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# Start-Up Planner Tips for Working with EHS Grantees

*(Expanded Edition)*

Implementing, Supporting, and Sustaining Program  
Options



EHS NRC

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EHS Start-Up Planner Project



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## *Implementing, Supporting, and Sustaining Program Options*

### ***Did You Know?***

- The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development. [45 CFR 1306.33 \(b\)\(1\)](#)
- In order to meet minimum Federal requirements, grantees operating home-based programs—including Early Head Start programs operating on a full-year basis—must reschedule home visits or group socializations cancelled by program staff. [45 CFR 1306.33\(a\)\(3\)](#)
- Grantees implementing a combination program option must provide class sessions and home visits that result in an amount of contact with children and families that is, at a minimum, equivalent to the services provided through the center-based program option or the home-based program option. [45 CFR 1306.34\(a\)\(1\)](#)
- The development of secure relationships is central to out-of-home care settings for infants and toddlers, and having a limited number of teachers who demonstrate an understanding of the child's family culture and language is recommended whenever possible. [45 CFR 1304.21\(b\)\(1\)\(i\)](#)
- Families enrolled in the Head Start or Early Head Start family child care program option must have proportionate representation on the Policy Council or policy committee. [45 CFR 1306.35\(a\)\(4\)](#)

As Early Head Start (EHS) programs expand or develop comprehensive services, delivered through a program option, a range of strategies may be considered in order to meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). Program options, which include home- and center-based, along with family child care and combination options, are selected in order to meet the needs of children and their families in a community. Although the program option or vehicle for delivering services may vary, management systems must be created or recreated to guarantee quality in the design and delivery of comprehensive services. The following resource provides the HSPPS and related Federal announcements, policy clarifications, strategies, and resources necessary to implement services—even when there are challenges—and sustain quality through each of the program options.

This Tip Sheet, designed to be used by EHS Start-Up Planners, administrators, and program staff, provides:

- Information regarding Federal requirements.
- Answers to challenging policy questions.

- Ideas for developing and implementing services, addressing challenges, and planning for sustainability.
- Resources for planning and implementation.

EHS Start-Up Planners and staff will find quick and easy resources to consider throughout the start-up process.

## ***Head Start Program Performance Standards***

### **Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:**

[1304.21 Education and early childhood development.](#)

[1304.52 Human resources management.](#)

[1304.53 Facilities, materials, and equipment.](#)

[1306.20 Program staffing.](#)

[1306.31 Choosing a Head Start program option.](#)

[1306.32 Center-based program option.](#)

[1306.33 Home based program option.](#)

[1306.34 Combination program option.](#)

[1306.35 Family child care program option.](#)

[1306.36 Additional Head Start program option variations.](#)

## ***Information Memoranda and Program Instructions***

[IM-10-06 Qualifications for Early Head Start Infant and Toddler Center-based staff](#)

[ACF-IM-HS-00-22 Child Development Services During Home Visits and Socializations in the Early Head Start Home-Based Program Option](#)

[PI 10-04 Application Procedures for Locally Designed or Specialized Delivery Models](#)

## ***Policy Clarifications***

[OHS – PC – J – 004 Do Family Child Care providers delivering Head Start services through a partnership agreement with a Head Start grantee need to meet the teacher credentialing requirements outlined in the Head Start Act for teachers in a center based program?](#)

[OHS – PC – J – 008 If a Head Start program is collaborating with a pre-K program, and classrooms include both Head Start and pre-K children, can a program operate a double session model and enroll 20 children in both the morning and afternoon sessions?](#)

[OHS – PC – J – 011 State daycare rules and Head Start’s rules sometimes differ. Which rule must Head Start programs comply with? Why?](#)

OHS – PC – J – 016 Can a Head Start program exceed the class size limitations of 1306.32 if additional classroom staff is made available?

OHS – PC – J – 018 If a center-based program enrolls a child with only a few months remaining in the program year, is the program still required to have two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences?

OHS – PC – J – 021 Can two children share a slot (i.e. one child attends Head Start for three days a week and the other child for the remaining two days)? Would it be appropriate for a classroom to have more than 20 children on its roster if the schedule were planned so that there were never more than 20 children in the classroom at the same time?

OHS – PC – J – 022 In 1306.33(b) "Home visits must be conducted by trained home visitors with the content of the visit jointly planned by the home visitor and the parents." In this case, please define "parent." We have several non-traditional families in which the significant person in the child's life may not be a biological or adoptive parent. Two specific cases we currently have include a lesbian couple who have adopted a baby, in which only one mother's name is on the birth certificate, yet they both are the child's "parents." Does a home visit count if it is with the mother who is not on the birth certificate? Another example is a significant other that the mother has been with for many years. The man is not the child's biological father and they are not married, yet they both feel that they are the child's "parents." Does a home visit count if it is with this person?

OHS – PC – J – 023 Do children need to be present at EHS/HS educational home visits?

OHS – PC – J – 024 Do children need to be present at EHS parent conferences?

OHS – PC – J – 026 In the home-based option, are children and parents required to attend all "socializations" unless a valid reason for absence is documented?

OHS – PC – J – 028 I have a parent who is refusing a Home Visit and lives within walking distance of our program. She even went as far as sending us a notarized letter stating that she is forbidding any Head Start staff from coming to her house although we have explained the Head Start mandate on Home Visits and the benefits of a Home Visit. Can this child still be in Head Start? Are Home Visits required? What if we do not have the required two home visits on this child?

OHS – PC – J – 029 Is there any policy regarding a home-based family who never attends socializations?

OHS – PC – J – 030 Are home-based visit reports required with a parent signature?

OHS – PC – J – 040 Do parent/teacher conference days and teacher home visit days count toward the planned days of service per year requirements?

[OHS – PC – J – 041 Can home visits begin on the first day of the program year?](#)

[OHS – PC – J – 042 If a family’s weekly home visit is scheduled for the same day as socialization and the family attends the socialization, can their attendance at the socialization also be counted as a weekly home-visit?](#)

## ***Strategies***

### **Developing Services During Start-Up**

When supporting a grantee or delegate agency’s development of services to infants, toddlers, and their families during the start-up period, there are specific HSPPS and practices to consider for each program option. The basic requirements for the program options are presented in 1306, but many of the specifics for EHS are found in 1304. Management systems, such as communication, reporting, program self-assessment, and monitoring, are critical to the establishment of quality services. Solid systems help all program options design and deliver high-quality individualized services to children and families within their communities. The following section offers suggestions for supporting the healthy development of the center-based, home-based, family child care, and combination program options during start-up.

#### ***Supporting the Center-Based Option***

When guiding programs operating center-based services, help them to:

- Create staffing systems to maintain ratios at all times, including during breaks, to meet the HSPPS. For each classroom of eight children there must be two qualified teachers. [45 CFR 1304.52\(g\)\(4\)](#)
- Develop personnel policies that define EHS teacher requirements as:
  - having a minimum of a child development associate credential, and training (or equivalent coursework) in early childhood development, and
  - not later than September 30, 2012, having training (or equivalent coursework) in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development. [IM-10-06 Qualifications for Early Head Start Infant and Toddler Center-based staff](#)
- Ensure that outdoor infant/toddler spaces are separated from areas used by preschoolers and are conducive to different stages of development.
- Configure sleeping arrangements for infants that
  - include firm mattresses for sleeping and
  - space cribs at least 3 feet apart, to avoid spreading contagious illness and allow for easy access.
- Develop policies and procedures to ensure that toys and materials for infants and toddlers are cleaned and sanitized regularly.

#### ***Supporting the Home-Based Option***

Support EHS programs that are building the home-based option by demonstrating how they can:

- Develop socialization activities appropriate for infants and toddlers and their families, bearing in mind
  - the age and development of the child,
  - the purpose of the socialization, and
  - the location and weather in regard to travel with very young children.
- Plan home visits and socialization experiences on a year-round basis to meet Office of Head Start (OHS) expectations for EHS.
- Ensure the appropriate assignment of roles and responsibilities for EHS home visitor positions to include content related to:
  - guidelines for creating structured, child-focused visits that promote parents' ability to support their child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development;
  - methods for promoting emergent literacy including use of research-based strategies to support children who are dual-language learners;
  - collaborative efforts to eliminate gaps in service by offering, when needed, health, vision, hearing, and developmental screening for children;
  - strategies for helping families cope with crises;
  - techniques for assessing families' self-sufficiency needs and how the community's resources meet those needs; and
  - tools for connecting the relationship of health and well-being of pregnant women to prenatal and early childhood development.

### ***Supporting the Family Child Care Option***

When guiding programs through the process of developing family child care homes, encourage them to:

- Include references to HSPPS and other regulations in provider contracts.
- Ensure each family child care home has sufficient indoor and outdoor space allowing for safe supervision of children that also meets state family child care regulations.
- Create a system for monitoring the continued safety of any child not within view for any period (for instance, when an infant is napping in one room while a toddler plays in another).
- Establish a pool of substitutes and assistant providers with appropriate training and experience for family child care providers to ensure continuous provision of quality services.
- Hire Child Development Specialists with a minimum of an associate degree in child development, knowledge and experience in early childhood education (including infant and toddler development), and family support. Child Development Specialists must have knowledge of HSPPS, other applicable regulations, and the CDA competency standards.
- Ensure Child Development Specialist positions provide support to family child care providers via:
  - regular announced and unannounced visits to each home for quality assurance purposes;
  - periodic visits to verify compliance with contract and/or policy requirements;
  - facilitation of communication among staff, providers, and families;

- recommendations for technical assistance; and
- development of collegial or mentoring relationships with other child care professionals.

### ***Supporting the Combination Option***

When working with programs utilizing a combination program option for EHS, suggest that they:

- Develop a formal written plan that describes the intention and philosophy behind why EHS children attend a center-based setting on a part-time basis.
- Operate the combination option on a full-year basis, offering home visits and center services accordingly.
- Create clearly written plans addressing applicable regulations in Sections 1306.32 and 1306.33 (center- and home-based) along with 1304.51 Management Systems and Procedures (Communication, Reporting Systems, Self-Assessment, and Monitoring) of the HSPPS when operating the combination program option.

### **Addressing Challenges During Start-Up and Beyond**

During start-up, EHS grantees and delegates often experience challenges that cause them to rethink their plans. While some challenges are short-lived and easily addressed, others require considerable effort in order to keep programs' development moving forward. For example, EHS programs with facility or renovation projects may encounter long, unexpected delays or unforeseen hurdles leading to a change of plans. EHS home-based programs receiving start-up funds for special populations including homeless families, refugee or teen parents may need assistance redeveloping their schedules to accommodate transient and/or high-need families. Programs new to the family child care option may discover that working with contracted positions and possible dual enrollment is more challenging than anticipated. This section offers suggestions for how planners can work with EHS programs to address challenges that the different program options might face, to help generate solutions, and to assist in the prioritization of needs.

### ***Supporting the Center-Based Option***

As EHS Start-Up Planners, you can use your expertise to provide programs with alternatives and/or adaptations to their original design to:

- Assist programs in the transition from a temporary home-based program option to a center-based option with the least disruption in services to families.
- Help programs realign staff positions and duties when necessary.
- Work with administrations to ensure that the organizational structure fits the programs' current systems and functions and again during any reorganization or change of program option.
- Offer alternative methods of recruitment, such as untapped community resources, to programs with under-enrollment issues.
- Develop new collaborations and partnerships with community services and agencies that have the potential to impact services on a larger scale. This can be in the form of:
  - classroom volunteers,

- in-kind services or supplies,
- training and/or speaking engagements, or
- promotions, public relations, and marketing.

### ***Supporting the Home-Based Option***

When supporting programs operating this option, you might:

- Review and revise current organizational structures to best accommodate staff roles and responsibilities as staff members recruit, enroll, and provide services to families in transition.
- Offer suggestions regarding socialization planning, especially when temporary or varied locations must be utilized, thus helping programs to think “outside the box” while adhering to regulations.
- Assist programs in developing strong collaborations and partnerships with local Head Start and nearby EHS programs in the event a family must relocate sooner than expected to a new service area.
- Ensure that the home visiting curriculum addresses the needs of the special population being served, e.g., teen parents.

### ***Supporting the Family Child Care Option***

Taking into consideration the multiple facets of this program option, you may want to work with programs to:

- Limit the number of contracted family child care providers in order to provide training, resources, and support at a more manageable level.
- Prioritize the development of strong relationship-building in an environment where change may be viewed with trepidation and fear on the part of providers who have been running a successful business for years.
- Understand the requirements and regulations of their state child care program in order to best serve families with dual enrollment in child care and EHS.

### ***Supporting the Combination Option***

EHS programs utilizing the combination program option may be working with new partners or program models that don’t quite fit standard operating procedure. Some key components to keep in mind include the following:

- Programs may combine roles so staff members can function as home visitors and teachers. If so, programs will need to ensure that staffs’ qualifications meet all Head Start regulations.
- Center-based operations in an approved EHS combination option must offer developmentally appropriate services on a full-time basis.

### **Planning for Sustainability**

As programs reflect on sustainability, planning may shift slightly and involve a more concentrated focus on details and projections for a wide range of positive outcomes. Long-range outcomes for children and families depend on solid management systems and services; long-

term goals should outline the direction programs should move as they put all of their program management and service-related pieces into place. At this point, the planning and goal-setting process may require a somewhat different course of action for each program option. Below are suggestions for Start-Up Planners to consider as they work with programs to plan for the sustainability of quality services.

### ***Supporting the Center-Based Option***

Start-Up Planners can provide guidance as center-based programs reflect on what worked best and what programmatic challenges to avoid. Some of these may include:

- Space allocation and room arrangement to accommodate routines, like sleeping and meal times.
- Provision of costly supplies such as diapers and formula.
- Training plans to include partner and delegate agencies' program performance.
- Staffing to cover all operating hours, including during vacations and training events.
- Alignment of the program option with the ever-changing needs of the community.

### ***Supporting the Home-Based Option***

Start-Up Planners can assist home-based programs as they give thought to sustainability by offering the following suggestions:

- Consider family schedules for home visits including days/times during the week, and develop a staffing plan accordingly.
- Review the availability of different types of programs to families within the service area.
- Strengthen understanding of the home-based option requirements to utilize home visitor positions as effectively as possible.
- Develop training plans to ensure program performance.

### ***Supporting the Family Child Care Option***

Sustainability often involves a process that requires clear thought and an open mind. As change is on the horizon, programs working with family child care providers can be supported by Start-Up Planners in:

- Developing a plan for continuation of services to families within the network.
- Strengthening the community partnerships developed locally and initiating more outreach efforts.
- Creating a strong network of providers to support each other and share resources that will build upon the foundation.
- Developing training plans to ensure partner program performance.

### ***Supporting the Combination Option***

Early Head Start programs operating a combination option can utilize Start-Up Planner expertise as they give thought to sustainability and management systems incorporating both home- and center-based services by:

- Reviewing community-assessment data to ensure the combination option is the best choice in meeting current family needs.

- Looking closely at Policy Council representation to check for the inclusion of families representing all program options chosen by a grantee.
- Developing close working relationships with local Head Start programs as families transition not only from EHS to Head Start but also from the combination option to a possible new program option.
- Creating training plans to ensure program performance.

## ***Resources***

### **Supervisor’s Manual for the Head Start Home-Based Program Option**

As a supervisor in a Head Start home-based program, you play a pivotal role in the quality of the home visiting services your agency provides. You are a liaison between the agency and the home visiting staff. You support, teach, and advocate, and you are a role model for your home visitors. You attend to the needs and resources of families and how to best help them. You work with your agency’s administrators to ensure that adequate systems are in place to support the work of the home visitors. You plan, evaluate, and coordinate many facets of the home-based program.

*Source: Early Head Start National Resource Center*

<http://ehsnrc.org/PDFfiles/EHS-Home-Supervisor.pdf>

### **Program Administrator’s Checklist for the Home-Based Program Option**

This tool was developed to help you evaluate whether the Head Start home-based program option is appropriate for your community. Each year, under your leadership, your agency has the opportunity and responsibility to evaluate how the Head Start services meet the needs of the families in the community. The Community Assessment, conducted once every 3 years (45 CFR 1305), provides essential information about the needs of families and resources available in the community. In each of the 2 years following the completion of the Community Assessment, you must conduct a review to determine whether any significant changes have occurred in the needs and resources available to families. If so, your agency must update your Community Assessment and reevaluate the decisions that were made with respect to your program’s philosophy and objectives, to the Head Start program options implemented by your agency, and to family recruitment and selection criteria.

*Source: Early Head Start National Resource Center*

<http://ehsnrc.org/PDFfiles/EHS-Home-AdminChk.pdf>

### **Early Head Start Tip Sheet #4: Full Day/Full Year Services**

Are Early Head Start programs required to provide full-day/full-year services? What is the working definition of full-day/full-year?

*Source: Early Head Start National Resource Center*

<http://ehsnrc.org/Publications/English%20Tip%20Sheets/TIP SHEET 4.PDF>

### **Early Head Start Tip Sheet #23: EHS Program Options**

As Early Head Start programs design and adapt their program models based on the needs of the families they serve, how do they determine which program option(s) to offer, and the flexibility within those program options?

*Source: Early Head Start National Resource Center*

[http://ehsnrc.org/Publications/English%20Tip%20Sheets/TIP\\_SHEET\\_23.PDF](http://ehsnrc.org/Publications/English%20Tip%20Sheets/TIP_SHEET_23.PDF)

### **Selecting the Appropriate Program Option**

Some child development services are provided through Early Head Start (EHS) centers. Head Start pregnant women and their families find guidance on how to choose among the different program options: center-based, home-based programs, or a combination of these. New welfare legislation states that many Early Head Start parents need to be employed, enrolled in school, or in job training while their child is still an infant. Sometimes the home-based option must be revisited in order to meet family needs.

*Source: Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center*

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Learning%20Environments/Program%20Options/edudev\\_art\\_00209\\_072505.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Learning%20Environments/Program%20Options/edudev_art_00209_072505.html)

### **Early Head Start National Research and Evaluation Project: Meeting the Child Care Needs of Families**

Child care is a top concern and challenge for parents of children in Early Head Start (EHS) programs. EHS staff and home visitors will find recommendations on child care quality and use within their programs from research collected by the Early Head Start National Research and Evaluation Project. Some suggestions include: conducting assessments, offering informal familial care, building relationships/collaborations with child care providers, and understanding the child care subsidy system.

*Source: Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center*

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Learning%20Environments/Program%20Options/edudev\\_art\\_00202\\_072505.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Learning%20Environments/Program%20Options/edudev_art_00202_072505.html)