

## **Disability Services**

“In these days it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms if provided by the state.”

Quote from *Chief Justice Earl Warren, Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*

With this philosophy in mind, and in accordance with the Head Start mandate to make at least 10 percent of its enrollment opportunities available to children with disabilities, the Big Sandy Area Community Action Program, Inc. Head Start has developed an active recruitment process designed to seek out children with special needs within its five county service area who are in need of comprehensive services.

The Disability Services Plan was written to ensure that each child enrolled will receive the maximum benefits of participation in the six delegate agencies and one direct operating agency of the Big Sandy Area C.A.P., Inc. These include but are not limited to:

1. Helping each child become more independent, self-reliant and to develop a positive self-concept.
2. Provide the opportunity for the child with disabilities to play and learn with non-disabled children.
3. Approach each child's needs on an individualized basis through the formulation and implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), thus meeting the unique needs and capabilities of the child and the special circumstances of his/her family.
4. Offering services to parents in meeting the special needs of their child.

## **Specific Objectives of the Disability Component Plan**

To provide, in accordance with school readiness goals, a comprehensive child development services plan which promotes the physical, motor, cognitive, language, social and emotional growth of all Head Start students.

To maintain an outreach and recruitment process to ensure a minimum enrollment of 10% diagnosed disabled children.

To provide a comprehensive program for this population of children and support services to their families.

To provide training to staff, parents and volunteers on disability services and resources available to them.

Provide for a smooth transition for children from Head Start to public school or other service delivery agencies.

## **P.S. 1302.12, 1302.13 and 1302.14: THE IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The recruitment, selection and enrollment of all children including disabled children are the primary responsibility of the Family Services component.

To actively participate in the important role of Child Find, it will be the responsibility of the Family Advocate to accept all applications. Those applications will become part of the Child Find Recruitment for the county-wide preschool screening and LEA referrals.

In order to comply with the P.S. 1302.33, 1302.34, 1302.42, a comprehensive recruitment and enrollment effort will be completed by June 30 to ensure cooperation between LEA (pre-school program) and the Head Start program in the placement of children needing preschool services.

The grantee Disability Services Manager will coordinate with LEA, Health Departments, Community Mental Health Agencies, early intervention programs, social service agencies, private medical providers, speech/language clinics, interagency councils, and other service agencies to initiate referrals to the Head Start program.

These recruitment contacts are made throughout the year, but in-depth efforts are put forth during the months of March – April to ensure the program of meeting the 10% mandate at the end of the recruitment period with pre-diagnosed children.

The Disability Services Manager will respond to all parent inquires and/or contacts, regardless of type or severity of the disability. Parents will be referred to the LEA and delegate agency, as appropriate.

### **Selection/Enrollment:**

Children will be selected for enrollment following the policies/procedures and selection criteria established by the Grantee agency and the established points system process, which allows additional points for a child with an identified disability. It is the responsibility of the Grantee Disability Services Manager and the delegate agency staff assigned to the disability services component to ensure that referrals received through Part C (Early Intervention Local Lead Agency), as well as any extenuating circumstances, are identified as priority factors on the child's eligibility application prior to enrollment selection.

The program must not deny enrollment to any child on the basis of a disability or its severity when:

1. The child meets the age and income eligibility criteria;
2. The parents wish to enroll the child;
3. Head Start is an appropriate placement;
4. The program has space to enroll more children.

If a disabled child is not accepted into the program, the designated LEA and delegate staff will inform parents of other appropriate resources, such as LEA Preschools, early intervention and child development programs.

### **Budget:**

Children with disabilities will be eligible for the services offered by Head Start for all children. The special education and related services above and beyond the regular services will be available to disabled children and their families through the LEA, other available resources and the grantee and delegate Head Start program accounts.

The Disability Services Manager is responsible for initiating these special services throughout the program year with the guidance from the grantee and delegate Head Start Directors.

The Disability Services Manager will review program history of the types and disabling conditions served the disabilities of returning students, and the severity of conditions to be served, to determine budgetary needs for service delivery. During the program's planning process, the Disability Services Manager will meet with Directors and other management staff to plan and budget for the grant application which is submitted in July.

### **Contracts:**

To assist the Disability Services Manager and Head Start Directors in planning the budget and service delivery, contractual agreements will be developed with LEA, mental health providers and other service agencies

and individuals as deemed necessary.

In the event that Head Start is unable to secure contracts with the LEA, the grantee Director will notify the Program Specialist and the ACF Regional Office immediately.

### **Program Accessibility:**

The Disability Services Manager will work closely with the Head Start Director and Services Managers to ensure that all facilities are accessible to children with disabilities. The Education Services Manager, teachers, Mental Health Services Manager and the Disability Services Manager will also work collaboratively to address any limited mobility, behavior or other safety concerns.

All possible resources will be utilized to meet identified needs (i.e. Assistive Technology Centers, Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs, the Kentucky Statewide Network of Special Education Cooperatives, Medicaid, etc.), as well as Head Start program funds. Accessibility issues will be addressed upon each child's enrollment and continue to be monitored throughout the program year.

## **P.S. 1302.33 ASSESSMENTS OF CHILDREN**

### **Screening / Assessment**

The Health Services Manager shall be responsible for the health and developmental screening of all children, including those with disabilities. Screenings must be completed within 45 calendar days of when the child first attends the program. A vision exam will occur within 90 calendar days of initial entry into the program.

The Disability Services Manager shall assist the Health Services manager in fulfilling this responsibility by securing appropriate providers and individuals to assist with screenings, scheduling of screening dates/times and preparation of screening sites and materials.

Through collaboration and cooperation with LEA, screening will be conducted from May – August.

The individual delegate programs shall be responsible for notifying the Health Services Manager of any new enrollees that need to be screened.

The Education Services Manager will be responsible for seeing that teachers are provided training on Teaching Strategies Gold prior to assessing the children. The Disability Services Manager will be knowledgeable of and assist with this process as needed.

### **Evaluations:**

The delegate disability services staff has the responsibility to refer a child as possibly having a disability to the LEA for further evaluation, as soon as the need is evident. A conference with the child's parent(s) will be held to discuss screening results and the referral process. Referrals will be made in writing and submitted to the LEA Special Education Director or his/her designee. **The Disabilities Services Manager will monitor the status of referrals by review of screening and disability information available on COPA, as well as response to intervention (RTI) information submitted by each delegate on a monthly basis during the school year.**

Parental consent for evaluation is the responsibility of the LEA. Designated delegate agency staff will work with the LEA to ensure that parents' informed consent is secured.

If the LEA is unable to conduct the evaluation in a timely manner, then it will be the Head Start program's responsibility to obtain parental consent and secure the evaluation. The LEA will use only licensed professionals in the field of the suspected disabling condition to provide evaluations.

When possible, the designated delegate or LEA staff will obtain, with parental permission, previous evaluation information that may have been completed on the child prior to his/her enrollment in Head Start.

Only those children found to be eligible under IDEA and having a current Individualized Education Plan shall be considered as "a child with a disability" for the purposes of enrollment, program planning and collection of child count data.

### **Staffing:**

Staffing sessions will be conducted periodically for all children. Special staffing may be called by the Disability Services Manager upon receipt of a teacher referral of a child with a diagnosed or suspected disability.

All components will be notified to have representation at the staffing conference by the designated disability staff. Written staffing reports will be given to the Head Start Director for review of appropriate staff who could not attend the scheduled staffing.

## **P.S. 1302.47 DISABILITIES AND HEALTH SERVICES COORDINATION**

The Disability Services Manager, Health Services Manager, and delegate agency staff will work closely together in the screening, assessment, and follow-up process to assure the special needs of each child with a disability is met.

Individual program staff will schedule periodic re-tests of children failing any part of the screening process.

To assist teachers in identifying children who appear to have a problem in social/emotional development, the Disability Services Manager will work closely with the Mental Health Services Manager / Consultant in scheduling classroom observations, staff/parent consultations and training.

Teachers will maintain anecdotal records on the child's activities and events in order to assist the Mental Health Services Manager / Consultant in making specific recommendations. Referrals to the Mental Health Services Manager for individual observation and/or evaluation of a child with disability will be made by the staff responsible for disability services in each program.

The Disability Services Manager will work closely with the Health Services Manager and Head Start Director to ensure that program policies for the administration of medication to children include necessary requirements to meet disability regulations.

## **P.S. 1302.33, 1302.61, 1302.62, 13202.63 DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The designated LEA representative, typically the Director of Special Education or Preschool Coordinator, shall serve as the designated chairperson for the Admission and Release Committee (ARC) meetings. Other committee members shall include, but not limited to: the child's parents, teacher and diagnosticians. The Grantee Disability Services Manager may be a part of the ARC Committee if requested. The Committee Chairperson shall be responsible for notifying Committee members at least seven (7) days before the IEP conference is held.

Evaluations and the subsequent development of the child's IEP (if determined eligible under IDEA) are to be completed within 60 school days after receiving parental consent for evaluation. If the child is pre-diagnosed, and has an IEP completed prior to entry, services must begin **as soon as possible after entry into the program.**

The designated LEA staff/ARC Committee Chairperson will ensure that IEP's encompass a statement of the child's present level of functioning, annual goals and short term objectives, criteria for progress, special educational services to be provided, projected dates of initiation/ duration of services and evaluation procedures to determine if objectives have been achieved. All documentation of written and verbal attempts to involve the child's parents in the IEP process will also be maintained. The

Disability Services Manager will monitor IEP development timeframes and content through during classroom visits, monitoring of information through COPA, and annual record reviews by appropriate Grantee staff.

When Head Start develops the IEP, an LEA representative will be invited in writing to attend. When the LEA develops the IEP, the appropriate delegate staff, including the child's teacher must make every effort to attend. The Grantee Disability Services Manager may attend an ARC meeting, if requested.

IEP conferences will be held at the Head Start site whenever possible.

If parents are unable to attend the IEP conference after three (3) attempts (written, phone call, home visit), the IEP will be developed by the remaining Committee members. Efforts will be made to make a home visit or obtain the parents input and signature. If a home visit or other opportunity to meet cannot be arranged, a copy of the IEP will be sent to the parent by registered mail.

The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) will review the child's progress and update the IEP a minimum of every 12 months. The ARC Chairperson will provide copies of the IEP to the parents, teacher and other staff as deemed necessary.

The Disability Services Manager, Education Services Manager, and delegate staff responsible for disability services will monitor the implementation of the IEP in the classroom throughout the program year. This will be done through teacher observations/anecdotal records, service provider progress reports and the on-going developmental assessment process.

**Program Options:**

During the IEP conference, the diagnostician(s) findings and recommendations, observations made by Head Start staff and parental desires will be considered by the ARC when deciding on the program option that will be most beneficial for the child. Various options may include, but are not limited to: joint placement with other agencies, alternate schedule of hours and/or days in attendance, shared enrollment slot, shared personnel to supervise special education services, etc.

In all situations, the child's full participation in the total Head Start program will be the first option considered. The designated LEA staff will ensure necessary modifications in activities, classroom environments and/or additional staff be provided in order to make this participation possible. Provisions for these modifications will be monitored by the Disability Services Manager and Grantee staff as part of classroom observations and review of IEP's.

If it is decided by the ARC that Head Start is not an appropriate placement for meeting the needs of the disabled child, the designated LEA staff will work with the child's teacher, parents and designated Head Start staff to refer to another existing agency/program.

### **Specific Services for Children with Disabilities:**

The Disability Services Manager will coordinate all comprehensive services for children with disabilities throughout the program year. Once the child is diagnosed and the IEP developed, services are to begin as soon as possible and consistent with the beginning and ending dates stated on the IEP. If the child meets LEA criteria, the LEA is responsible for ensuring that these services are provided. Head Start may share the provision of services as determined in the child's IEP.

If the child does not meet LEA criteria, but is eligible to receive services through the Head Start criteria, then the Disability Services Manager will be responsible for securing all services to meet the needs of the child.

The Family Advocate will complete the PFCE Family Needs/Goals Assessment with the family, which includes questions regarding developmental issues / screening, as well as health, nutrition, school readiness subjects. This information is gathered in order to further plan for delivery of services to the child with disabilities and their families.

The designated LEA staff will coordinate the delivery of related services (speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, special transportation, etc.) for diagnosed children for whom Head Start has the responsibility of providing said services.

### **P.S. 1302.44 NUTRITION SERVICES**

The Disability Services Manager will work closely with the Nutrition Services Manager to ensure that provisions to meet the needs of children with disabilities are incorporated into the nutrition program.

Professionals such as physical therapists, speech/language therapists, occupational therapists, and physicians, will be consulted to obtain information and guidance for staff and parents of children who have difficulty chewing and swallowing, who cannot feed themselves or who have severe allergies or other medical conditions.

The LEA designated staff, Nutrition Services and Disability Services Manager will assist the classroom staff in making any necessary adaptations or modifications to see that children with disabilities are participating in all nutrition and meal service activities to the extent possible.

### **P.S. 1303.75 TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation, **which includes school buses or allowable alternate vehicles adapted for children with disabilities**, will be provided by the LEA and/or Head Start program as deemed necessary for children with disabilities **to attend the center-based program in which they are enrolled**. Transportation will **also be provided in order for the child to keep therapy or other follow-up care services identified on the child's IEP or as deemed necessary as a service need (dental care, etc.)**. **Children with disabilities will be provided**

necessary transportation in order to participate in classroom activities / outings attended by their nondisabled peers/classmates (field trips, community events, etc.). The program will ensure special transportation requirements designated in the child's IEP (seating requirements, equipment needs, necessary training for bus drivers and monitors, etc.) are met.

### **STATE CERTIFICATION:**

Special education and related services will be provided to children qualified to receive these services by or under the supervision of LEA personnel meeting required State Qualifications. The Disability Services Manager or an LEA representative who meets these qualifications will supervise special education and related services to children needing these services.

### **TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

Training will be conducted or arranged by the Disability Services Manager at the scheduled Pre-Service training program in July/August. Training will address any new forms, review of disabling conditions, working with children with specific disabilities, updates on rules and regulations regarding disability services and transition into and from Head Start.

During the program's in-service training, the Disability Services Manager will continue to arrange and provide information on topics that will better enhance staff, parents and volunteer's skills and understanding of children with disabilities, the use of specialized equipment and materials, and ways of including children in curriculum activities. Topics may include ways to prevent disabilities, indications/warning signs of possible disabilities, techniques and instruction on particular disabilities and other training needs that arise.

The Disability Manager and other delegate staff will arrange trainings for parents on disability topics in each county during the program year. Workshop topics will include parental rights and responsibilities, recognizing characteristics of disabling conditions and developmentally appropriate activities.

A list of appropriate referral resources will be included in the Community Resource Book/Directory and provided to parents by the Family Advocates.

Parents will be informed and referred to existing Parent Advocacy groups and other local organizations in order to obtain additional training and to be amongst others with similar needs and concerns.

The Disability Services Manager will work closely with the Head Start Director to plan for and conduct orientation for all new staff. Information will be comprehensive coverage of disability services.

Teaching staff will be selected to attend other local, cluster, regional and state training provided through the Regional Training Center, the Head Start Association, the Kentucky Board of Education, etc. Selection of teaching staff will be done according to the training topics being offered, identified training needs and the disabling conditions of the children they are serving.

Technical assistance will be provided and/or arranged for teaching staff as needed/requested.

The Disability Services Manager will keep abreast of the latest legislation, updates and techniques by attending training related to disability services throughout the year. Information will be shared with other managers and direct service staff during scheduled training, staff meetings, written reports, classroom visitations, etc.

### **P.S. 1302.34, 1302.61, and 1302.62 TRANSITION**

The Head Start Director, Education Services Manager and Disability Services Manager will work with area Part C (Early Intervention) Local Lead Agencies and the LEA's in developing and implementing agreements/plans for transition of children with disabilities.

The Disability Services Manager will coordinate with the Family Services and Education Services Managers in providing training and appropriate transition activities for parents and children.

### **RECORD KEEPING:**

A comprehensive file, kept under lock, will be maintained in the delegate Head Start office by an assigned staff person. All information regarding the child's disability will be kept separate from his/her cumulative record. Each file will contain a copy of the child's IEP, health information, enrollment application, staffing reports, diagnostic evaluations, consent forms, screening/assessment data, progress reports and other pertinent information as deemed necessary.

A record of disclosure will be maintained for each file and anyone having access to the files must sign and date the record access form.

Parents may view their child's file by arranging an appointment with the Head Start Director.

### **HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

The Health Advisory Committee will be the vehicle by which the Disability Services Manager will secure guidance and assistance in carrying out the Disability Services Plan and regulations.

1. In coordination with the Health Services Manager, the Disabilities Services Manager will secure LEA, MCCC, and other agency representatives that provide services to children with disabilities to be a viable part of this Committee.

### **ANNUAL UPDATE/REVIEW:**

The Disability Services Plan will be reviewed annually and revisions made as deemed necessary. Recommendations from the Health Advisory Committee, new regulations, input from other component managers, staff, and parents will be the basis for change.

The Disability Services Manager will have the responsibility for preparing the plan for submission to the Policy Council for their approval.