

# EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 5

EHS Children Qualifying for Head Start, August 2010

## **Does a child from an Early Head Start program automatically qualify for Head Start at the age of three?**

### **Response:**

The child does not automatically qualify for a preschool Head Start program. The family's income must be re-determined before enrollment into preschool Head Start. If the family no longer meets the income eligibility for Head Start, one of two things can happen.

- 1) The child can be enrolled as over-income if this meets the local program's selection and enrollment criteria. Head Start programs are allowed to offer 10% of their enrollment to children whose families are above the federal poverty guideline.
- 2) As part of the transition planning for and with the family, Early Head Start is responsible for helping to find an appropriate non-Head Start preschool placement if that is what is needed.

### *Transition Planning*

The Performance Standards cite that the transition planning should begin 6 months prior to the child's third birthday. Since children and families often experience transitions from one program option to another throughout their participation in Early Head Start, transition planning can begin even earlier and be an ongoing process that is integrated into the family partnership plans.

### **Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:**

- How does the program ensure that transition planning for each child and family begins *at least six months prior* to the child's third birthday?
- What is the program's transition process among/between programs?
- How does the program ensure that the child(ren)'s next placement is appropriate for the child and family?

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

- 1305.7(c) When a child moves from a program serving infants and toddlers to a Head Start program serving children age three and older, the family income must be re-verified. If one agency operates both an Early Head Start and a Head Start program, and the parents wish to enroll their child who has been enrolled in the agency's Early Head Start program, the agency must ensure, whenever possible, that the child receives Head Start services until enrolled in school.
- 1304.41(c)(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Early Head Start or Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school, a Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education preschool program, or other child care settings.
- 1304.41(c)(2) To ensure the most appropriate placement and services following participation in Early Head Start, transition planning must be undertaken for each child and family *at least six months prior* to the child's third birthday.

## Resources:

Early Head Start National Resource Center. **EHS Program Strategies: Transition Strategies: Continuity and Change in the Lives of Infants and Toddlers.** DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 2004.

**Policy Clarifications.** *The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.* DHHS/ACF/OHS.

- **OHS-PC-I-015: What Age Must a Child be in Order to be Considered Eligible for Head Start?** April 27, 2007.
- **OHS-PC-I-022: Does a Family Income of Children Entering Head Start for a Third Year Need to be Re-verified?** May 15, 2007.

Region X EHS Workgroup. “**Anticipating Transition Issues in EHS: Developing a Thoughtful Approach.**” *Region X Head Start News.* (Spring 2001).

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Families-Parent%20Involvement/Transition%20Activities/edudev\\_fts\\_00001a1\\_051606.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Families-Parent%20Involvement/Transition%20Activities/edudev_fts_00001a1_051606.html)

(accessed August 14, 2010).

**Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community.** DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2007.

- **Community Partnerships.**
- **Parent Involvement.**
- **Transition.**

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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.*