



**Pueblo of Isleta Early Head Start & Head Start  
Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, & Attendance  
(ERSEA)  
Policies & Procedures**



## **The ERSEA Committee**

### **Policy:**

To ensure that the program has an effective ERSEA Committee that will enhance the program's ability to effectively meet the requirements of CFR 1305 and all other regulations and procedures in this critical management system.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR 1305

### **Procedure:**

1. The Early Head Start/Head Start Executive Director will ensure that the program has an effective and active ERSEA Committee with appropriate membership and leadership.
2. The ERSEA Committee will consist of the following members:
  - ERSEA Lead – Data Manager
  - Executive Director
  - Education Coordinator
  - Health Coordinator
  - Nutrition Coordinator
  - Disabilities Coordinator
  - Family Services Coordinator
  - Data Clerk
  - Policy Council and/or Parents (as they can attend)
  - Tribal Council Liaison (as he/she can attend)
3. The ERSEA Lead will stay abreast of the latest ERSEA updates and requirements by attending training and conferences and ensuring that the information is shared with the ERSEA Committee.
4. The ERSEA Lead will ensure that the ERSEA Committee is properly trained on the Policies & Procedures.
5. The ERSEA Lead will ensure that all new employees receive ERSEA Training with 90 days of their hire date.
6. The Executive Director will ensure that the Tribal Council and Policy Council receive ERSEA Training with 180 days of a new term.
7. The ERSEA Committee will meet regularly throughout the year. All meetings will include an Agenda, Sign-In Sheet, & Minutes.
8. The ERSEA Committee will review and revise, as necessary, the ERSEA Plans, Policies, Procedures, Forms, & Timelines.
9. Monthly ERSEA progress reports will be compiled by the ERSEA Lead and forwarded to the EHS/HS Executive Director.
10. The EHS/HS Executive Director will ensure that the Policy Council and Tribal Council are kept appropriately informed of ERSEA progress throughout the enrollment year.



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## **Age and Income Eligibility**

### **Policy:**

To ensure that the program establishes a formal process for eligibility that is based on age of child, family income, and other risk factors.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR 1305.4

### **Procedures:**

1. Children who are birth to 30 months, and women who are pregnant, are eligible to be in Early Head Start (EHS) home-based services. Children 3 months to 30 months are eligible for EHS center-based services.
2. Children who are three years by August 31<sup>st</sup> of the program year and up to age five are eligible for Head Start (HS) services.
3. Children may transition from EHS to HS on their third birthday if a slot is available and are exempt from the August 31<sup>st</sup> date. As well as, three year olds with documented disabilities.
4. Children in EHS will remain eligible for EHS services up to 36 months and no more than 40 months based on their Individualized Transition Plan.
5. The ERSEA Committee member will confirm the child's age eligibility by verifying any of the following acceptable documentation:
  - Birth Certificate
  - Hospital Certificate/Records
  - Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB)
6. The program may enroll no less than 51% of income eligible families and no more than 49% of over income families as long as ALL children residing on the reservation that meet the income eligibility have been served and all Indian families native to the reservation that meet the income eligibility have been served. {Refer to 45 CFR 1305.4(3)(i)-(iv)}
7. An income eligible child or family has an annual income, before taxes, that is equal to, or less than, the Federal Poverty Guidelines or receives public assistance.
8. The ERSEA Committee member will verify and take a photo copy of the following acceptable documentation:
  - TANF/SSI Letter
  - Individual Income Tax Form 1040
  - W-2



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- Pay Stubs from the previous 12 months or relevant time period based on family's current situation
  - Letter from employer
  - Signed declaration on the program's *Other Documentation Form* stating reason for lack of documentation or income source.
  - A Third Party Verification may be completed by the verifying staff, with consent from the parents/guardians, if the family has difficulty obtaining proof of their income.
- 9.** The ERSEA Committee member will complete and sign the Verification portion of the family's application. This document will be kept on file and used to admit the family into the program and be the source to identify the documents used to verify age and income eligibility.
- Families that share joint custody or the child's time equally, will be asked to provide income from both parties. Each income will be divided in half and added together to determine the total income that will be used for eligibility.
  - Families that have one parent with primary physical custody, without joint decision making, will be asked for the income of that parent only.
  - Families that have two parents who are not married, but who live in the same home, will be asked to provide both incomes.
  - Families that have two parents who are not married and live in different residences will be asked for the income of the parent who has the child the majority of the time (total income is to include child support if applicable).
- 10.** The Selection Criteria sheet will be filled out and kept on file. This sheet will identify the family's eligible points based on the program's eligibility criteria.
- 11.** An Eligibility Verification Form will be printed from the program's database program, Child Plus, and signed by the appropriate staff member indicating the eligibility type and the forms verified.
- 12.** Any ERSEA Committee Member who intentionally enrolls an ineligible family into the Head Start or Early Head Start Program by falsifying documentation is subject to the termination of their employment under the Pueblo of Isleta Personnel Policies & Procedures Section 601.1(H).



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## **Recruitment & Enrollment Opportunities**

### **Policy:**

To have all families with Early Head Start and Head Start eligible children and eligible prenatal mothers apply for enrollment to the program.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1305.5

### **Procedures:**

1. A Recruitment Plan will be developed annually by the ERSEA Lead to ensure that all families are actively informed about the program.
2. The ERSEA Committee will solicit applications from as many families within the recruitment area as possible and reduce barriers by helping the family fill out the application, assisting the family with accessing necessary documentation, interpretation, and translation as needed.
3. The program staff will ensure that the center environment is welcoming and inviting.
4. Special efforts will be made to recruit children with disabilities by working with community partners and other agencies that serve these families.
5. Addresses of eligible families are accessed by working with the Tribal Census Office and other community partners. Families are contacted by mail with announcements of recruitment information.
6. Parents/Guardians are asked to call and schedule an appointment to complete the application information on-site with the help of an ERSEA Committee Member.
7. The goal of recruitment is to establish a pool of applicants that is greater than the number of slots available for the upcoming program year.
8. Monthly recruitment notices are sent to the Tribal Newsletter.
9. Public announcements are posted at the offices of the community partners and where ever public information may be posted.
10. Notification is given to parents of currently enrolled children of their eligibility EHS/HS for the next program year (if still age eligible) via communication at Family Nights, Parent Committee Meetings, Policy Council Meetings, and information memos/flyers.
11. The ERSEA Lead will review all applications for completeness. If an application is not complete, it will returned to the committee member that took the application for finishing and the committee member must explain to the family why the application was not accepted.
12. Each completed application will be assigned points utilizing the program's Selection Criteria.
13. A list will then be generated ranking the applicant by highest number of eligibility points.



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## Selection

### **Policy:**

To have a formal process for establishing selection criteria and for selecting children and families who are eligible for Early Head Start & Head Start services. The Selection Process will be used to establish a waiting list that ranks children and families according to highest point value to assure that eligible children enter the program as vacancies occur.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1305.6.

### **Procedures:**

1. The EHS/HS Program will use information gathered from the Community Assessment and annual updated Federal Poverty Guidelines to determine appropriate selection criteria for enrollment into the program. The Selection Criteria will be approved by the Policy Council and the Tribal Council on an annual basis.
2. The Selection Criteria will be designed based upon income, age, disability status, other risk factors, and native blood quantum/classification.
3. Each completed application will be assigned points utilizing the program's Selection Criteria and will automatically be totaled by the Child Plus data system.
4. A list will then be generated using the Child Plus data system ranking the applicant by highest number of eligibility points.
5. All Wait List families must re-apply for the next program year and have their income re-verified. Points can change as a result.
6. The ERSEA Committee will review each Selection Criteria sheet for accuracy.
7. Priority is given to children and families with a current IFSP, IEP, or documented disability.
8. Priority is given to children transitioning from EHS to HS and they may transition into an open HS slot at their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday if they are ranked at the top of the wait list and the opening is age suitable.
9. Children in families that are considered "Homeless" are given priority for enrollment, subject to availability in the program, without regard to other factors.
10. All eligible families that are not selected will be placed on a Wait List in highest ranking order.
11. All children enrolled in the EHS Home-Based Option will have their Selection Criteria reviewed and points will be updated to reflect their current family situation as of August of the current year. Points may also be adjusted during the Program Year if the EHS Home-Based family experiences a drastic change (i.e. child receives disability services, a parent loses employment).



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## **Enrollment/Re-Enrollment**

### **Policy:**

To ensure that children and families selected for Early Head Start & Head Start services complete the Enrollment and Re-Enrollment processes in accordance with Early Head Start and Head Start regulations and the Pueblo of Isleta Early Head Start and Head Start requirements.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1305.7 & 45 CFR 1304.2(a)(1)(i).

### **Procedures:**

1. All vacant slots will be filled with the highest ranking children and families. The ERSEA Committee will ensure that no more than 49% of the total funded slots are filled by Over-Income families.
2. Income eligible children and families who are enrolled in EHS remain income eligible for the duration of their participation in the program.
3. Children who are enrolled in HS are income eligible for two years. If the child returns for a third year, the family's income must be re-verified.
4. All families that were enrolled in either EHS or HS, but were determined to be over-income, must have income re-verified annually.
5. Each family that is selected for enrollment/re-enrollment will be notified with a date and time of their Enrollment Appointment and paperwork needed at that time.
6. At the time of the Enrollment Appointment, the ERSEA Committee Member will ensure that the following documentation is completed:
  - Emergency Contacts (Child Plus)
  - Medical Insurance Info (obtain hard copy)
  - Child Health History
  - Child Nutrition Form
  - Family Data Form
  - Transportation Request Form
  - Authorization for Release of Information Form
  - Consent for Care Form
  - Consent for Screenings Form
  - Diet Restriction Form (If applicable)
  - Dental Exam/Fluoride Consent Form
  - Child Health Record – Psycho/Social Interview
  - Media/Walking/Footwear Permission Form
  - ERSEA Home Visit Form (EHS Home Based ONLY)
  - CACFP Infant Formula Form (EHS Center Based Infants ONLY)



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7. If a child withdrew from the program before the end of the year, that child is not considered a returning child and must re-start the ERSEA process, including filling out a new application.
8. Full enrollment will be achieved by the first day of the new program year.
9. EHS will continuously enroll children and families to fill vacancies from children that have aged out until there are less than 60 days remaining in the program year.
10. An infant born to a prenatal mother enrolled into the Home Based Program will automatically fill the slot of the prenatal mother once the two week post-partum visit occurs. Prenatal families have three months to submit child's Proof of Birth, newborn screening results, immunizations, and health exam. If this documentation is not received within three months, this family may forfeit their slot.
11. The first day that an EHS/HS center based child attends the program or an EHS home based family completes a home visit will be considered the enrollment date.
12. Prior to the child's enrollment date, families must provide a copy of the child's most current Well Child Physical Exam (within last 12 months for HS eligible children & most recent well baby exam for EHS eligible), current immunization record, copy of the child's most current dental exam (by age 3 and within the last 6 months), signed physician Health Form with Health Plan for any allergies and/or medical conditions, and a copy of the child's medical insurance card.
13. Every effort will be made to provide assistance to families in setting up a medical and/or dental home and obtaining medical insurance for these services. Families who need this assistance will be given an opportunity to have their child enter into the program with the acknowledgment that they have 90 calendar days to provide the program with copies of all necessary medical records.
14. If every effort has been exhausted to assist families with obtaining medical/dental services/documentation within the first 90 calendar days of the child's entry into the program and all attempts have been unsuccessful, all Head Start services will end on the 90<sup>th</sup> day.
15. Any family whose Head Start services end due to lack of medical/dental documentation will have to complete the application process again and provide copies of all necessary paperwork before entering into the program.



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## **Attendance/Absenteeism**

### **Policy:**

To ensure that the program has a clear process for taking daily attendance, helping families become school ready by encouraging regular attendance, and to ensure that children and families achieve the maximum benefit from EHS & HS.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1305.8.

### **Procedures:**

1. The teachers will take daily attendance and submit weekly to the Education Coordinator.
2. Education Coordinator will enter this information in to Child Plus weekly.
3. Home Visitors will submit a weekly home visit log identifying number of visits completed, attempted, cancelled, and no-call/no-show.
4. Home visitors will enter all attempts and complete home visits in to Child Plus.
5. The Data Clerk or ERSEA Lead will print attendance reports from Child Plus monthly.
6. If the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) falls below 85%, the Education Coordinator/Home Visitors must provide a written explanation and action plan to the Executive Director.
7. If a family calls in to notify the program that a child will be absent, the front desk will fill out the Attendance Binder and Attendance Slip indicting the reason for the absence. If illness is the reason, the front desk staff will ask for details (i.e. fever, diarrhea, vomiting, pink eye, etc.) and place the slip into the proper classroom box.
8. If a child is absent for three consecutive days, the teacher will attempt to make contact with the family to find out why the child was absent. If the family cannot be reached or is experiencing a crisis, the family shall be referred to the Education Coordinator and the Education Coordinator will refer to the appropriate content area coordinator.
9. If a family cannot be reached on the phone after three attempts, a home visit will be made by the Education Coordinator. The classroom teachers may accompany when applicable. If no one is home, the ERSEA Lead will be informed and an Attendance/Contact Letter will be drafted and mailed/delivered to the home.
10. Home Visitors will document all uncompleted home visit attempts listing the reason for cancelled visits, no-call/no-show visits, or staff cancelled visits.
11. The following calculation will be used to identify families that are nearing or falling below 85% compliance for attendance.  
$$\# \text{ of days/home visits in program option} \times 85\% - \# \text{ of days/home visits in program option} = \text{the Allowed Number of Days Absent}$$
12. Families nearing the Allowed Number of Days Absent will be given an Attendance Letter and placed on an Attendance Plan for Chronic Absenteeism. Chronic Absenteeism is defined as an extended period of unexcused absences or a pattern of inconsistent attendance that is negatively impacting the usefulness of the program services to the child or family.



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- 13.** Families falling below the Allowed Number of Days Absent will be staffed with the ERSEA Committee to decide if the family may benefit from another program option (EHS), if there is any support that may be extended to family, or if the family may be withdrawn/dis-enrolled from the program.
- 14.** Reasons that are considered “Excused” are as follows: Health Reasons, Family Crisis, Transportation, and Documented Excused Absences.
- 15.** A child will also be counted as “Present, but Off-Site” if they are receiving Head Start Services off-site with documentation (i.e., physical appointment, dental appointment, or evaluations for Special Education services). They will not be counted as present for CACFP purposes.
- 16.** A child who arrives after 8:45am is considered Tardy.
  - A. Three tardies (consecutively or not) will result in one unexcused absence.
  - B. Nine tardies (consecutively or not) will result in an Attendance Plan.



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## **Voluntary and Involuntary Withdrawal of Children**

### **Policy:**

If a parent decides to voluntarily withdraw his/her child from the Head Start program, every attempt is made by Head Start staff to determine the cause. All feasible attempts are made to maintain a child's enrollment in the program.

- This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1305.8

### **Procedure:**

1. When the program learns a parent is considering withdrawing their child, an attempt to determine the reason is made. Staff will work with the parent to eliminate or reduce any problems identified relating to the potential withdrawal of the child and will encourage the parent to allow the child to remain in the program. The only exception is when a child is to be withdrawn due to medical reasons and remaining in the program would be detrimental to the child's health. Staff will try to persuade the parent(s) to postpone a final decision regarding withdrawing the child until all attempts to solve any problems are exhausted.
2. Staff will make the initial contact and summarize the initial meeting contact on a Family Contact Form.
3. The Education Coordinator or Home Visitor will immediately schedule a meeting or make a home visit to determine if the parent(s) will allow the child to remain in Early Head Start/Head Start. A resolution of any conflict or problems concerning the family or child is then suggested by the staff involved. A presentation about benefits the child derives from remaining in Early Head Start/Head Start is made at this time. Documentation of this conference is made on a Family Contact Form and given to the ERSEA Lead.
4. The Education Coordinator will inform the child's teacher of the conference and whether the parent has been persuaded to allow the child to remain in Early Head Start/Head Start. A careful review of the parent's concerns or reasons for considering withdrawal will be discussed. Documentation of the Education Coordinator/teacher conference summarizing the problem is completed.



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5. If the parent(s) still insist on withdrawing the child from the program, the Education Coordinator/Home Visitor will proceed with the withdrawal procedures and complete the Withdrawal/Drop Form.
6. Final approval of the withdrawal is made by the Executive Director after ensuring everything possible has been done to prevent the child from withdrawing.
7. In certain situations, it may be necessary for a child to be involuntarily withdrawn from the Early Head Start/Head Start program.

Factor Warranting Involuntary Withdrawal

1. Irregular Attendance
  - ◆ If a child is consistently absent without a medical reason or a valid cause, he/she may be withdrawn from the program.
  - ◆ If a child is absent for five consecutive days without parent contact and all methods for establishing parent contact have been exhausted.
2. Inappropriate Placement or Progression
  - ◆ If a child is disruptive to the point of affecting the atmosphere of the classroom.
  - ◆ If a child is being detrimental and poses a threat to himself/herself and/or other children.
3. Failure to provide required health documentation.

Steps Prior to Involuntary Withdrawal

1. Home visit (if parent will allow) is made by the Education Coordinator and/or family service staff to determine any problems.
  - ◆ Every effort is made to explore all variables.
  - ◆ Documentation has been presented.
  - ◆ Alternative resources with other agencies have been discussed.
2. Parents will receive an official notice of withdrawal from the Executive Director which includes:
  - ◆ Reason for withdrawal
  - ◆ Date and signature of the Executive DirectorParents will have five (5) working days after receiving the official notice of withdrawal to appeal the decision.



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Amendments approved by the Policy Council on 11/16/2015

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Policy Council President

Amendments approved by the Policy Council on \_\_\_\_\_

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Tribal Council President