

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 11

Child Development and Health Services: Disabilities Services

Core Question to be answered by Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee ensure that individual services are effectively provided to children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities?

Purpose:

The purpose is to ensure that children with disabilities enrolled in the program receive all of the services to which they are entitled in the least restrictive environment. (Purpose and application of Part 1308, p. 255.)

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to disabilities services. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(c)(4); 1304.20(f); 1304.21(a)(1)(ii); 1304.23(a)(2); 1304.24(a)(3)(iii); 1304.41(a)(4); 1304.53(a)(10)(xvii); 1304.53(b)(1)(iii); 1308; 1310.22(b).

As you conduct your Self-Assessment of program services to children with disabilities, pay close attention to:

- The process used by the program to assess children’s needs for special services
- How the program engages parents as partners when planning special services for children
- Evidence of the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Head Start program
- Evidence of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in Early Head Start programs and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for Head Start programs

Note: Individual programs may wish to substitute terms used in this booklet with terms used by your local school district (e.g., special needs, disabilities, special services, disabilities services).

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Observe:

Check in with Self-Assessment team members assigned to *curriculum* and *individualization*. Ask them to summarize for you what they discovered about the program's approach to serving children with disabilities during their assessment process. In particular, review with them the results of the **Curriculum Observation Instrument** pertaining to serving children with disabilities.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Written plans describing how disabilities services will be delivered
- Copies of all Interagency Agreements with Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Part C, and other programs serving children with disabilities and their families
- A sample of records for children with disabilities (Note: assign this task to someone on your team who can review children's records without breaching the confidentiality policy of the program.)
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the PRISM report, PIR data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

As you review the above documents and records answer the following:

Is there evidence that the disabilities services plan has been updated annually?

Yes No Comment: _____

Are there interagency agreements between the program and LEAs that provide services to enable the effective participation of children with disabilities?

Yes No Comment: _____

Do files demonstrate a timely process for assessing children with suspected disabilities, engaging parents, and arranging for services, as needed? (Note: A meeting to develop the IEP must be held within thirty calendar days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services.)

Yes No Comment: _____

If you have an Early Head Start program, is there evidence of a formal partnership with the local Part C agency (provider of early intervention services)?

Yes No Comment: _____

If you have an Early Head Start program, is there an agreement that describes the process for coordinating services for infants and toddlers?

Yes No Comment: _____

Is there evidence of the family's involvement in the development of IEPs and IFSPs?

Yes No Comment: _____

Do IEPs and IFSPs identify persons responsible for planning, delivering, and supervising services and projected dates for services to begin?

Yes No Comment: _____

Are transition plans developed for children that provide continuity of care as children with disabilities move from one program to the next?

Yes No Comment: _____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview the:

- Manager of disabilities services
- Teachers, home visitors, family child care providers, family service workers
- Parents of children with disabilities
- If possible, a representative from the local LEA (Head Start) and/or Part C agency (Early Head Start)

Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:

Questions for the disabilities services manager:

What efforts are taken to recruit children with disabilities (including children with severe disabilities)?

Is there a system in place to track the provision of disabilities services? Describe the follow-up that occurs when timeframes are not met.

How are children with disabilities included in ongoing assessment? Are all children included? Give examples of how appropriate accommodations were made for their special needs.

What types of modifications has the program made to meet the specific needs of children with disabilities over the past year?

How does the program provide parents with information and assistance in understanding and advocating for services and supports needed to address their child’s special needs?

Has the program been successful in accessing the additional resources (including transportation) that may be outlined in the IEPs and IFSPs of the children you serve?

Questions for education staff:

Provide us with some examples of how you have modified the program and individualized services to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in the full range of program activities.

Questions for education/family services staff:

Provide us with some examples of the information, support, and guidance available to assist you in providing services to children with disabilities and their families.

Questions for families:

Describe how the Head Start program involved you in planning services for your child.

What resources in the community have you heard about through Head Start that can offer you assistance?

Have you participated in any training that specifically prepares you to advocate for your child?

Questions for Program Partners:

Describe your relationship with the Head Start program.

Do you have an interagency agreement in place that describes the process you and Head Start will follow to provide services to children with disabilities? If yes, describe the major components of the interagency agreement.

Are there challenges or barriers you face in providing services to Head Start children?

How are you working with Head Start to overcome these barriers?

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Disabilities Services

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

Areas where the program needs improvement:

Additional areas of concern:
