

**INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT
FOR SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
IN HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS IN LOUISIANA**

Between

**Louisiana Department of Education
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Region VI Office of Head Start**

And

**Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
Louisiana Department of Social Services
Louisiana Head Start Association**

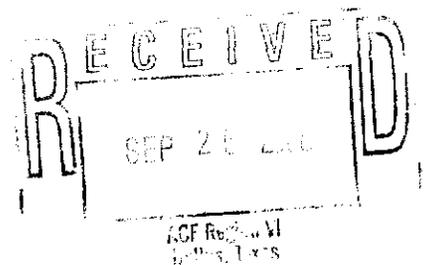
The purpose of this Interagency Agreement is to define our roles and responsibilities within our respective mandates, enhance our linkages/relationships; and coordinate a comprehensive system of activities, policies and procedures among named participants which guide and support local programs in maximizing the delivery of early care, development, and education services for children (0-5) with disabilities and their families.

Purpose:

This agreement is written to assist Head Start/ Early Head Start Grantees and Local Education Agencies (LEA) in addressing their mutual commitment to serving young children with disabilities and their families through cooperative and collaborative agreements. Public Law 105-17, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Parts B and C, and Public Law 110-134 (Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007) and their respective regulations provide the federal legal basis for assuring that young children with disabilities receive services to meet their individual needs. It is expected that through collaborative efforts, LEAs, Head Start/Early Head Start and other agencies, including the Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Louisiana Department of Social Services, Louisiana Head Start Association and Region VI Office of Head Start who provide services to children with disabilities, birth through five years and their families, will enter into cooperative agreements and/or contracts which establish procedures for compliance with the provisions of the IDEA and the Federal Head Start Act. Such collaboration and cooperation will improve services for young children with disabilities and their families while conserving resources and avoiding duplication of effort.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide guidance for collaborative and cooperative arrangements between Head Start/Early Head Start Grantees, Local Education Agencies, and other agencies that provide services to young children with disabilities and their families, in order to:

- 1) assure that infants and toddlers with disabilities, birth through two years of age, are identified, referred, evaluated and receive appropriate early intervention services through EarlySteps
- 2) assure that young children with disabilities, three through five years of age, are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) have access to the full range of services available;
- 3) enhance the services continuum for children with disabilities;
- 4) facilitate the transition of children with disabilities between Part C, services and Head Start/Early Head Start services and between Head Start/ Early Head Start and LEA services;
- 5) maximize services to eligible children through structured formal written agreements between appropriate agencies;
- 6) conserve fiscal and human resources and avoid duplication of effort; and
- 7) maximize readiness skills and reading opportunities for children through the use of developmentally appropriate practices including emergent and family literacy.



Area of Cooperation:

Head Start/Early Head Start Grantees and LEA's must develop agreements within the context of this agreement that will define relationships and specify areas for cooperation and responsibility in accordance with the **Regulations for Implementation of the Children With Exceptionalities Act** (Bulletin 1706), the **Pupil Appraisal Handbook** (Bulletin 1508), the **EarlySteps Policies and Practices** (Manual) and the **Head Start Program Performance Standards on Services for Children with Disabilities**, (45 CFR 1304 Revised & 1308).

Communication:

LEA's and Head Start/Early Head Start Grantees shall develop interagency networks of compatible systems for collecting and reporting information on children receiving services and the services provided. Children who meet eligibility under Bulletin 1508 will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed by the LEA on a form approved by the SDE. Children who meet EarlySteps eligibility criteria will have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed by the Family Service Coordinator. Children receiving services under *eligibility for Head Start* (45 CFR 1308) will have an IEP developed by Head Start on their approved form.

	DHHS/ACF/OHS	Early Steps	DOE
<p>Child Identification *location *referral *recruitment</p>	<p>Ensure that Head Start and Early Head Start programs design comprehensive services which meet all Head Start Program Performance Standards for locating and serving children with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>Head Start must cooperate with other agencies in serving children in the least restrictive environment.</p> <p>-Participate in the public agency's Child Find plan under Part B of IDEA; [45-CFR 1308.4(l)(1)] and Part C</p> <p>-Incorporate into outreach and recruitment activities, specific actions to actively locate and recruit children with disabilities. [45-CFR 1308.5 (a)]</p> <p>-The Disabilities Service Plan must include preparation of staff and parents for the entry of children with severe disabilities into the Head Start program. [45-CFR 1308.4 (g)]</p>	<p>Children ages birth to 3 years are referred to a regional System Point of Entry Office (SPOE) by calling 1-866-earlysteps, anyone may make a referral. Children qualify with a developmental delay or an established medical condition which may result in developmental delay. Early Steps will conduct public awareness activities with Head Start and Early Head Start to identify children who might be eligible.</p> <p>Early Steps provides services in the child's "natural environment" which could be the family's home, child care settings or Early Head Start.</p> <p>Following a referral by other agencies, a referral acknowledgement is mailed. Information regarding the results of screening, eligibility determination, and/or the Individualized Family Service Plan is shared with other agencies with family consent.</p>	<p>Birth through 2 years of age- Any child located by an LEA who is suspected of having a disability, and is within these age ranges, shall be referred to the Lead Agency's designated point of entry (Bulletin 1706§410A, §415A).</p> <p>-3 through 5 years of age - Children in these age ranges, who are suspected of having a disability, shall be referred to the LEA's child search coordinator, who shall locate, screen, and refer them for an individual evaluation, if needed. If determined eligible, the LEA will offer services in the appropriate setting, according to Bulletin 1706 §410B and §415.</p> <p>-Each LEA shall document that the effort of ongoing identification activities is conducted to identify and locate each student who is under its jurisdiction, suspected of having a disability, in need of special education and related services, and meets the criteria as listed in Bulletin 1706 §411.</p> <p>-The LEA shall provide the Head Start Grantees with appropriate Child Search materials to be disseminated by the Head Start Grantees.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-The LEA's and Head Start shall establish mutual procedures for joint cooperation in the Child Search activities under Part B of IDEA and in accordance with Bulletin 1706. 34 CFR 303 Part C of IDEA</p>
<p>Screening Assessment Evaluation</p>	<p>-In collaboration with each child's parent, and within 45 calendar days of the child's entry into the program, grantee and delegate agencies must perform or obtain linguistically and age appropriate screening procedures to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory (visual and auditory), behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills (see 45 CFR 1308.6(b)(3) for additional information). To the greatest extent possible, these screening procedures must be sensitive to the child's cultural background. [45-CFR 1304.20(b)]</p> <p>-Must refer a child to the LEA for</p>	<p>All children referred to Early Steps for concerns regarding development are screened with the <i>Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)</i>. If a concern is indicated through the screening, the child proceeds to an assessment using the <i>Battelle Developmental Inventory-2(BDI-2)</i>. If current screening information using the ASQ is sent with a referral, that information is utilized for decision-making to proceed further through the eligibility determination process.</p> <p>Screening information from Early Head Start shall be incorporated into the EarlySteps system for eligibility determination.</p>	<p>The LEA shall establish ongoing activities to facilitate completion of screenings, assessments, and evaluations within the timelines according to Louisiana Bulletins 1706 and 1508, 45 CFR 1304 (revised) and 45 CFR 1308. It is the responsibility of the LEA to share information regarding parental notification/permission, release of information and joint personnel to ensure comprehensive screenings, assessments, and evaluations.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-These responsibilities shall be shared jointly with Head Start.</p> <p>-All information shared in this</p>

	<p>evaluation as soon as the need is evident, starting as early as the child's third birthday. [45-CFR 1308.6 (e)(1)]</p> <p>-Must obtain parental consent in writing before a child can have an initial evaluation to determine whether the child has a disability. [45-CFR 1308.6 (e)(3)]</p> <p>-Must use trained (State certified or licensed) personnel to administer testing and evaluation procedures. [45-CFR 1308.6 (e)(2)(ii)]</p> <p>-Arrange or provide an evaluation using its own resources and accessing others if the LEA does not evaluate the child. [45-CFR 1308.6 (e)(2)]</p> <p>-Must use a multidisciplinary team including at least one person with knowledge in the area of suspected disability to complete the evaluation. [45-CFR 1308.6 (e)(2)(iv)]</p> <p>-When Head Start provides for the evaluation, the multidisciplinary team makes the determination whether the child meets the Head Start eligibility criteria. [45-CFR 1308.19(a)]</p> <p>-Make concerted efforts to reach and include the most in need and hardest to reach in the screening effort, providing assistance but urging parents to complete screening before the start of the program year. [45-CFR 1308.6 (b) (2)]</p>		<p>process shall be within the rules governing confidentiality and the due process rights of children and their parents as set forth in the IDEA. 34 CFR 303 Part C of IDEA</p>
<p>Determination of Disability *Criteria of Eligibility</p>	<p>-Infants and toddlers with disabilities are those from birth to three years, as identified under the Part C Program (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in their State. [45-CFR 1304.3 (a)(1)]</p> <p>-<i>Children with disabilities</i> means, for children ages 3 to 5, those with mental retardation, hearing impairments including deafness, speech or language impairments, visual impairments including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and show, by reason thereof, need special</p>	<p>Any child being considered for eligibility in Early Steps will receive the BDI-2 by a trained EarlySteps Assessment provider. Following the administration of the test, the (SPOE) eligibility team meets to review the BDI-2, referral and health information, and family assessment information and makes the determination of eligibility. Head Start and Early Head Start staff is encouraged to participate in this process with parent consent.</p>	<p>-It is the responsibility of the LEA's to ensure that each child, three through five years, suspected of having a disability is deemed eligible for services through a multidisciplinary evaluation in accordance with the IDEA Part B 619 and Bulletins 1508 and 1706.</p> <p>-The LEA's shall accept evaluations provided by the Head Start Grantee that meets the criteria established in Bulletin 1508.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-Both LEA and Head Start personnel shall serve cooperatively as members of the multidisciplinary teams and share professional diagnostic information to reduce duplication of</p>

	<p>education and related services. The term "children with disabilities" for children aged 3 to 5, inclusive, may, at a State's discretion, include children experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services. [45-CFR 1308.]</p> <p>-If the State Education Agency eligibility criteria for preschool children include an additional category which is appropriate for a Head Start child, children meeting the criteria for that category must receive services as children with disabilities in Head Start programs. [45-CFR 1308.17(b)]</p> <p>-The multidisciplinary team provides the results of the evaluation and determines that the child does or does not need special education and related services. [45-CFR 1308.6 (e)(5)]</p>		<p>services.</p>
<p>Joint Program Development *IFSP/IEP</p>	<p>-Ensure every child receiving services in Head Start who has been evaluated and found to have a disability and in need of special education has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) before special education and related services are provided. [45-CFR 1308.19(b)]</p> <p>-Attempt to participate in the IEP meeting and placement decision for any child meeting Head Start eligibility requirements when the LEA develops the IEP. [45-CFR 1308.19(c)]</p> <p>-Support parent and agency participation in the evaluation and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development process for infants and toddlers enrolled in their program. [45-CFR 1304.20(f)(2)(ii)]</p> <p>-If Head Start develops the IEP, the IEP must take into account the child's unique needs, strengths, developmental potential and the family strengths and circumstances</p>	<p>Children identified as eligible will have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed with the SPOE multidisciplinary team, which might include a representative from Head Start/Early Head Start with parent consent.</p>	<p>-Children identified as eligible for services under IDEA Part B 619 and enrolled in a Head Start program must have an IEP developed by an IEP team to include appropriate representatives from the Head Start program and the LEA in addition to other members as required by Bulletin 1706 and CFR 1308. Services such as, but not limited to, speech and occupational therapy that are indicated on the IEP may be provided by Head Start, however, staff must meet the personnel qualifications of the LEA.</p>

	<p>as well as the child's disabilities. [45-CFR 1308.19(d)]</p> <p><u>Note:</u> In cases where children do not meet Local Education Agency (LEA) special education criteria, an IEP can be developed by a Head Start multidisciplinary team and Head Start IEP forms and procedures are used.</p> <p>-Grantee and delegate agencies must assist with the provision of related services addressing health concerns in accordance with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). [45-CFR 1304.20(c)(4)]</p> <p>-(ii) Be inclusive of children with disabilities, consistent with their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP). [45-CFR 1304.21(a)(ii)]</p>		
Service Delivery (Setting)	<p>Head Start must cooperate with other agencies in serving children in the least restrictive environment.</p> <p>-Include provisions for children with disabilities to be included in the full range of activities and services normally provided to all Head Start children and provisions for any modifications necessary to meet the special needs of children with disabilities. [45-CFR 1308.4(c)]</p>	<p>Service delivery in natural environments might include Early Head Start/Head Start settings, child care, family home, etc.</p>	<p>-LEA's, according to IDEA are required to provide a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities, three through 21 years of age.</p> <p>-LEA's shall explore various service delivery setting options in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to meet the individual needs of the child and the family.</p> <p>-The IEP team, including the parent(s), shall determine the service delivery setting during the IEP meeting.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-Efforts should be made to provide the special education services within the child's natural environment.</p>
Delivery of Services (How)	<p>-The grantee or delegate agency must arrange or provide special education and related services necessary to foster the maximum development of each child's potential and to facilitate participation in the regular Head Start program unless the services are being provided by the LEA or other agency. [45-CFR 1308.4(h)]</p> <p>- Early Head Start shall coordinate with EarlySteps to ensure that</p>	<p>The development of the IFSP includes identifying measurable outcomes for the child and family and the criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine progress. Early Intervention services that are necessary to meet the needs of the child and the family are specified on the IFSP. The IFSP will identify other services, when appropriate, that are needed but not provided by Early Steps. These services might include</p>	<p>-LEA's are responsible for ensuring that all services on the IEP are provided in the designated setting as prescribed on the IEP.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-A copy of the Bulletin 1508 evaluation and the completed IEP shall be provided to the Head Start grantee. The IEP must indicate the service delivery model for each recommended service. The IEP will</p>

	<p>services are provided according to the IFSP.</p> <p>-Shall be responsible for providing special education and related services for those children enrolled in Head Start who qualify for services based on Head Start eligibility criteria, but who are not served by the LEA. [45-CFR 1308.4(h)]</p> <p>-Shall include the options of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Joint placement of children with other agencies; (2) Shared provision of services with other agencies; (3) Shared personnel to supervise special education services, when necessary to meet State requirements on qualifications; (4) Administrative accommodations such as having two children share one enrollment slot when each child's IEP calls for part-time service because of their individual needs; and (5) Any other strategies to be used to insure that special needs are met. These may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Increased staff; (ii) Use of volunteers; and (iii) Use of supervised students in such fields as child development, special education, child psychology, various therapies and family services to assist the staff. [45-CFR 1308.4(j)(1-5)] 	<p>those provided by Head Start and Early Head Start.</p>	<p>determine direct and indirect services, as well as, frequency and intensity of the special education services.</p> <p>-All information shared in this process shall be within the rules governing confidentiality and the due process rights of children and their parents as set forth in the IDEA.</p>
<p>Transition</p>	<p>-Address strategies for the transition of children into Head Start from infant/toddler programs and/or EarlySteps (0 to 3 years), as well as the transition from Head Start into the next placement. [45-CFR 1308.4(g)]</p> <p>-Participate in and support efforts for a smooth and effective transition for children who, at age three, will need to be considered for services for preschool age children with disabilities [45-CFR 1304.20(f)(2) iii]</p> <p>-Support families of children with disabilities entering from infant/toddler programs. [45-CFR 1308.21(a)(1)]</p> <p>-Include in the Head Start IEP information on Head Start</p>	<p>Transition is discussed with the family at each IFSP review. No later than age 2 years, 2 months, a transition plan is developed to meet family and child needs regarding transition activities. A transition conference is held in which LEA and or Head Start/Early Head Start personnel participate to develop appropriate services beginning at the child's third birthday.</p>	<p>-The LEA will work with Early Steps and Head Start to facilitate a smooth transition of services, thus eliminating any disruption of services to the child and family.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-All information shared in this process shall be within the rules governing confidentiality and the due process rights of children and their families as set forth in the IDEA.</p>

	<p>transition services. [45-CFR 1308.19(e)(4)]</p> <p>-Assist families in the transition of children from Head Start to public school or other placement, beginning early in the program year. [45-CFR 1308.21(b)]</p> <p>-In cooperation with the child's family, notify the school of the child's planned enrollment prior to the date of enrollment. [45-CFR 1308.21 (c)]</p>		
<p>Shared Resources *Training *TA</p>	<p>All Head Start programs and local school districts or administrative units should consider the development of a coordinated system of child identification and shared resources including items such a shared personnel, cooperative classrooms and health, food and transportation systems, joint in-service training where appropriate, classroom space, cooperative resource libraries, and service coordination for families. Training and technical assistance will be provided through collaborative efforts of the Region VI T/TA Network and the Louisiana Department of Education.</p>	<p>Early Steps training modules are available to Head Start/Early Head Start/LEA staff. Technical Assistance can be provided by the EarlySteps Regional Coordinators. Brochures/referral forms are available. The SpecialQuest initiative is a possible opportunity for agencies to collaborate/share training resources.</p>	<p>-LEA's will collaborate with Head Start to share resources and expertise in training and technical assistance in an effort to maximize available resources and reduce duplication.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-LEA's and Head Start grantees may develop additional areas of shared resources.</p>
<p>Public Awareness</p>	<p>Head Start/Early Head Start grantees with partners will collaborate in providing information on the availability of services to children with disabilities and their families.</p>	<p>Early Steps will provide public awareness materials regarding the program and coordinate resources to facilitate service settings for children in natural environments.</p>	<p>LEA's will collaborate with Head Start in providing information on the availability of services to children with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>-LEA's shall provide public awareness on inclusion in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and inclusive practices to best meet the needs of the individual children and their families.</p>
<p>Dispute Resolution</p>	<p>Parties will first attempt to resolve the dispute between or among themselves. All local agencies will ensure that a system is in place to resolve disputes and solve problems. The system should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Timelines for regular meetings to review local agreements, plan collaborative activities, and resolve issues. b. The identification of a liaison from each agency. 	<p>Early Steps will develop dispute resolutions procedures with Head Start to resolve any conflicts which develop.</p>	<p>-LEA's will collaborate with Head Start to develop written procedures for resolving any issues that may arise which are not governed by contracts and/or which may be in conflict with policies and resolutions governing both agencies.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-Every attempt shall be made to resolve conflicts at the local level. Unresolved conflicts are to be reviewed and resolved jointly by the</p>

			LDE and Region VI Office of Head Start.
Service Monitoring	This agreement will be jointly reviewed by all parties every three years and more frequently if laws and regulations are amended that will significantly impact this agreement or when a party requests a formal change. The Region VI Training and Technical Assistance Disabilities Coordinator and/or the Louisiana Head Start State Collaboration Office will develop a process for review and convene a meeting if needed or requested.	Head Start/Early Head Start settings used for service delivery will be incorporated into the quality management process of the Early Steps system.	<p>-The State Department of Education will monitor an LEA and the Head Start grantee that serves children with disabilities deemed eligible according to Bulletin 1508.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>-This monitoring procedure will be in accordance with compliance monitoring procedures outlined in Louisiana Bulletin 1922.</p>

Review/Revision of Agreement:

Representatives of EarlySteps, State Department of Education, Region VI Office of Head Start, and the state interagency agreement committee, will review this agreement every 3 years and make joint recommendations for any necessary modifications. Otherwise, no additions, deletions, or modifications can be made to this agreement without the joint written approval of the parties of this agreement. This contract may be terminated by either party upon thirty days written notice to all.

Date of Implementation:

This agreement shall become effective upon signature of the agreeing parties. Once effective, the Region VI Office of Head Start will disseminate this agreement to EarlySteps, State Department of Education, Louisiana Head Start Association and the Head Start/Early Head Start Grantees. EarlySteps, the SDE and Region VI Office of Head Start will support the LEAs and Head Start/Early Head Start Grantees in the development of local agreements, as needed.

Region VI – OFFICE OF HEAD START



Susan Johnston
Acting Regional Program Manager
Administration for Children and Families
Region VI Office of Head Start

7/1/2008

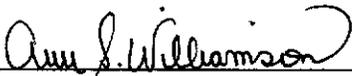
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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Paul G. Pastorek
State Superintendent of Education
Louisiana Department of Education

Date



Ann S. Williamson
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Social Services

8-28-08

Date

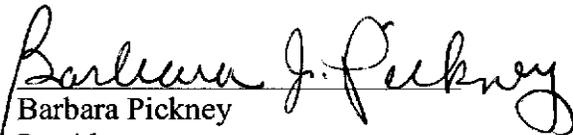
Date



Alan Levine
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

8-20-08

Date



Barbara Pickney
President
Louisiana Head Start Association

7/28/08

Date