

NEIGHBORIMPACT HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START

Policy & Procedure

Section: Subpart A-Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance	PC Approval Date: 1/18/18
Title: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, and Enrollment	Updated: 11/7/17
Policy #: HS-75	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 3

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 on Eligibility published February 10, 2015 and Head Start Performance Standard Subpart Part A. Annually, 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. At least 10 percent of the total numbers of enrollment opportunities are made available to children with disabilities. Once all slots are filled at the beginning of each program year, a waiting list is developed. Children on the waiting list are ranked according to the selection criteria and vacancies are filled from the prioritized waiting list within 30 days.

Procedure:

Selection Criteria

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 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. Eligibility documents updated to ensure information needed for revised selection criteria is included on the application.

Determining, Verifying and Documenting Eligibility:

Upon receipt of application the ERSEA Coordinator will contact families to schedule an in person interview. If an in person interview is not possible a telephone interview is required.

- A. 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 & Early 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.
- B. 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.
 - C. Verification of age is required unless proof of documentation creates a barrier or enrollment for child.
 - D. Income:
 - 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/family 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
 - E. A child transitioning from EHS to Head Start will need to re-verify eligibility.
 - F. 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.
 - G. Trained staff will verify income eligibility, document source and sign the Family Eligibility Verification upon verification.
 1. Acceptable documents for establishing proof of income include: Individual Income tax form 1040 for previous year or all W-2 forms or a December pay stub with year to date earnings (only if it reflects entire year's income)
 2. Child support payments received for the last 12 months
 3. Unemployment payments received in the last 12 months
 4. Letter from caseworker for Foster Care
 5. Scholarship /Grant award letter
 6. Letter from caseworker verifying ongoing TANF
 7. SSI Award letter
 - H. No Income or No Proof of Income:
 - Statement of No Income will be completed by family.
 - No other documentation of income of be excepted by family.
 - If family is self employed a self declaration of income is acceptable as a last resort.
 - I. 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 provider

Selection

- A. Applications will be scored based on 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.
- B. For Head Start & Early Head Start selection begins in spring for the following program year. Selection continues throughout the school year as enrollment opportunities arise.
- C. Children are selected according to the assigned points from the established selection criteria until all of the available slots have been assigned.
- D. All eligible children not selected are placed on a waiting list and prioritized according to selection criteria points.
- E. Each child participating in the Head Start & Early Head Start program is eligible through the end of the succeeding program year or until transition to Kindergarten.
- F. 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.
- G. 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:

- A. Vacancies that become available during the year will be filled from the prioritized Waiting List within 30 days.

Over-income Selection

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.

Training

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

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