start staff, particularly those involved due to the nature of the child's disability.
5. A meeting is held at a time convenient for the parents and staff to develop the IEP within thirty calendar days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services. Services are to begin as soon as possible after the development of the IEP.
6. Head Start makes vigorous efforts to involve parents in the IEP process:
- a. Notify parents in writing and, if necessary also verbally or by other appropriate means, of the purpose, persons requested to attend, time and location of the IEP meeting far enough in advance so that there is opportunity for them to participate.

- b. Make every effort to assure that the parents understand the purpose and proceedings and that they are encouraged to provide information about their child and their desires for the child's program.
 - c. Provide, interpreters, if needed, and offer the parents a copy of the IEP, in the parents' language of understanding, after it has been signed.
 - d. Hold the meeting, without the parents only if neither parent can attend, after repeated attempts to establish a date or facilitate their participation, through records of contacts, (i.e. phone calls, letters, home visits or visits to parent's place of work), along with the responses or results.
 - e. Arrange an opportunity to meet the parents to review the results of the meeting and secure their input and signature.
7. Head Start initiates the implementation of the IEP as soon as possible after the IEP meeting by modifying the child's program in accordance with the IEP and arranging for the provision or related services.
8. If a child enters the Head Start program with an IEP completed within two (2) months prior to entry, services are to begin within the first two (2) weeks of program attendance.