

NeighborImpact Head Start & Early Head Start Policy & Procedure	
Section: Subpart A-Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance	PC Approval Date: 7/19/18
Title: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, and Enrollment	Updated: 11/07/2017
Policy #: HS-33	NI Board Approval: 9/12/19
Forms Required: Application, Eligibility Verification, Recruitment Plan, Selection Criteria	
Performance Standards: 1302.11-1302.15; Head Start Act	Page 1 of 4

Policy: It is the policy of NeighborImpact Head Start & Early Head Start to determine eligibility and select children for the program consistent with requirements of the Final Rule Head Start Performance Standards. The Policy Council approves and submits to the NeighborImpact Board of Directors decisions about program recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities. Using these priorities, the NeighborImpact Board of Directors establishes procedures and criteria for the recruitment, selection and enrollment of children.

Purpose: NeighborImpact Head Start utilizes a systematic process to review all applications for Head Start services in order to determine eligibility and to identify children and families to be enrolled. Eligibility is determined by trained staff using regulations from the Office of Head Start & Early Head Start. Selection criteria are established by a formal process and reviewed and approved annually with the intent of enrolling children and families with the greatest need for services. These criteria are then used to select children and families for enrollment in the program. Once all slots are filled at the beginning of each program year, a ranked waiting list is developed.

Procedure:

Selection Process:

Annually NeighborImpact will establish selection criteria for Head Start/Early Head Start.

1. Management staff review the program’s community needs assessment to ensure the program is currently serving children and families most in need of Head Start EHS services.
2. Policy Council determines the Recruitment, Selection and Enrollment Priorities and Recruitment Plan.
3. The Head Start Management Team updates the Recruitment, Selection and Enrollment Priorities and Recruitment Plan for Policy Council and Board use.
4. The Policy Council approves the Recruitment, Selection, and Enrollment Priorities and Recruitment Plan submits them to the NeighborImpact Board of Directors for approval.
5. The Board uses the Policy Council approved selection priorities to establish procedures and criteria for selection of children to the program.
6. The ERSEA Specialist updates ChildPlus selection criteria and Pre-Applications to ensure information needed for revised selection criteria is included.

Determining, Verifying and Documenting Eligibility:

1. Upon receipt of Pre-Application the ERSEA Specialist will contact families to schedule an in person interview. If an in person interview is not possible a telephone interview is required.
2. For Head Start, a child must be three or four years old on September 1 of the program year. With permission from the Head Start Director a child maybe three years old during the program year. In this instance, the child would need to re-verify eligibility for the third year in the program.
3. For Early Head Start, a child must be younger than 3 years of age. Pregnant women are eligible for

Early Head Start (EHS) services. The unborn child is counted in the family size for EHS eligibility only.

4. Verification of age is required, unless proof of documentation creates a barrier or enrollment for child and documentation is uploaded in ChildPlus.
5. Eligibility requirements:
 - Child is a foster child
 - Child meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless for children and youth
 - Family receives public assistance through
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Ongoing cash assistance from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
 - If a child is foster, homeless or receives public assistance no other income proof is needed to determine eligibility.
 - Family is at or below Federal Poverty Guidelines for family size
 - Family is between 100-130% of Federal Poverty Guidelines for family size, Up to 35% of enrollment
6. A child transitioning from EHS to Head Start will need to re-verify eligibility.
7. Applications considered based on income will include income for 12 months - either the previous 12 months of when the application is received or the last calendar year.
8. Trained staff will verify income eligibility, document source and sign the Family Eligibility Verification in ChildPlus upon verification.

Acceptable documents for establishing proof of income include:

 1. Individual Income tax form 1040 –adjusted gross income for previous year or W-2 forms-
 2. December pay stub with year to date earnings (only if it reflects entire year's income)
 3. Child support payments received for the last 12 months
 4. Unemployment payments received in the last 12 months
 5. Letter from caseworker for Foster Care
 6. Scholarship /Grant award letter
 7. Letter from caseworker verifying ongoing TANF
 8. SSI Award letter
9. No Income or No Proof of Income (Self-Declaration):
 - If a family has no income a Statement of No Income Form will be completed.
 - If family is self-employed a self-declaration of income is acceptable.
 - Information from a third party may be obtained to determine eligibility, with written consent.
10. Homeless Children:
 - A child must meet the definition for homeless child or youth in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001.
 - Homeless Declaration Form is completed or family provides documentation of homelessness from a third party.

Joint Custody-calculating income:

1. For families that have joint custody take the total household number for each parent, combine family size and divide by two. Round up if necessary and half the income.
2. If a parent is receiving child support, child support is used as income for the recipient and take total household number of parent receiving child support. Do not half income or divide family size.

Records:

1. Eligibility records are stored in ChildPlus. Any eligibility documents will be shredded when uploaded into ChildPlus.

2. Eligibility records are kept for children currently enrolled, as long as they are enrolled, and, for one year after they have stopped receiving services.

Violating Eligibility Determination Regulations:

1. NeighborImpact employees, board and policy council members and volunteers will follow the NeighborImpact Employee Conduct Policy #C-25.0 - Head Start Eligibility Determination & Regulation.
2. Parents sign the application in ChildPlus which states “Certification: I certify that this information is true. If any part is false, my participation in this agency’s programs may be terminated and I may be subject to legal action. I also understand that the information in this application will be held in strict confidence within the agency and is accessible to me during normal business hours.”
3. Clients, parents and community members will follow the Community and Clients Complaints Policy and Procedure for any concerns regarding violations of eligibility determination.

Selection:

1. Applications are scored by selection criteria points and placed on either the eligible waitlist or the over-income waitlist. Children with the highest pointed applications on the eligible waitlist will be selected first. Waitlists will be prioritized by catchment area and selection points. If two or more applications have the same selection points, the application with the lowest income per family member will get priority.
2. For Head Start selection begins in spring for the following program year. For Head Start & Early Head Start selection continues throughout the school year as enrollment opportunities arise.
3. Children are selected according to the assigned points from the established selection criteria until all of the available slots have been assigned.
4. Eligible children not selected, are placed on a ranked waiting list and prioritized according to selection criteria points.
5. Each child participating in the Head Start program is eligible through the end of the succeeding program year or until transition to Kindergarten. Early Head Start children are eligible until they turn 3 or transition into Head Start.
6. The program will ensure, whenever possible, that children who are transitioning from EHS to Head Start will receive Head Start services until enrolled in school, as long as child is eligible.
7. Families indicate on the application if the child has a disability, and is receiving services from ECSE. The Inclusion and Family Services Manager verifies services, and works with ECSE to determine proper placement and supports needed.

Selection after the school year has begun:

Vacancies that become available during the school year will be filled within 30 days.

- A. See Enrollment Process Policy and Procedure for vacancies that arise throughout the school year.

Over-income Selection

- A. Up to 10% of the slots may be filled by children that exceed the low-income guidelines, but would benefit from Head Start services. Up to 35% of children may be enrolled whose family income falls between 100-130% of the poverty line.

Determining selection for over-income slots:

1. If 10% disability slots are not filled with income eligible children with a documented disability, children with disabilities in the over-income category will be selected first.
2. When selecting from the over-income waitlist families whose income falls between 100%-130% FPL will be considered first, if two or more families have the exact selection criteria number, the application with the lowest income will be selected first.
3. NeighborImpact Head Start & Early Head Start must be able to report to the Head Start

regional program office the reasons why the program chose to enroll children from 100-130% poverty line as defined in 1302.12(d)(2).

Enrollment

- A. At least 10% of children actually enrolled must be children with disabilities.
- B. If the Community Needs Assessment determines a need, up to 3% of enrollment slots may be reserved for children who are experiencing homelessness or in foster care for 30 days.
- C. Once children are selected for the following school year the following process will occur for enrollment of children in the program:
 - 1. The ERSEA Specialist notifies the Family Services and Inclusion Manager of selected children.
 - 2. The ERSEA Specialist changes the status from “new” to “accepted” in ChildPlus.
 - 3. The Family Services and Inclusion Manager assigns the enrollment visit to a Head Start Advocate.
 - 4. The Head Start Advocate complete the enrollment visit within 2 week of selection.
 - 5. After the enrollment visit, the Head Start Advocate gives the child file to the Family Services and Inclusion Manager for review, who then forwards to the health office for review.
 - 6. Children are placed into classrooms by the Transportation Manager. Transportation needs, the number of 3 and 4 year olds, and other health, mental health or special circumstances are taking into consideration.
 - 7. After children are placed into the classrooms the ERSEA Specialist assigns the class to each child in ChildPlus.
 - 8. Teacher Advocates contact parents and inform of classroom placement and schedule Parent/Classroom Orientation.

Training: NeighborImpact Head Start & Early Head Start will train all governing body, policy council, management and staff who determine eligibility:

- 1. Within 90 days of hire for Head Start & Early Head Start Management and staff who make eligibility determinations.
- 2. Within 180 days of beginning of term for Policy Council and NeighborImpact Board members.
- 3. Ongoing training will occur for ERSEA staff and Head Start & Early Head Start Management, at least annually.
- 4. NeighborImpact Board and Policy Council members will receive annual Eligibility training.

A. Training will include:

- 1. How to determine eligibility from families and third parties.
- 2. Incorporate strategies for treating families with dignity and respect and for dealing with domestic violence, stigma and privacy.
- 3. Explain program policy and procedure for actions against staff, families or participants who attempt to provide false information.