



Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol

Family and Community Engagement and ERSEA Guides

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Interviews

ERSEA Coordinator—Interview

ERSEA Compliance Framework #1—Recruitment and Selection

- ▶ Interview the ERSEA Coordinator to determine if the program has an established process for the recruitment of families with Head Start and/or Early Head Start eligible children, including children with disabilities and pregnant women (if applicable). If a process has been established, determine how the program defined this process.

During your interview, determine if prior to establishing the process for recruitment, the program gained an understanding of the geographic area(s) most in need of services and used this information to define their geographic service area. Ensure that after gaining an understanding of the community that the program established recruitment goals, subsequently developed recruitment plans, and conducted outreach to meet these recruitment goals.

ERSEA 1.1

- ▶ Interview the ERSEA coordinator to determine if the program has established selection criteria. If the ERSEA coordinator says that the program does have selection criteria, determine what the criteria are that the grantee uses to select children.

The criteria should at a minimum include child age, family income/categorical eligibility, availability of kindergarten or first grade for the child, as well as any locally determined priorities. If this is a Migrant program, determine whether priority was given to children from families whose pursuit of agricultural work required them to relocate most frequently within the previous two years.

During your interview with the ERSEA coordinator determine who they work with when writing the criteria and who is responsible for the approval/disapproval of the criteria.

ERSEA 1.2

- ▶ Interview the ERSEA Coordinator about the program's decision making process with respect to if and when to enroll children whose family income is above 100% of poverty. Determine how the program ensures that children who are below the poverty line or are categorically eligible are enrolled before other children.

ERSEA 1.3



ERSEA Compliance Framework #2—Eligibility

- ▶ Interview the ERSEA coordinator about the program's enrollment process. Ask him/her to describe the program's enrollment process in detail and to provide you with information on how enrollment decisions are made.

Prior to the program enrolling children whose families exceed the low income guidelines the AI/AN program must ensure that:

- ▶ All children from Indian and non-Indian families living on the reservation that meet the low-income guidelines who wish to be enrolled in Head Start are served; AND
- ▶ That all children from income-eligible Indian families native to the reservation living in non-reservation areas, approved as part of the Tribe's service area, who wish to be enrolled in Head Start are served by the program are served.

Note: Applies only to AIAN programs

ERSEA 2.3

ERSEA Compliance Framework #3—Enrollment

- ▶ Ask the ERSEA coordinator to indicate the percentage of actual enrollment in the program that is children with disabilities and whether the program has received a waiver from ACF.

If the monitoring review's start date is prior to the mid-point of the program's year, listen for evidence that the program is making reasonable progress towards meeting the 10% threshold requirement, which includes showing progress in enrolling children with disabilities and of conducting outreach to families of children with disabilities.

ERSEA 3.1

- ▶ Ask the ERSEA Coordinator about how the program developed and maintains its waiting list and how it ranks the children who are listed on the waiting list. Listen for how the program uses its selection criteria to rank order children on its waiting list (please note that if the program is under-enrolled, they are not required to maintain a waiting list).

Ask about the program's ongoing activities and community outreach efforts to identify underserved populations to ensure that eligible children enter the program as vacancies occur, in order for you to learn about how the program works to fill any vacancies.

ERSEA 3.2



ERSEA Compliance Framework #4—Attendance and Participation

- ▶ Ask the ERSEA coordinator to show you records of the program’s monthly average daily attendance to determine whether it falls below 85 percent. In programs for which monthly average daily attendance falls below 85%, ask the ERSEA coordinator to describe how the program analyzes the patterns of and causes for absenteeism, and how the program supports families in instances where children have 4 or more unexcused absences.

ERSEA 4.1



FCE Coordinator—Interview

Child Health & Safety Compliance Framework #6—Safe Transportation

- ▶ Interview the FCE Coordinator to determine how the program provides assistance to families to ensure children are able to attend program activities in areas where no transportation services are provided.

Ask the Coordinator to describe the processes the program has in place to ensure that parents who experience transportation challenges are provided support in ensuring their child is able to attend program activities. Ask the Coordinator for samples of the program materials that describe the types of transportation services and support that are available to families enrolled in the program.

CHS 6.6

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #3—Supporting Parents as Their Child's First and Most Important Educator

- ▶ Interview the FCE Coordinator to determine if the program has a process in place to complete all of the required home visits. Ask the staff member to describe how the program ensures that all children receive the required home visits and how they track their progress in completing the home visits. It may be helpful to choose a few children and ask the staff member to show you how they know if and when home visits have been completed for the child. If it is early in the program year, prior to January, and the program has not yet had time to complete the home visits ask the program to provide you with information from the previous year. Document the number and percent of home visits that were not completed.

FCE 3.1

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #5—Community Partnerships

- ▶ Interview the FCE Coordinator to determine whether the program has established and maintained a Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC).

Focus your interview on the members included in the committee. Do members include Head Start parents, professionals, and other volunteers from the community? How do they inform policy regarding Health services?

FCE 5.1



- ▶ Interview the FCE Coordinator to determine whether the program has established ongoing collaborative relationships.

The focus of your interview should be on the effectiveness of the partnerships and how they meet the needs of the community. Your goal is to understand how the Head Start program and the collaborating agencies work together to ensure that children and families receive the required services, what the Head Start program does to reduce gaps or delays in service, and how agreements focus on sharing resources between the Head Start program and the collaborating agencies.

Ask the FCE Coordinator how the relationships they've established meet the needs of the community. How do they determine the needs of the community and ensure that their partnerships meet them?

Ensure during your interview that the Head Start program has attempted to make agreements with all of the required agencies referenced in 1304.41(a)(2)(i-ix).

FCE 5.2



FCE Staff—Interview

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #1—Building Relationships and Strengthening Families

- ▶ Interview FCE staff to determine how the program ensures that staff are respectful of each family’s diversity and cultural and ethnic background.

Determine whether the staff member is aware of how to respect the diversity and cultural and ethnic differences of children and families. Have staff demonstrated an interest in learning about and understanding the cultural norms of enrolled families? For example, can they identify where families are from, the languages and cultures represented in their program and ways that they have responded appropriately? How did they learn this information?

Find out how the staff member uses what he or she has learned about the backgrounds of families to ensure that all children and families feel welcomed and respected. Are staff members able to communicate in the family’s home language? If not, how do they communicate with the family?

FCE 1.1

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #2—Promoting Positive Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Interview the FCE Staff to determine whether the program ensures that parents have an opportunity to enhance their parenting skills and foster the growth and development of their children.

Find out how the program provides opportunities for parenting skill and knowledge development. Determine how information is provided and what opportunities parents have to process the information. Look for examples of adult learning principles being utilized in a parenting curriculum that has been adopted, adapted or developed or provided through an evidence-based approach to support parenting skills and knowledge development.

FCE 2.1



Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #3—Supporting Parents as Their Child's First and Most Important Educator

- ▶ Determine if the program has provided opportunities to both children and families to increase their access to materials, services, and activities essential to literacy development.

Listen to ensure the program used the following approaches:

- ▶ Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
- ▶ Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children
- ▶ Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and financial literacy
- ▶ Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

FCE 3.4

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #4—Developing Meaningful and Individualized Transitions

- ▶ Interview FCE staff to determine whether the program has attempted to assist parents in becoming their children's advocate as they transition.

In your interview determine how the program:

- ▶ Establishes and maintains procedures to support successful transitions including active agreements with community partners (i.e. LEAs and local school districts),
- ▶ Provides education and training to parents to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the school setting, and
- ▶ Assists parents in communicating with teachers and other school personnel so that parents can participate in decisions related to their children's education.

FCE 4.1

- ▶ During your conversation with the FCE staff, review together one or more child files to show how the program does transition planning for each child. Learn how the program makes determinations as to whether the child should remain in Early Head Start for additional months until he or she can transition into Head Start or another program.

Encourage the FCE staff to show and describe how the program takes into account each of the following in transition planning:

- ▶ Begins at least six (6) months prior to the child's third birthday



- ▶ The child's health status and developmental level
- ▶ The progress made by the child and family while in Early Head Start and current changing circumstances
- ▶ The availability of Head Start and other child development or child care services in the community
- ▶ Evidence that the program made a determination as to whether the child should remain in EHS for additional months until he or she can transition into HS or another program

Note: Applies only to programs serving infants and toddlers

FCE 4.2



Mental Health Consultant—Interview

Child Development & Education Compliance Framework #3—Individualizing

- ▶ Interview the Mental Health Consultant to determine the type of services he or she provides to the program. Ask the Consultant about the schedule of onsite mental health consultations. Determine how the Consultant is involved in the design and implementation of program practices.

CDE 3.7

Mental Health Services Coordinator—Interview

Child Development & Education Compliance Framework #3—Individualizing

- ▶ Interview the Mental Health Coordinator to determine if the program has secured the services of a mental health professional and that the services provided by the professional are frequent and sufficient according to the needs of the program.

Ask the Coordinator to describe how they provide or ensure a consultant provides regularly scheduled, ongoing expertise and oversight in the area of mental health services.

CDE 3.7

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #2—Promoting Positive Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Interview the Mental Health Services Coordinator to confirm the program performed all of the required tasks related to working collaboratively with them in relation to Mental Health services.

During your interview, determine how the mental health professional engages with parents and staff. Ask the Mental Health Services Coordinator about the types of training and materials that are shared with parents. Collect information about how the mental health professional shares his or her observations with parents, discusses their concerns, and provides information for parents related to mental health.

FCE 2.2



- ▶ Interview the Mental Health Services Coordinator to determine whether the program provided education on mental health issues.

During your interview ask for examples of the types of mental health education and consultation provided to parents and staff and the frequency of those educational opportunities. Look for an ongoing system of mental health education and consultation that can reach families and support staff at various points depending on need and development. Examples should include both group learning and individual opportunities as needed.

FCE 2.3



Parent—Interview

ERSEA Compliance Framework #4—Attendance and Participation

- ▶ Ask parents to describe if and how the program charges fees, for example paying late fees, registration fees, money for field trips, etc., to help you determine whether parents have ever been required to pay Head Start in exchange for their child's participation in the program.

If parents are required to pay fees, ask how this affected their ability to participate in the program.

If parents are required to pay fees, verify that these fees are required with the Fiscal Reviewer. Work with the Fiscal Reviewer to collect documentation of the required payments and include them as part of your evidence.

ERSEA 4.2

Child Health & Safety Compliance Framework #1—Helping Families Access Health and Dental Care

- ▶ Interview parents to gain an understanding of how the program handled any situation in which there was an emergency involving a child or if there was a suspected health or developmental concern (if applicable). Ask the parent(s) you are interviewing whether their child experienced an emergency (e.g., a visit to the emergency room) during program hours. If so, were they notified of the emergency in a prompt and timely manner, and who from the program notified them?

CHS 1.3



Child Health & Safety Compliance Framework #2—Screening and Referrals

- ▶ Interview parents about their involvement in the screening, referral, and evaluation process for their child. The program is required to provide them with information on the types of screenings their child will be receiving and the results of the screenings.

During your interview determine what information the program provided to them both prior to and after screening were completed. If applicable, the program is also required to provide parents with the purpose of any follow up evaluations and the subsequent results of the follow up evaluations.

If their child was in need of an IEP ask the parents how the program included them in the process of developing the IEP.

CHS 2.3

Child Health & Safety Compliance Framework #3—Physical Environments

- ▶ Interview parents regarding the program's responsibility to provide items which meet the needs of parents and children. Has the program informed them that it is the responsibility of the program to provide these items, including diapers and wipes?

CHS 3.2

Child Health & Safety Compliance Framework #6—Safe Transportation

- ▶ Interview parents to determine how the program provides assistance to families to ensure children are able to attend program activities in areas where no transportation services are provided.

If a parent describes any transportation challenges, ask them to describe the challenges and how the program worked, or did not work, with the family to overcome any challenges to their child's attendance, due to transportation.

CHS 6.6

Child Development & Education Compliance Framework #3—Individualizing

- ▶ Interview parent(s) to determine if the program attempted to obtain information from them about their child's health and safety needs.

CDE 3.2



Child Development & Education Compliance Framework #4—Monitoring Children’s Progress

- ▶ For parents of children who are Dual Language Learners, ask them to describe the types of services their child receives to support their overall development, and their acquisition of English. Ask them how often they discuss their child’s progress and what type of information program staff share with them and the type of information they share with the program.

CDE 4.3

- ▶ Interview parents to determine how the program has been respectful of each family’s diversity, cultural and ethnic background.

Find out whether parents feel welcome in the program and ask them to explain the ways in which they feel welcome (or don’t feel). Determine how the program is respectful of the cultural or ethnic background of families.

Ask how the program ensures that language does not create any barriers to parents’ full participation in program activities by asking who they regularly speak with at the program that speaks their language.

FCE 1.1



Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #1—Building Relationships and Strengthening Families

- ▶ Interview parents to determine how the program has facilitated a strengths-based goal setting process with the parents.

Ask the parents to provide you with examples of the set of opportunities the program offers families to develop and implement individualized family goals. Ask for descriptions of the types of activities staff provide to build new skills, build on pre-existing family plans, or provide access to community resources when needed.

Determine whether the program initiated the process of family goal-setting soon after enrollment.

Through your interview with the parents determine whether they trust the program to help them achieve the goals that have been identified.

Note: A Family Partnership Agreement is not a form. It is the process through which programs support families in Head Start. Thus, it is an interactive experience that happens over time and can include many different types of interactions. This process is not a one-time “event,” such as a formal meeting.

FCE 1.2

- ▶ Interview parents to determine how the program has provided, directly or through referrals, resources and services for families’ needs, goals, and interests and conducts follow-ups to determine the effectiveness of services received.

Engage with the families during your interview and ask them if they are willing to share examples of some of the services that the Head Start program provides to them either directly or through referrals. Ask them about their satisfaction with the services provided and how the program follows-up with them to ensure their expectations are met.

FCE 1.3



Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #2—Promoting Positive Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Interview parents to determine whether the program ensures that parents have an opportunity to enhance their parenting skills and foster the growth and development of their children.

During your interview ask parents for examples of how they have had opportunities to enhance their parenting skills. For example, what type of information do they learn about getting their children ready for school? Are they provided opportunities to share concerns about their child's development? What types of information have they received about their children's developmental strengths or opportunities? How is the program partnering with them to support their children's individual learning experience?

FCE 2.1

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #2—Promoting Positive Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Interview parents to confirm that the program performed all of the required tasks related to working collaboratively with them in relation to Mental Health services.

Parents are often concerned about behavioral issues with their children. Talk with the parents to determine how they are encouraged to share their concerns and are supported in understanding appropriate responses to challenging behaviors. Find out what information parents receive about developing supportive environments and strategies for their children.

FCE 2.2

- ▶ Interview parents to determine whether the program provided education on mental health issues.

Collect information about the parent's ability to access Mental Health services and talk to the mental health professional. Focus on the type and quality of services, the amount of information provided to parents and the regularity of those services. Education on mental health should be provided to groups and individuals as needed.

FCE 2.3



Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #3—Supporting Parents as Their Child's First and Most Important Educator

- ▶ Interview parents about their staff-parent conferences.

Ask parents about the value of the staff-parent conferences that are provided to them. An important focus of this interview is to determine how informed the parents are about the goals for their child's development and their educational progress. It is also important to find out whether parents had the opportunities to provide input to teachers about their own observations of their children.

Note: Only applies to parents of children enrolled in the center based program option

FCE 3.1

- ▶ Interview parents to determine how the program welcomes them at all times, whether they are encouraged to observe their children as often as possible, and whether there is a requirement that they participate as a condition of their children's enrollment.

FCE 3.2

- ▶ Interview parents about access to materials, services, and activities essential to family literacy development.

During your interview ask parents for examples of family literacy activities that are provided by the program. Does the program support the parents in their role as the children's first teacher by giving them strategies for interactive literacy activities at home and/or in the community? Does the program give them strategies they can use that support their children's language development? Ask families how the program helps them to access literacy material, services, and activities that engage the entire family.

Also, ask for examples of activities or strategies that the program uses to help develop families' financial literacy, such as activities that support knowledge about budgeting, financial resources, access to benefit programs, and other options.

FCE 3.4

- ▶ Interview parents of children with disabilities to determine whether the program has provided information to them to help develop their knowledge about their children's disabilities.

Use your interview to determine whether parents are:



- ▶ Informed of their rights under IDEA
- ▶ Engaged in activities or communication aimed at building their self-confidence, skills and knowledge in accessing resources
- ▶ Informed as to how to advocate to ensure the special needs of their children are met

FCE 3.5

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #4—Developing Meaningful and Individualized Transitions

- ▶ Interview parents to determine whether the program has attempted to assist them in becoming their children's advocate as they transition.

Use your interview to determine whether parents understand and are educated about the transition process. Ask parents to describe the transition process and the opportunities they have to interact with new teachers (e.g., Head Start teachers for infant/toddler transitions) or other school personnel. Determine whether the parents feel empowered to make decisions about their children's education and know their rights in the school setting.

FCE 4.1



Document Reviews

ERSEA Documents—Document

ERSEA Compliance Framework #1—Recruitment and Selection

- ▶ Perform a document review of the program's recruitment policies to determine if the program has an established process for the recruitment of families with Head Start and/or Early Head Start eligible children, including children with disabilities and pregnant women (if applicable).

Also determine if the program has conducted community research and subsequently established recruitment goals based on their knowledge of community needs.

ERSEA 1.1

- ▶ Perform a document review of the program's selection criteria to determine if the grantee has established selection criteria. If the program does have criteria, review the criteria to ensure they meet the requirements. The criteria should at a minimum include child age, family income/categorical eligibility, availability of kindergarten or first grade for the child, as well as any locally determined priorities. If this is a Migrant program, look for evidence that priority was given to children from families whose pursuit of agricultural work required them to relocate most frequently within the previous two years.

ERSEA 1.2

- ▶ Perform a document review of the program's selection criteria to determine if and how the program ensures that children who are below the poverty line or are categorically eligible are enrolled prior to children whose family income is above 100% of poverty.

ERSEA 1.3



ERSEA Compliance Framework #3—Enrollment

- ▶ Perform a document review of the program’s enrollment documents to determine the percentage of children enrolled in the program (actual enrollment) that are children with disabilities. (Note: the program might have a waiver from ACF.)

If the monitoring review’s start date is prior to the mid-point of the program’s year, look to see if the enrollment percentage shows progress in enrolling children with disabilities, and look for any evidence that the program is conducting outreach to families of children with disabilities as a means of making reasonable progress towards meeting the 10% threshold requirement. (Note that written documentation of these recruitment efforts is not required).

The program should be able to provide you with percentage of children enrolled in the program with disabilities through their tracking system.

ERSEA 3.1

- ▶ Perform a document review of the program’s waiting list and selection criteria. Determine whether the program maintains an active waiting list at all times in which children are ranked according to the program’s selection criteria, and whether the program uses the waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur (please note that if the program is under enrolled they are not required to maintain a waiting list).

ERSEA 3.2

- ▶ Perform a document review of the program’s enrollment reports to determine whether they were submitted to the ACF Regional Office within 14 days following the end of the previous month, and that they accurately match enrollment data maintained by the grantee. Determine whether actual enrollment was less than funded enrollment, for how long the shortfall existed, and whether the program submitted in their report to ACF the reason for any existing enrollment shortfall.

ERSEA 3.3



ERSEA Compliance Framework #4—Attendance and Participation

- ▶ Perform a review of the program’s daily attendance records to determine whether, for children with 4 or more consecutive unexcused absences, the program took efforts to initiate appropriate family support. Document the number and percent of children who had 4 or more consecutive unexcused absences where the program did not initiate appropriate family support.

ERSEA 4.1

Family Services—Document

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #1—Building Relationships and Strengthening Families

- ▶ With the program, review the documents used to track family services. Determine if there is evidence of:
 - ▶ The program working collaboratively with the parents to identify and continually access services and resources.
 - ▶ The program follows up with the family to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of the services received through referrals, when necessary, met the family's expectations and circumstances.

FCE 1.3

HSAC Documents—Document

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #5—Community Partnerships

- ▶ Review the Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) documents to confirm that the membership requirements are met.

Ask for documentation that validates the formation of an HSAC. Review the documents to determine how the HSAC informs policy regarding Health services and ensure that the HSAC includes the following members:

- ▶ Head Start parents
- ▶ Professionals
- ▶ Other volunteers from the community

FCE 5.1



Interagency Agreements—Document

Family & Community Engagement Compliance Framework #5—Community Partnerships

- ▶ Review the program's Interagency Agreements with all the LEAs and other agencies within the grantee's service areas and determine whether they include the following:
 - ▶ Referrals for evaluations, IEP meetings, and placement decisions
 - ▶ Transitions
 - ▶ File and resource sharing

FCE 5.3

Mental Health Documents—Document

Child Development & Education Compliance Framework #3—Individualizing

- ▶ If applicable, review the consulting agreement with the mental health professional.
Review the contract to determine the types of services the professional is responsible for and the frequency for which they visit the program.

CDE 3.7



Summary

Family and Community Engagement Summary

Management Systems Compliance Framework #5—Program Systems Summaries and Strengths

- ▶ Summarize the results of your review of the program’s provision of Family and Community Engagement services. Determine if the program has effective systems in place to actively engage families and community members meaningful ways so they both contribute to and actively participate in program activities, as is required by Head Start performance standards and regulations. Provide support for your determination. Describe any patterns you found, areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement. Remember to consult with other reviewers (e.g., CHS and CDE reviewers) about their findings, as appropriate.

SYS 5.2