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COMPONENT: CHILD MENTAL HEALTH

SUBJECT: SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: The program severely limits the use of suspension and prohibits expulsion due to a child’s behavior.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

The program severely limits the use of suspension due to a child’s behavior.

- Such suspensions are only temporary in nature.

A temporary suspension is used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

Before the program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, the program engages with a mental health consultant, collaborates with the parents, and utilizes appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, the program helps the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:

- Continuing to engage with the parents and a Mental Health Consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;
- Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed;
- Providing services that include home visits; and,
- Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.

Prohibition on Expulsion

The program cannot expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior.

When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, the program explores all possible steps and documents all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitates the child's safe participation in the program.

- Such steps include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. 705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child's teacher, and:
 - If the child has an IFSP or IEP, the program consults with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or,
 - If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the program collaborates, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.

If, after the program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described above, the program, in consultation with the parents, the child's Teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the Mental Health Consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program works with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.