

LEA Referral and Evaluation Procedure

POLICY:

Children will be referred to the Local Education Agency (LEA) for Evaluation as soon as the need is evident.

This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1302, 21, 1302.30, 1302.33, 1302.34, 1302.42, 1302.30, 1302.31, 1302.33, 1302.34, 1302.35, 1302.46, 1302.60, and 1302.90.

PROCEDURE:

1. Complete all developmental and sensory screenings (see Developmental and Behavior Screening, Vision Exam/Screening, Speech/Language Screening, and Hearing Screening policies).
2. Review and discuss screening results and possible actions (see Child/Family Staffing, Involving Parents policies). Possible actions include:
 - a. No action needed
 - b. Review documentation related to implementation of **interventions/response to interventions (RTI) process.**
 - c. Refer for speech/language evaluation only
 - d. Refer for cognitive and/or motor and/or multiple evaluations
 - e. Refer for emotional/behavior evaluation (see Mental Health Services – Referrals policy)
 - f. Uncertain: request additional observation(s), interventions/progress documentation and or screening be completed to help determine further action.
3. If further evaluation is recommended, **a written referral is made to the designated LEA disability staff member or Director of Special Education services in accordance with the state approved LEA referral policies, procedures and forms.**
4. The LEA Special Education Director or designee will coordinate the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meetings, send out the notices, chair the meeting and complete the required paperwork.
5. School district evaluators can arrange the evaluation time and place with the parent and/or teachers. This will be determined based on the type of evaluation, time needed and parent preference.
6. If the LEA does not evaluate the child, Head Start is responsible for providing or arranging for the evaluation. In this case, the following requirements will be met:
 - a. Testing and evaluation procedures are selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory, and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication, unless it clearly is not feasible to do so.

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- b. No single procedure may be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.
- c. The evaluation is made by multi-disciplinary team or group of person including at least one teacher or specialist with knowledge in the area of suspected disability.
- d. Evaluators use only assessment materials which have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used.
- e. Tests used for children with impaired sensory, manual, or communication skills are administered so that they reflect the children's aptitudes and achievement levels and not just the disabilities.
- f. Tests and materials must assess all areas related to the suspected disability.
- g. In the case of a child whose primary disability appears to be a speech or language impairment, the team ensures that enough tests are used to determine that the impairment is not a symptom of another disability and a Speech / Language Pathologist is involved in the evaluation.
- h. Confidentiality is maintained in accordance with these and State requirements. Parents are given the opportunity to review their child's records in a timely manner. Parents are notified and must give permission if additional evaluations are proposed. The **designated delegate staff member, evaluator(s) and/ or Disability Services Manager** explains the purpose and results of the evaluation and makes concerted efforts to help the parents understand them.
- i. The ARC, which includes the parent and a Head Start representative, provides the results of the evaluation and its professional **opinion** that the child does or does not **meet the eligibility criteria for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. If it is their professional opinion that a child has a disability, the team states which of the eligibility criteria applies and provides recommendations for program and services.
- j. **If the ARC team's professional opinion indicates that the child does not meet the eligibility criteria for special education services under IDEA, the designated delegate staff member and / or the Disability Services Manager will seek guidance from a mental health or child development specialist to determine if a significant delay exists that is likely to interfere with the child's development and school readiness. If such a delay exists, the designated delegate staff member and Disability Services Manager will partner with the family to help address the child's needs. This may include, but is not limited to, consideration for services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, information on available outpatient therapy centers, medical professionals, advocacy groups, and community agencies.**

Approved by Policy Council, August 2017