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EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: TRANSITIONS

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: To establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school or other child care settings. These procedures must include: Coordinating with the schools or other agencies to ensure that individual Head Start children's relevant records are transferred to the school or next placement in which a child will enroll or from earlier placements to Head Start; Outreach to encourage communication between Head Start staff and their counterparts in the schools and other child care settings including principals, teachers, social workers and health staff to facilitate continuity of programming; Initiating meetings involving Head Start teachers and parents and kindergarten or elementary school teachers to discuss the developmental progress and abilities of individual children; and initiating joint transition-related training for Head Start staff and school or other child development staff.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

Successful transitions have a positive long-lasting effect on children's ability to learn and the relationship between home and school for parents. This Head Start program places a strong emphasis on parent and family engagement and highly values early childhood education. Partnerships we form will help children and families bridge the gap between learning environments and create opportunities for parents/guardians to become more involved in their children's education.

The goal of this transition plan will be to continue to foster strong parental involvement of Head Start parents and families into the public schools, create strong local partnerships among elementary schools, parents and Head Start and develop relationships between elementary schools, parents and Head Start.

To ensure a seamless transition, children and families will be transitioned from home to the Head Start program by attending open house prior to classes beginning. Teachers will ensure that a home visit has taken place for each child to also assist in the transition from home to school.

Children will also be transitioned from Head Start into the public school system at the end of the program year by inviting kindergarten teachers to speak at parent meetings and having the children participate in field trips to the local kindergarten classes.

Recruitment is on-going. However in February the Family Advocates will begin recruitment for the upcoming school year by starting communication within the community. The first contact for a parent/guardian interested in enrolling their child is the Family Advocate. At recruitment, information must be given to parents regarding our partnership with the elementary schools. The Program Director and Family Service Manager will be responsible for developing and maintaining a partnership agreement between Head Start and the School District that promotes transition activities, training, communication and access to resources. The Program Director, Family Service Manager and the Board of Education for each relative Public School District will assess current transition activities and address any existing barriers.

During the months of March and April the Family Service Manager will ensure the Family Advocates provide the following services to parents/guardians for school readiness:

- Provide on-site transition related training for parents/guardians that includes the rights and responsibilities of parents in the school setting and ways to become an advocate for their child.
- Inform parents/guardians and participate in Kindergarten registration and obtain a list of required Kindergarten supplies.

The Family Advocates along with the Education Staff will provide the following activities for parents/guardians to promote school readiness:

- Invite Kindergarten teachers to visit with Head Start classroom children.
- Arrange for Head Start children, parents/guardians and staff to visit local Kindergarten classrooms.
- Plan other creative activities/field trips and follow-up with parents/guardians and children to help make a seamless transition to Kindergarten.

Area Coordinators and the Education Manager will ensure Education staff provides the following activities/procedures to ensure school readiness:

- Utilizing the *Classroom Transition Summary* sheet, track all transition activities.
- Submit a Transition Summary form to the Area Coordinator.
- Reinforce and support children's learning experiences in Kindergarten through classroom activities.

In collaboration with parents/guardians and the LEA, the Health Services Manager, along with the Education staff and Family Advocates, will discuss transitioning Head Start children with an IEP in to the public School.