

 <b>Policy #:</b> S-1	<b>Effective Date:</b> 3/11/97	<b>Page #:</b> 1 of 5
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**COMPONENT: SOCIAL SERVICES**

**SUBJECT: ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ELIGIBILITY AND ATTENDANCE (ERSEA)**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** Head Start will maintain a Social Services recruitment process which will ensure full enrollment of eligible children regardless of race, creed, color, special needs or national origin. Head Start recognizes the importance of teaching children to establish good school attendance habits and believes this attitude can be successfully established in the program. Parents are asked to notify their child’s teacher when the child must be absent. When the monthly average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85 percent, a Head Start program must analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis must include a study of the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. If the absences are a result of illness or if they are well documented absences for other reasons, no special action is required. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child in either the same or a different program option, the child’s slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy.

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE: *Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection and Eligibility***

To be eligible for Head Start services, a child may be three (3), four (4) or five (5) years of age. The priority targeted child being four (4) as of September 30 of the upcoming program year. At least 90 percent of the children who are enrolled must meet the current income guidelines. Up to 10 percent of the children who are enrolled may be children from families that exceed the Federal Poverty Guidelines but who meet the selection criteria used to determine children who would most benefit from Head Start services. The selection criteria ranking system will be completed by the Central Office Staff under the direction of the Family Service Manager. A minimum of 10 percent of slots will be reserved for children professionally diagnosed with disabilities. When a recruitment application is received which indicates a disability, documentation verifying the diagnosis must accompany the recruitment form.

Recruitment is on-going. A recruitment application will be made available through the local Head Start Centers, Department of Human Services, Health Departments, local school systems and community doctor’s offices. Flyers, radio spots, posters in local businesses and newspaper announcements will be submitted in ample time for all interested persons to be aware of recruitment dates and locations.

A Family Service Worker will be available at the location of recruitment to take the recruitment applications and compile necessary documentation for consideration for enrollment for the upcoming program year. (Attached document, Recruitment Application) A Selection Criteria Form will be completed by the Family Service Worker to determine eligibility of the child and ranking for enrollment.

At the time of recruitment a copy of income verification showing prior 12 months income **or verification which now accurately represents the family's income**, must accompany the recruitment form. All family situations will be looked at on an individual basis. If necessary, the program will assist families in filling out the recruitment application in order to assure that all information needed for selection is completed.

The period of time used to verify family income is the preceding calendar year or the twelve months prior to the month the application is filed. A copy of the following may serve as income verification: Families First verification, form 1040 income tax, statement from employer, Supplemental Security Income verification, or other approved document.

In the recruitment process, the Family Service Worker will review all completed Selection Criteria Forms to determine ranking. Parents that did not bring all documentation needed for recruitment will be counseled by Family Service Workers. After determining ranking the Family Service Worker's will notify the parents of selected children and request the following information: proof of age (which may be verified by a certified or "mother's" copy of the birth certificate, immunization record or insurance card), up-to-date shot record, current physical, a copy of TN Care or other insurance. Any recruitment applications that are not completed will not be considered.

Family Service Staff will meet to determine enrollment status and ranking of available slots for the upcoming program year. The forms will be prioritized by age, and income eligibility, with priority given to children that will be four (4) years of age by September 30 of the upcoming program year. Recruitment applications will be pulled from this group until enough children are selected for the funded slots. A count will be taken of the diagnosed disabilities in this group to verify that the program has met the required minimum of 10 percent diagnosed disabilities. If more diagnosed disabilities are needed, they will be pulled from the remaining recruitment applications, still based on age and income eligibility.

When full enrollment has been reached and a vacancy comes open, the selection criteria will be used to determine the next child eligible for enrollment. When an opening occurs we will review all selection criteria of waiting children placing the child with the highest points in an available slot.

Highland Rim Head Start will comply with the regulations as stated in Performance Standards 1305.7 - Enrollment and Re-enrollment: (A) Each child enrolled in a Head Start program must be allowed to remain in Head Start until kindergarten or first grade is available for the child in the child's community, except that the Head Start program may choose not to enroll a child when there are compelling reasons for the child not to remain in Head Start, such as when there is a change in the child's family income and there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services. (B) A Head Start grantee must maintain its funded enrollment level. When a program

determines that a vacancy exists, no more than 30 calendar days may elapse before the vacancy is filled. A program may elect not to fill a vacancy when 60 calendar days or less remain in the program's enrollment year. (C) If a child has been found income eligible and is participating in a Head Start program, he or she remains income eligible through that enrollment year and the immediately succeeding enrollment year.

Once the selection process is completed parents of selected children will be notified by mail or phone of a date and location to meet with a Head Start Staff person to complete the enrollment process. For returning children, staff will determine what information must be up-dated, such as health records and emergency information.

At the time of enrollment, a Family Service Worker will be available to meet with the families to discuss the process of the Family Partnership. The Partnership can be completed at this time or if the parents prefer, the Family Service Worker can arrange an appointment for a later date.

When the child leaves the program, the child's birth certificate, shot record, and physical from the Head Start classroom folder will be given to the parents/guardian. All other materials in the child's folder will come to the Central Office to be filed. A complete school record, including a copy of the birth certificate and social Security card if available and assessments will be forwarded as requested to the child's next educational setting if the parent/guardian has authorized release of information (H-8).

**OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE: *Attendance***

Program staff will work with families on problems of irregular attendance.

Excused absences include:

- a. Head Lice
- b. Hospitalization
- c. Incapacitated due to serious illness/injury
- d. Death in the family
- e. Receiving medical treatment or therapy at a time when class is in session
- f. Temporary family situations (Ex: transportation, parent/guardian illness, temporary relocation, and inclement weather)
- g. Court-ordered visitations and arrangements between custodial and noncustodial parent/guardian

Children should be kept home if he/she has had any of the following within the past 24 hours:

- a. Upset stomach (diarrhea or vomiting)
- b. Respiratory symptoms (difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing).
- c. Fever auxiliary temp of 100 degrees F or more, oral temp of 101 degrees F or more, or rectal temp of 102 degrees F.
- d. Eye drainage

- e. Unexplained rash (red or purple rash, welts that appear quickly, open sores) and burns
- f. Appearance/behavior (child acts or looks different than usual – unusually tired, lacks appetite; confused; difficult to awaken; change in color of skin, eyes, stool, or urine).
- g. Obvious, severe pain.

The parent should contact the Center and discuss signs of illness with the teacher when calling to report an absence.

If the parent does not contact the center, the teacher must contact the parent/guardian on the first day the child is absent and follow-up as needed. Teachers must document on the attendance sheet each time a parent/guardian is contacted concerning attendance. If more information other than reasons for absence is discussed, such information must be documented on a Family Contact Note. A Family Service Worker must be contacted on the third (3) day of consecutive unexcused absence and the Family Service Manager notified.

1. First Offense: The teacher will fill out an extended absence report. They will notify the FSW responsible for their classroom immediately. The FSW will make a phone call to the parent to see if there is a problem and ask if we can assist them in any way to get the child back into school. They will remind the parent of our attendance policy.
2. Second Offense: Unexcused absenteeism – FSW notified on the third (3) day- The FSW along with another staff person will attempt to make a home visit and the parent told at that time if the child is not back in school on a regular basis starting the next day, the child will be dropped. If no contact is made, a certified letter will be sent notifying them if their child is not back in school on a regular basis within five (5) days of the receipt of the letter they will be dropped from our program. This serves as a second offense warning.
3. Third Offense: Unexcused absenteeism – A letter will be sent, by the FSW, to the parent/guardian notifying them their child has been dropped from the program.

When a child has been enrolled for a Center but has never attended by the 4th day after his first scheduled day of attendance and no contact is made with the family, that slot will be considered vacant.

If a child is sent home for any reason before regular dismissal – The teacher must notify the Central Office with time, reason, temperature (if relevant), and to whom the child was released. Documentation of this information will be kept at the front desk at the Central Office.

Family Contact notes must be submitted to the Central Office weekly for review and filing by a Family Service Worker.

## **Tardiness and Late Pick-Up**

Children being brought to school should arrive no later than 8:00 a.m. If for some reason you know you will be late call the center and let them know. This information is needed in order to plan lunches.

Be aware of your classroom opening and closing times. Habitual tardiness or picking up children late can lead to reporting of such to the Department of Children Services (DCS).