



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Health

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Health Services Newsletter

GET A HEAD START ON ENROLLMENT

Enrollment can occur any time throughout the year if your program has an opening. Many programs, however, have an open enrollment period. The enrollment visit is an important time to gather health and nutrition related information but it is also a great opportunity to engage families in the health services your program can provide. Early Head Start and Head Start programs should partner with parents and health care providers to ensure every child and pregnant woman has access to a medical home for ongoing and continuous health care.

THE HEALTH INFORMATION TO GATHER DURING ENROLLMENT

1. The child or pregnant woman's medical record. The health record should tell you if the child or pregnant woman has an identified medical home, up to date immunizations, screenings, and any diagnosed medical conditions.

2. Immunization schedule

3. Nutrition Needs : Identify needs by reviewing nutrition related information from the EPSDT physical exam, the child's eating and growth pattern and the pregnant woman's diet. An assessment of nutrition needs should include:

- A. Child/family eating patterns;
- B. Family's cultural, ethnic, religious food preferences;
- C. Food intolerances;
- D. Food allergies;
- E. Identify nutrition education needs;
- F. Relevant health screening data such as height, weight and;
- G. Blood tests for anemia.



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SUPPORTING STAFF

Every program is different. Some health managers are able to meet and conduct the health and nutrition assessment with each family. Others rely on the information gathered by an enrollment specialist or family service worker. It is important to support and train those conducting the assessments to ensure correct information is gathered in an appropriate way. You can schedule staff meetings to review health and nutrition assess-

ments and help them identify health risk behaviors. Also consider providing professional development opportunities for staff. This can be access to local training, engaging a Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) member to provide training or online training opportunities. View the resources section on page 4 for suggested learning opportunities.

Remember, you might be the expert on health in Head Start but families are the expert on their child.

FOR YOUR FAMILY NEWSLETTER

YOU CAN TAILOR THE FOLLOWING TO INCLUDE IN YOUR OWN FAMILY NEWSLETTER.

Welcome to X's Head Start! We are so glad you have chosen to become a part of our program. We offer health services such as healthy meals, tracking your child's health schedule, and nutrition education. Our health manager, X, is available to answer your health related questions or concerns. Please contact him/her at XXX XXX XXXX.

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ENGAGING FAMILIES IN HEALTH SERVICES

The enrollment period is your first opportunity to engage a family in your program's health services. Partner with your enrollment or family specialist to plan for how best to engage and inform parents. Effectively communicating with parents is a key factor in developing strategies to strengthen parent involvement. When parents feel included and heard, their support can contribute a dynamic source of energy. The contribution of family experiences, perspectives as well as family participation is of tremendous value to Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

When building family partnerships, it is important to seek to understand and then to be understood.

“Tell me more about that...”

Encourage your staff to ask open-ended questions in place of questions with only a yes or no response.

“What are some healthy habits you might be interested in learning more about or trying at home?”

Acknowledge parents' strengths when providing guidance or recommendations.

“I think it is really great you...”

And remember, you might be the expert on health in Head Start but families are the experts on their child. These simple communication strategies can go a long way to engaging parents in health services.



WHAT NEXT?

Once you have gathered health information, what do you do with it? Reviewing health screening and examination results is a key **to determining a child's health needs. Screening and exam results that are "outside the normal range," "abnormal," or "failed"** mean the child may have a health issue. Such results must be followed up by rescreening and further evaluation by the health care provider to determine if the child has a health concern and, if so, what treatment is necessary.

Each child's complete health record should be assessed since many health issues and screening or exam results are interrelated. For example, if a child is diagnosed with dental problems such as dental caries, it is important to identify possible causes in nutrition (e.g. use of bottle, sweets) and possible effects on growth (e.g. failure to thrive or overweight).

Your role as health manager is to support families in obtaining the necessary health care related to these results. This may include referrals to Registered Dietitians and/or health care providers, helping apply for Medicaid, securing follow-up appointments, etc.

WHAT TO DO IF THE MEDICAL RECORDS ARE NOT UP TO DATE?

Depending on your community, you might have several families who do not have access to healthcare. The enrollment period is an opportunity to partner and strategize with families to help them access a health care provider. Steps you should take:

1. Determine the values and beliefs of families regarding preventive health maintenance for family members.
2. Assist families in applying for Medicaid or State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) services.
3. Collaborate with local Medicaid and SCHIP agencies to determine a child's eligibility for medical assistance and to identify Medicaid and SCHIP providers.
4. Seek help from the Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) to identify potential providers, sources of funding for health services, and ways to inform community health providers about the health needs of Head Start children and families.
5. Help families get appointments with medical providers.
6. Once a healthcare provider is located, staff periodically review health records to ensure recommended treatment and preventive services are being provided, and that providers make plans for both treatment and follow up. Programs that serve migrant families may also need to assist families in arranging follow up care at their new location.



HEALTH INSURANCE

The enrollment visit is also an opportunity to determine if families have health insurance.

Let families know they may qualify for Medicaid now. Help them **contact your state's Medicaid office.**

The rules for Medicaid eligibility are different for each state. Most states offer coverage for adults with children below a certain income level, as well as pregnant women, some seniors, and people with disabilities.

Under the health care law, Medicaid eligibility is expanding in many states. Beginning in 2014, many more Head Start family members — including parents, older siblings

and grandparents under age 65 — may qualify for coverage.

Even if you were told you didn't qualify for Medicaid in the past, you may qualify under the new rules.

Fill out an application at Healthcare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596 to find out if you'll qualify in 2014. English and Spanish-speaking customer service representatives are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Interpreters in 150 languages, such as Chinese and French, are also available.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Head Start has always provided an inclusive environment for all children, requiring each program to maintain at least 10% enrollment for children with disabilities. The Office of Head Start encourages programs to use the enrollment process as a way to enroll children already identified by the Part C agency or pre-school special education provider (through Section 619, Part B).

If a child is not previously identified, the enrollment visit may be an opportunity to identify children with disabilities. Programs are encouraged to conduct recruitment, enrollment, and identification of children in close collaboration with community partners such as Child Find, Early Intervention Agencies, and healthcare providers.

However, Head Start and Early Head Start often provide the first opportunity for a comprehensive **assessment of a child's development** and special needs. Your role as health manager is to partner with the disabilities manager as well as other staff to identify children with disabilities and ensure appropriate health services are provided.

Find training and inclusion resources at the [Head Start Center for Inclusion](#).

RESOURCES

ECLKC Resources

1. [The Importance of Well-Child Health Care and a Medical Home \(A Learning Activity\)](#)
2. [Reviewing Health Records \(A Learning Activity\)](#)
3. [Taking Inventory of Screenings and Exams \(A Learning Activity\)](#)
4. [Making It On Our Own- Customizing an Individualized Health Plan \(A Learning Activity\)](#)

Other Resources

1. [Women, Infants and Children Online Learning](#)
2. [Expanded Food and Nutrition Education](#)
3. [Let's Move Childcare](#)
4. [Tribal Health Services](#)
5. [Indian Health Service Head Start Program](#)
6. [Migrant Health Promotion](#)

*Fostering a culture of health and wellness for
Head Start children, families, and staff.*

NATIONAL CENTER ON HEALTH

Our Goal:

To help Head Start and Early Head Start programs implement best practices and effective approaches within medical and dental care access, health awareness, healthy active living, emergency preparedness, and environmental safety to support healthy outcomes and school readiness for young children and their families.

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