

FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AGREEMENTS

This document is intended to assist programs in developing local interagency agreements for services to children with disabilities and their families. It is expected that this framework will be used as a guide and will be customized to meet the needs of local communities.

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

(School District or Child Development Watch, Division of Public Health)

AND

(Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start, or ECAP)

This agreement is between (name of school district or Child Development Watch (CDW), Division of Public Health (DPH) and (name of Head Start, Early Head Start (EHS), Migrant Head Start (MHS), or Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP), for the period of (date) to (date).

I. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this agreement is to establish working procedures between (name of school district or CDW, DPH) and (name of Head Start, EHS, MHS program or ECAP) in the provision of services to children with disabilities in compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

It is the intent of this Agreement to:

1. Define which services will be provided by each agency.
2. Ensure that eligible children receive services as required by law, in the least restrictive or natural environment.

3. Ensure that each agency cooperatively maintains communication and shares leadership responsibility at the local level so that available resources are used in the most effective manner.
4. Ensure that cooperative arrangements between (name of school district or CDW, DPH) and (name of Head Start, EHS, MHS program or ECAP) are developed, implemented and preserved.

II. Program Mandates

Responsibility of the school district:

1. Locate and identify preschool children with disabilities through a child find effort which includes a process for screening.
2. Provide eligible preschool children with disabilities a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) including the development and implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
3. Place preschool children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with an opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.
4. Work with appropriate community agencies to provide services to preschool children with disabilities.

Responsibility of the Head Start Program, Migrant Head Start Program or ECAP:

1. Recruit, enroll, and serve eligible children ages 3-5. No less than 10 percent of the total number of enrollment opportunities in Head Start and ECAP Programs shall be available for children with disabilities who are eligible to participate.
2. Provide for developmental, hearing and vision screenings of all Head Start and ECAP children within 45 days of the child's entry into the program.
3. Refer children suspected of having a disability to appropriate school district personnel for evaluation.
4. Work closely with other community agencies in order to provide services to children with disabilities and their families.
5. Assure that children with disabilities receive all services to which they are entitled according to Head Start Program Performance Standards for Children with Disabilities (CFR 45 Part 1308) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Responsibility of Child Development Watch, Division of Public Health:

1. Accept and triage referrals of potentially eligible children ages birth to three years who are at risk of developmental delay and/or disability.
2. Provide comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluations on the functioning of each infant and toddler with a disability and/or developmental delay.
3. Provide a family-directed identification of the needs of each family to appropriately enhance the development of the infant and toddler.

4. Assign a service coordinator to each family of an eligible infant and toddler with a disability.
5. Develop an Individualized Family Service Plan for each infant and toddler who is eligible under Part C, to include:
 - current developmental needs
 - strengths and concerns for the eligible child and family
 - specific outcomes that address identified needs
 - recommended resources and services, and how those resources and services will be provided
6. Assist in the planning of transition for how the eligible child will be served after their third birthday.

Responsibility of Early Head Start:

1. Recruit, enroll, and serve eligible children ages prenatal through three. No less than 10 percent of the total number of enrollment opportunities in an Early Head Start Program shall be available for children with disabilities who are eligible to participate.
2. Provide for developmental, hearing and vision screenings of all Early Head Start children within 45 days of the child's entry into the program.
3. Refer children suspected of having a disability to CDW, DPH for evaluation.
4. Work closely with other community agencies in order to provide services to children with disabilities and their families.
5. Assure that children with disabilities receive all services to which they are entitled according to Head Start Program Performance Standards for Children with Disabilities (CFR 45 Part 1308), 1304 and IDEA.

III. Program Description

1. _____ school district or CDW, DPH (general identifying information about the district program or CDW, DPH and options).
2. _____ Head Start, EHS, MHS program or ECAP (general identifying information to include names and addresses of centers located within the school district).

IV. Suggestions for Collaboration

1. Child Find/Screening

School districts are required to locate and identify all children with disabilities birth to 21 years of age within their jurisdiction. CDW, DPH has a similar requirement for children with disabilities birth to three.

Early Head Start (EHS), Head Start, Migrant Head Start (MHS), and Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) are required to recruit children with

suspected or diagnosed disabilities by conducting a community assessment and contacting community agencies serving children with disabilities. Once enrolled, all children must be screened within 45 calendar days in areas of hearing, vision, and development.

School districts, CDW, DPH, EHS, Head Start, MHS, and ECAP may coordinate screening efforts by:

- a. Organizing cooperative child find activities so that screening results can be jointly used.
- b. Sharing staff and facilities for joint screenings.
- c. Coordinating the instruments and procedures to be used.
- d. Informing and including parents in the screening process.
- e. Sharing screening information within and across agencies, with parental consent.

2. **Referral for Evaluation**

School districts and CDW, DPH, are required to provide evaluations of children with suspected disabilities by qualified personnel using appropriate assessment strategies.

Head Start Programs and ECAP are required to refer children to school district personnel for evaluation after those children have been identified through an appropriate process. This process should include information from a developmental assessment and documentation of teacher observations, interventions used and other relevant instructional problem solving.

EHS and MHS programs are responsible for referring enrolled families with infants and toddlers suspected of having a disability to CDW, DPH.

School districts, CDW, EHS, DPH, MHS, Head Start, and ECAP may plan together to coordinate referrals for evaluation by:

- a. Developing referral procedures.
- b. Training staff to understand referral procedures and the information needed for an appropriate referral.
- c. Sharing responsibility in the referral procedure (such as assisting parents with paperwork and informing parents of their rights).
- d. Sharing information on eligibility criteria.

- e. Maintaining communication throughout the process including sharing outcomes of the referral.

3. Evaluation Process

School districts are required to provide evaluations for children who may require special education as outlined in Part B of IDEA.

CDW, DPH, is required to provide evaluations for children birth to three who may require early intervention due to developmental delay or disability as outlined in Part C of IDEA.

EHS and MHS programs are responsible for referring families with infants and toddlers suspected of having a disability to CDW, DPH, to coordinate needed evaluations.

Head Start Programs, MHS, and ECAP are required to refer and obtain evaluations for children suspected of having a disability.

School districts, CDW, DPH, Head Start Programs, EHS, MHS, and ECAP may coordinate comprehensive evaluation efforts by:

- a. Coordinating evaluation time lines for each agency.
- b. Coordinating sites and scheduling for evaluations, for example:
 - (1) Providing evaluations on-site or in other natural environments.
 - (2) Obtaining parent permission and notifying parents about evaluations.
 - (3) Providing transportation to appointments for evaluations.
- c. Coordinating paperwork to assure evaluation results can be shared between agencies when appropriate, including parent permission regarding evaluation and sharing of evaluation information.
- d. Sharing evaluation information and results when possible.
- e. Including an EHS, HS, MHS, or ECAP representative as a member of the evaluation team.
- f. Using the same or similar evaluation procedures and instruments when possible.
- g. Providing training, within and across agencies, around the use of same or similar evaluation procedures and instruments.

h. Ensuring that information provided by parents, about their children, is included in the evaluation process.

4. Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Process and Implementation

CDW, DPH, is required to develop an IFSP for children determined to be eligible for early intervention.

School districts are required to develop an IEP for children determined to be eligible for special education.

EHS and MHS programs must support parent participation in the evaluation and IFSP development process for infants and toddlers enrolled in their program.

Head Start Programs, MHS, and ECAP are required to participate in the development of the IEP for preschool age children.

School districts, CDW, DPH, EHS and Head Start Programs, and ECAP may coordinate the development of the IEP/IFSP by:

- a. Assuring the participation of appropriate EHS, MHS, Head Start, and ECAP staff as part of the IEP/IFSP team and designating responsibility for notification of team members for meetings.
- b. Facilitating the active involvement of parents by delineating responsibility for notification, explanation of the purpose for meeting, etc.
- c. Coordinating paperwork and parental consent to assure IEP/IFSP can be shared.
- d. Scheduling the IEP/IFSP meeting to ensure participation by appropriate agencies.

5. Placement/Natural Environment

School districts are required to provide services to preschool children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with an opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers, as appropriate.

CDW, DPH, is required to serve infants and toddlers in natural environments to the maximum extent possible.

EHS, MHS, Head Start Programs, and ECAP are required to make available ten percent of their enrollment opportunities to children with disabilities.

School districts, Head Start Programs, MHS, and ECAP may work cooperatively in regard to placement by considering the following options:

- a. When considering placement in natural environments, IEP/IFSP teams, including the parents, will consider all placement options, including Head Start, MHS, EHS, school district programs, and ECAP.
- b. School districts refer children with disabilities to the Head Start Program, MHS, or ECAP as a placement option.

In this case, the following must be discussed, developed, or shared:

(1) Options for dual enrollment.

(2) Eligibility and selection criteria for EHS, MHS, Head Start, and ECAP enrollment.

(3) Referral procedures to the EHS, MHS, and Head Start programs and ECAP (contact persons, etc.)

(4) Information on EHS, MHS, Head Start, and ECAP visitation options for parents.

6. Service Provision

School districts are required to ensure that all services designated in the child's IEP are provided.

CDW, DPH, is required to ensure that all early intervention services designated in the child and family's IFSP are provided.

Head Start, MHS Programs and ECAP are required to assist in the implementation of IEPs for children with disabilities.

Early Head Start and MHS are required to assist in the implementation of IFSPs for children with disabilities from birth to three and their families.

All programs should consider the following options to ensure the coordination of services to children with disabilities:

- a. CDW, DPH, and school districts should provide consultation services to HS, ECAP, EHS, and MHS to ensure continuity and consistency in service delivery.
- b. The school district could place special education staff and therapists at the Head Start Center.

- c. School districts could reimburse Head Start Programs for salaries of necessary staff as defined by an IEP.
- d. School districts and CDW, DPH, provide special education/early intervention resources, itinerant or consultative teachers, early interventionists and therapists on-site at the EHS, MHS, ECAP, and Head Start Program.
- e. Programs and districts share or coordinate resources and services such as case management, transportation and therapy services across agencies and with families.
- f. CDW, DPH, may provide early intervention services on site at the Early Head Start or Migrant Head Start programs.
- g. Children with disabilities enrolled in Head Start and ECAP may receive comprehensive Head Start or ECAP services when placed in the school district program for their educational services.

7. Procedures for Review/Monitoring Child's Progress

School districts, CDW, DPH, Head Start, EHS, MHS and ECAP may coordinate efforts by:

- a. Coordinating IFSP/IEP review meetings with EHS, MHS, ECAP and Head Start personnel.
- b. Sharing procedures and forms for reporting attendance.
- c. Developing procedures for sharing progress reports and periodic consultation among all staff (school districts, CDW, DPH, EHS, MHS, ECAP and Head Start) providing services.

8. Transition

All agencies are required to plan for the smooth transition of children from one service setting to another.

Transition efforts among all programs may be coordinated by:

- a. Developing a process for sharing information, including obtaining the necessary consent for information sharing.
- b. Training staff about the receiving program's services for children and families.
- c. Participate in developing transition plans, using existing plans such as the

IFSP, when applicable, and other supplemental information.

- d. Developing time lines for transition activities and participating in transition planning as outlined in IDEA.
- e. Arranging visits and other options for orienting staff, children and families to the receiving program(s).

9. Staff Development

All programs are required to provide ongoing training for staff to increase their knowledge and ability to provide quality services to children with disabilities and may coordinate efforts by:

- a. Developing a system for staff needs assessment in the area of training.
- b. Coordinating training calendars.
- c. Training staff regarding the regulations and program philosophy of each agency.
- d. Inviting staff from each agency and families to share training activities.
- e. Planning joint training activities.
- f. Linking local training efforts with the Statewide Partners' Council for Children with Disabilities.
- g. Providing opportunities for staff visitation and information sharing across agencies.

10. System Coordination

All Programs have systems for counting and reporting children with disabilities and for ensuring continuity and consistency in service delivery. Efforts may be coordinated by:

- a. Developing a system so that time lines and persons responsible for reporting are clear.
- b. Training staff regarding specific procedures, timelines and regulations for each agency.
- c. Sharing existing interagency agreements that impact children with disabilities and their families.
- d. Sharing information to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of services to children who are migrant and/or homeless.

11. Problem Solving

All agencies will ensure that there is a system in place to resolve disputes and solve problems. The system should include:

- a. Timelines for regular meetings to review the local agreement, plan collaborative activities and to resolve issues.
- b. The identification of a liaison from each agency

V. Confidentiality

All parties to this agreement shall follow the requirements outlined in the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA).

VI. Agreement Review

This interagency agreement will be reviewed to assess the effectiveness of the partnership and revised by (name of school district or CDW, DPH) and (name of EHS, MHS, Head Start program or ECAP) on an as needed basis or at least once annually. This agreement may be terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice.

Name, Title

Name, Title

Date

Date