

EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 19 – 2010 revision

Enrollment, Disabilities & EHS/Head Start Agencies

How do the requirements regarding enrolling at least 10% of children with disabilities apply for an agency that has both a Head Start and an Early Head Start program with one grant award?

Response:

In recognition of the value and worth of all children, Early Head Start (EHS) requires inclusion of children with disabilities. The *Head Start Act* (amended 2007) requires that not less than 10 percent of the total number of enrollment are for children with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities are defined as those children under three years of age who are eligible for services under State regulations governing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is a Federal law that is implemented at the State and local levels to provide screening, assessment, and, for eligible infants and toddlers, early intervention services based on Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP).

“When a grantee or delegate agency operates both an Early Head Start (EHS) and preschool Head Start (HS) program under the same grant or delegate agreement, then the requirement that at least 10% of the children actually enrolled be children with disabilities applies to the combined enrollment of the two programs funded under that grant or delegate agreement. When a grantee has multiple delegate agency agreements, the 10% requirement applies separately to each of their delegate agencies.

Agencies are reminded that they must recruit, select and enroll those children most in need, including children with disabilities, across the entire age range of children served by these two programs so that children with disabilities will have opportunities to be enrolled in both their EHS and HS programs. As a general practice programs should strive to have at least 10% of enrollment in each program be children with disabilities” (OHS – PC – K – 028, 2009).

Concern for agency-wide focus on enrollment for infants and toddlers with disabilities

If agencies combine the 10% disabilities enrollment between both programs, it could significantly reduce the enrollment opportunities for infants and toddlers with disabilities. The concern is programs then may not assign priority to the recruitment and selection of infants and toddlers with disabilities in the Early Head Start program.

Continued efforts for identifying disabilities

Head Start and EHS often provide the first opportunity for a comprehensive assessment of a child’s development and special needs. The 2008-2009 PIR indicates that about 6% of enrolled children were identified with disabilities during the program year. Programs should continue with efforts of early identification.

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- What is the program's plan for recruitment, selection, and enrollment of infants and toddlers with disabilities?
- How do the EHS program and the Part C partner communicate, coordinate, and plan for success recruitment and program services for children with disabilities?
- How does the EHS program ensure that there is a proportional representation of infants and toddlers with disabilities when it operates jointly with a Head Start program?

Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

The March 10, 2009 Program Instruction on Enrollment of Children with Disabilities (ACF-PI-HS-09-04) provides the following information on the requirement:

“Current Head Start regulations found at 45 CFR §1305.6(c) have been superseded by the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9837, Section 640(d)(1), which requires that “the Secretary shall establish policies and procedures to assure that for fiscal year 2009 and thereafter, not less than 10 percent of the total number of children actually enrolled by each Head Start agency and each delegate agency will be children with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), by the State or local agency providing services under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).”

Resources:

Enrollment of Children with Disabilities. Program Instruction ACF-PI-HS-09-04. DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2009.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/PIs>

Policy Clarifications. *The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.* DHHS/ACF/OHS. Retrieved January 5, 2010 from

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Policy%20Clarifications%20and%20FAQs>

- **K-028: Does a grantee that operates both a Head Start and Early Head Start Program have to reach 10% enrollment of children with disabilities in each of the programs or is the 10% requirement applied to the combined enrollment of the two programs?**

SpecialQuest Birth To Five: Head Start/Hilton Training Program. DHHS/ACF/OHS. <http://www.specialquest.org/>

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This Tip Sheet is not a regulatory document. Its intent is to provide a basis for dialogue, clarification, and problem solving among Office of Head Start, Regional Offices, TA consultants, and grantees. If you need further clarification on Head Start Policies and regulations, please contact your Regional Program Specialist.