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COMPONENT: DISABILITIES

SUBJECT: EVALUATION PROCEDURES

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: To ensure that children suspected of having a disability are evaluated in a timely manner.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE:

The Health & Disability Manager must arrange for further, formal, evaluation of a child who has been identified as possibly having a disability.

If the LEA does not evaluate the child, Head Start is responsible for arranging or providing for an evaluation, using its own resources and accessing others. In this case, the evaluation must meet the following requirements:

- Testing and evaluation procedures must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory, administered in the child’s home language or mode of communication, unless it is not clearly feasible to do so.
- Testing and evaluation procedures must be administered by trained (State certified or licensed) personnel.
- No single procedure may be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.
- The evaluation must be made by a multidisciplinary team or group of persons including at least one teacher or specialist with knowledge in the area of suspected disability.
- Evaluators must use only assessment materials which have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used.
- Tests used for children with impaired sensory, manual or communication skills must be administered so that they reflect the children’s aptitudes and achievement levels and not just the disabilities.
- Tests and materials must assess all areas related to the suspected disability.
- In the case of a child whose primary disability appears to be a speech or language impairment, the team must assure that enough tests are used to determine that the impairment is not a symptom of another disability. A speech or language pathologist should be involved in the evaluation process.

Written parental consent must be obtained before a child can have an initial evaluation to determine whether the child has a disability. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The multidisciplinary team provides the results of the evaluation, and its professional opinion that the child does or does not need special education and related services. If it is their professional opinion that a child has a disability, the team is to state which of the eligibility criteria applies and provide recommendation for programming, along with their findings. Performance Standards 1308.7 details specific eligibility criteria that may be considered.

The evaluation and findings, including the recommendation for programming, will be placed in each child's permanent file located at the Head Start Central Office.