

**UTRGV Early Head Start Child Care Partnership
Services for Children with Disabilities
Orientation Guide**

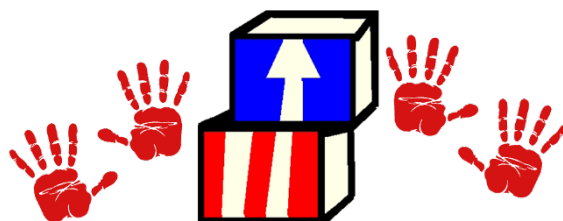




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Services for Children with Disabilities



1302.60 FULL PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

“A program must ensure enrolled children with disabilities, including but not limited to those who are eligible for services under IDEA, and their families receive all applicable program services delivered in the least restrictive possible environment and that they fully participate in all program activities.”

The Early Head Start Program:

- * Screens children to identify any factors that may interfere with a child’s early learning, growth, and development.
- * Conducts ongoing assessments, partners with families to support them as advocates for their children, consults with specialists, as necessary, to help children and families obtain additional services, and take all possible steps to ensure each child's full participation in the program.
- * Ensures the individualized needs of all children with disabilities are met and they have access to and are able to fully participate in the range of activities and services, in the least restricted environment as possible. This includes children that do not qualify for services under IDEA.

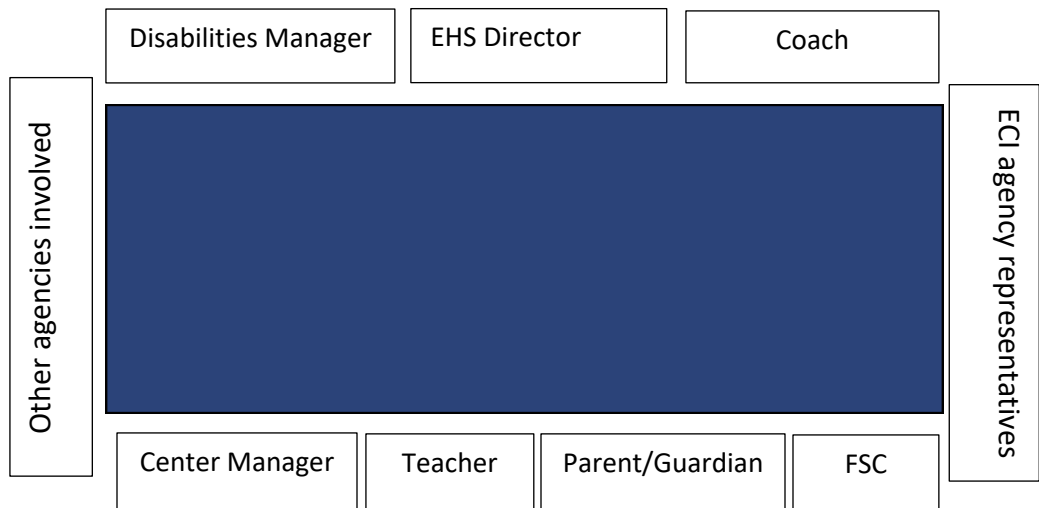


IFSP/IEP

1302.61 Additional services for children.
(c) Additional services for children with an IFSP or IEP. To ensure the individual needs of children eligible for services under IDEA are met, a program must: (1) Work closely with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, the family, and other service partners, as appropriate, to ensure:
(i) Services for a child with disabilities will be planned and delivered as required by their IFSP or IEP, as appropriate.

1302.61 Continued...
(2) Plan and implement the transition services described in subpart G of this part, including at a minimum:
(i) For children with an IFSP who are transitioning out of Early Head Start, collaborate with the parents, and the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, to ensure appropriate steps are undertaken in a timely and appropriate manner to determine the child's eligibility for services under Part B of IDEA.

IFSP/IEP Meeting Chart



❖ Program Structure, Education and Child Development ❖

The Early Head Start Program:

- ❖ *Offers full-day, center-based, high-quality early education and child development services to children birth to three years old, including children with disabilities and pregnant women.*
- ❖ *Implements the Frog Street research-based curriculum that enhances all the areas of child development.*
- ❖ *Provides culturally and linguistically appropriate learning experiences to all children and families.*
- ❖ *Uses the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to five to guide their choices in curriculum, learning materials, daily activities, support family engagement in children's learning, and inform intentional teaching practices. This framework provides opportunities for play, exploration, discovery, and problem solving that will promote successful learning of all children including those with disabilities.*





Health Program Services



1302.40 Purpose.

“(a) A program must provide high-quality health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and that will support each child’s growth and school readiness.”

The Early Head Start Program:

- * Emphasizes the importance of early identification of health, nutrition, and mental health needs, which, if undetected or untreated, might cause learning difficulties. The program will make every effort to ensure that every child is connected to a doctor or clinic to receive complete age appropriate health assessments and appropriate dental care.
- * Facilitates the ability of enrolled pregnant women and expectant families in accessing ongoing health care, comprehensive services and health insurance, as appropriate.



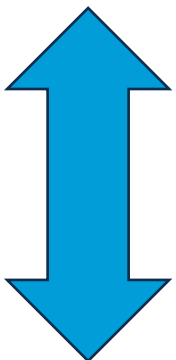


Family and Community Engagement Program Services

1302.50 Family engagement.

“(a) Purpose. A program must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children’s learning and development. Programs are encouraged to develop innovative two-generation approaches that address prevalent needs of families across their program that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources.

* Parent and Family Engagement in Early Head Start is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a road map for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families. The PFCE Framework consists of seven (7) Family Engagement Outcomes focused on the ultimate outcome for children by promoting school readiness.



1. Family Well-being
2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships
3. Families as Lifelong Educator
4. Families as Learners
5. Family Engagement in Transitions
6. Family Connections to Peers and Community
7. Families as Advocates and Leaders





Eligibility: A family may be eligible for Early Head Start services if the family's income is determined to be at or below the federal poverty level. A program may enroll children from families whose incomes are higher than the federal poverty level if they meet other eligibility requirements.

Recruitment: The UTRGV Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Program has a plan in place to enroll children into the program. A Child Find questionnaire is conducted and a Child Find Brochure is distributed for both English and Spanish speakers. The program has developed a strong partnership and implemented Collaborative Agreements with PSJA ISD and Easter Seals in order to recruit children with disabilities.

Selection: After the Program has determined and verified eligibility with the family, a selection criteria is used that weighs the prioritization of selection of participants. This is based on community needs identified in the Community Needs Assessment and any other relevant family or child risk factors such as, disabilities. A waiting list is developed at the beginning of each enrollment year and maintained throughout the year. This ranks children according to the program's selection criteria.

Enrollment Process: The UTRGV Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Program maintains its funded enrollment and fills any vacancy as soon as possible. The Program services 10 percent or more of the mandated enrollment of children with disabilities at the UTRGV Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Centers.



Attendance: The Early Head Start Program tracks daily attendance for each child ensuring a monthly average daily attendance rate of 85% or above. If a child is unexpectedly absent, the Early Head Start program attempts to contact the parent/guardian to ensure the child's well-being..

Transition Services



1302.70 TRANSITIONS FROM EARLY HEAD START.

“(a) Implementing transition strategies and practices. An Early Head Start program must implement strategies and practices to support successful transitions for children and their families transitioning out of Early Head Start.”

The Early Head Start Program:

- * Early Head Start is for children from 0 to 3 years of age and pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. When a child turns three, they will transition out of Early Head Start and into the next setting, the family selects.
- * The Early Head Start program supports all families and their children in planning their transition to the next program or setting. If a child was eligible for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services while they were in Early Head Start, the program providers will use the same transition steps and timelines as for the transition out of ECI.





Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women










1302.80 Enrolled Pregnant Women

(c) A program must facilitate the ability of all enrolled pregnant women to access comprehensive services through referrals that, at a minimum, include nutritional counseling, food assistance, oral health care, mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and emergency shelter or transitional housing in cases of domestic violence.









Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum

The key concepts are:

-  Strength based, family centered
-  Parent-child relationship focused
-  Parent input
-  Respectful, responsive, relationship based
-  Individualized
-  Inclusive
-  Healthy and safe
-  Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant
-  Comprehensive in-transition planning

In addition, in order to achieve quality center-based toddler care, the key concepts of early group experience are:

-  Small groups for toddlers, with high staff-to-child ratios
-  Primary care teachers
-  Continuity of care
-  Responsive individualized caregiving/planning
-  Meeting the needs of the individual and family
-  Developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant learning environment

Training and Professional Development

1302.92 Training and professional development.

(a) A program must provide to all new staff, consultants, and volunteers an orientation that focuses on, at a minimum, the goals and underlying philosophy of the program and on the ways they are implemented.

(b) A program must establish and implement a systematic approach to staff training and professional development designed to assist staff in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality, comprehensive services within the scope of their job responsibilities, and attached to academic credit as appropriate.



- Training and professional development is offered to all Early Head Start staff, parents and community Child Care partners.
- The Early Head Start program equips teachers with knowledge on how to work with children with disabilities. Teachers are trained on the ASQ-3 a developmental assessments and, The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). This is a social-emotional assessment widely used by early childhood educational programs to inform early identification and intervention efforts.



Volunteers



Volunteers are an important part of our Early Head Start Program. Volunteers provide valuable help and expertise. A volunteer can be a parent, family member, community member, college students or, anyone interested in helping.

How will my volunteering help?

Not only will it provide a helping hand to the staff and children, but it will provide much needed In-Kind. Head Start is a federally funded program. For every dollar the federal government gives us, they expect 25 cents worth of In-Kind donations. Every hour you volunteer provides In-kind. Failure to meet our In-Kind could result in losing funding. Donation of materials, supplies, and in-home activities are also considered In-Kind.

I want to volunteer, what is next?
Please advise the Center Manager at your EHS Center and/or your Family Services Coordinator of your desire to volunteer and the areas you are interested in volunteering. You will be asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement and discuss a time to get started after completing a background check.

When can I volunteer?
You can set a time for volunteering that fits your schedule.





Maintaining Records



1303.24 Maintaining records.

(a) A program must maintain child records in a manner that ensures only parents, and officials within the program or acting on behalf of the program have access, and such records must be destroyed within a reasonable timeframe after such records are no longer needed or required to be maintained.

Procedure; The Early Head Start (EHS) program will store data:

1. In physical documents that are stored in a secure location only accessible to appropriate staff.
2. Electronically through ChildPlus Professional Head Start Management Software that is only accessible by staff members who have an assigned username and password that is provided by the EHS ChildPlus Software Administrator/Manager.
 - * These files are stored under lock and key that is monitored by the EHS campus director, EHS Center Manager, or EHS Child Care Center owner.
 - * EHS Program will maintain the eligibility/children/family files for five years.