Enrollment – 2019/2020
Policy/Procedure

To establish the official procedures necessary for a Head Start family to begin receiving services and provide a network of support to ensure the completion of this process.

Policy/Procedure:
1. Arrowhead Head Start will develop a comprehensive recruitment plan annually to determine the greatest need in the designated service area. Specific efforts will be made to target families with vulnerable children such as those with disabilities, in foster care or experiencing homelessness. (See Recruitment Plan)
2. Each child/family needs to complete an initial enrollment application with the assistance of an authorized/trained Head Start staff member. Applications can be taken at any time during the year and must be done in person, unless there is a compelling reason to do so by phone interview (such situations will have the reasons documented). Applications are scheduled at the convenience of the client, and a verification of the family’s income is a part of the application process. (See Eligibility Policy.) Parents will choose the program option that best meets their family’s needs at the time of application in-take. The application will be submitted to the Community Relations Manager for review and eligibility determination. Head Start staff offers appropriate community resource & referral during this visit.
3. Each application is assigned enrollment points by the Community Relations Manager with assistance from the trained field staff using the 2019-2020 Enrollment Point Systems. The point systems are updated and approved annually by the Policy Council. The Disability Services Manager will assign disability points for children with special needs (see Enrollment Selection Criteria for Children with Disabilities Policy/Procedure).
4. Families maintaining enrollment throughout the first year of services will not be required to reverify their income, unless they are moving from the Early Head Start to the traditional Head Start program. All repeating application placements for Head Start are subject to the same priority point ranking system that is approved by the Policy Council annually. However, Early Head Start children continuing in the Early Head Start program are automatically reenrolled due to year round services.
5. Waiting lists will be maintained in the ChildPlus database that rank children according to the selection criteria. Parents will be informed about other preschool/child care options in writing. Additionally, all initial applicants will receive a copy of the parent resource guide, At Your Fingertips, which highlights other available services in the area.
6. When a child is accepted the family will receive an acceptance letter from the program. The acceptance letter will instruct the family to complete the medical and dental forms and complete the parent orientation.
7. The Family Support Specialist, EHS Home Base Educator, Center Manager or EHS Center Manager will schedule the parent orientation visit to assist in completing the necessary enrollment information. (Enrollment packet, parent orientation, parent contract, and review of Parent Handbook policies and procedures)
8. For center-based programs, a visit is scheduled for the parent and child to view the learning environment and meet the child’s Center Manager.
9. Head Start center-based children will continue to be enrolled through the end of the program year. Early Head Start will have year round/open-ended enrollment.

10. A child will be able to attend the program on the day the office verifies all of the following:
   - Immunizations, with age verification (child must meet state requirements)
   - Emergency Card & Parent Orientation completed

11. A child may be enrolled in the traditional Head Start program until the year they turn 5 years old on or before September 1st of the program year. Children in Early Head Start are eligible to remain in the program until the ending program year of their 3rd birthday.

12. At least 55% of the children enrolled in the Head Start Program will be from low-income families meeting the federal poverty guidelines. 35% of the children may come from families within 130% of the federal poverty guidelines, as long as all income eligible applicants have been placed first.

13. Children enrolled under the 130% category will have reasons to document why they were selected for the program listed in the “Enrollment Notes” section of the ChildPlus data base. See Recruitment Plan for outreach efforts.

14. Children with disabilities will be recruited, meeting or exceeding a 10% minimum of the total program enrollment.

Special Considerations:

1. Consideration will be given to special situations, including families having moved to our service area that were previously enrolled in other Head Start programs, special disability conditions, and/or special referral. Discretion will be given to the I.D. Team on such decisions.

2. Open slots will be filled within 30 days, unless otherwise determined that a slot should remain open to accommodate families experiencing significant hardships such as homelessness or foster care.

3. Children enrolled in the program and transferring to another site will receive priority for continued placement.

4. Waiting lists will be established for each site which will rank children and their families according to the program’s selection criteria. This will ensure that eligible children and pregnant mothers are immediately available for enrollment in the program when vacancies occur. Site preferences and transfers will be honored when possible before enrollment of new child into a site.

5. Arrowhead Head Start staff may move a family from one program option to another depending on the needs of the child, request of the parent, or conditions of specific program requirements. For example, if a child is not being successful in a classroom setting then the child may be transferred to a home base option. Such decisions will be made by the Community Relations Manager, Direct Care Staff and the Program Manager.

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standards 1302.12, 1302.14, 1302.13, 1302.15, 1302.34, 1302.41, 1302.47

Approved by Policy Council on 2-6-19 1-19