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SIU CARBONDALE HEAD START
Operating Policies and Procedures Manual

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REGULATION REFERENCE: Performance Standard 1305.3

POLICY: The program must complete an assessment of the community strengths, needs and resources and prepare a community assessment report. The assessment must be in accordance with the requirement of 45CFR 1305.3 The Head Start community assessment (CA) is conducted to assist in identifying relevant physical, economic, social, and other community resources, as well as problems, as they relate to the design and implementation of the SIU Carbondale Head Start Program.

The community assessment is a process for collecting data that describes the status of the communities within Jackson and Williamson counties. The findings of the CA can be utilized to identify needs of families and children within the service areas, in addition to determining the types of services and program options that would best meet those needs. The CA findings can also assist in identifying where shortages exist in community linkages, suggest possibilities in bridging those gaps, and build upon the current community resources to further enhance the services that are currently being provided.

The community-wide strategic planning process incorporates the findings of the community assessment, program self-assessment with input from community and staff stakeholders into the development of the philosophy, long range and short term goals of the program, define current, as well as future service areas, and identify resources that would be able to address identified needs.

PROCEDURE: Full Assessment – The full community assessment is to be conducted every three years. The following steps outline activities in completing the CA. The required content of the CA include the following information:

- Demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families, which include the number, geographic location, and racial composition;
- Number of children with disabilities, types of disabilities, and relevant services and resources provided by community agencies;
- Data on education, health, nutrition, and social services needs of Head Start eligible children and families;
- The education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of children and their families as defined by families of Head Start eligible children and by institutions in the community serving young children;
- Other child development and publicly funded state and local preschool programs, and the approximate number of Head Start eligible children served by each;
• Resources in the community that could be used to address the needs of Head Start eligible children and their families, including problems with availability and accessibility.

• A summary of the process used to conduct the community assessment, which includes the involvement of parents, staff, and other sources of statistical information and data.

• The Family/Community Partnerships Coordinator (FCPC) works in coordination with the program director to determine areas of focus, timeframes/due dates, participants and assignments.
  o Timeframes for data collection are generally November – January, concluding with a findings meeting for stakeholders and participants held in February and the final report prepared.
  o Participants may include staff at all levels, Policy Council members, University officials and community members and determines the schedule of activities.

• Generally, the FCPC is responsible for overseeing data collection, preparing the report and presenting community assessment data at the findings meeting.

Update Year – The community assessment update takes place during the two intervening years following a full assessment. The purpose of the update is to review the full CA to determine if there have been significant changes that need to be reported and impact program design and options.

• The FCPC works in coordination with the program director to determine areas of focus, timeframes/due dates, participants and assignments.

• Generally, The FCPC is responsible for overseeing data collection, preparing the report and presenting CA data.
SIU CARBONDALE HEAD START  
Operating Policies and Procedures Manual

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<th>Subject: Eligibility</th>
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REGULATION REFERENCE: Performance Standard 1305.4

POLICY: SIU Carbondale Head Start serves age and income eligible children and their families who reside in Williamson and Jackson counties. In order to be age eligible for Head Start, children must be three years of age or turn three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community in which the Head Start program is located, but not older than compulsory school age. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Missing Children’s Act require that a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate be reviewed for proof of identity and age.

“Income eligible” is defined as:
- Families whose total annual income before taxes is equal to or less than the poverty income guidelines as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This also includes families who are receiving income from public assistance (TANF and SSI) the program may enroll 10% of children whose families’ income falls above the poverty guidelines.

If the program has exhausted all income eligible applications, it may serve 35% of children whose families’ income falls between 100% and 130% of the poverty income guidelines. Additional documentation is required if this occurs.

At least 10 percent (10%) of the total enrollment opportunities must be filled with children who have disabilities. Children with disabilities are those who have been identified, evaluated, and meet the eligibility criteria established by P.L. 94-142. No child is denied placement based on a disability or its severity.

“Categorically eligible” is defined as:
- Children in foster care
- Families that are homeless

PROCEDURE: Age and income eligibility are determined when the family completes an application for their child to attend the program.

Age Verification—
- Families are asked to provide a certified birth certificate at the time of application in order to verify the child’s age. A copy of the certified certificate is made and a copy placed in the child’s permanent file by the staff person completing the application with the family.
- Families that cannot provide a certified birth certificate at the time of application may provide another form of age verification (hospital birth certificate, medical card, visa, passport or other legal document showing the child’s date of birth). A copy of the provided documentation is to be placed in the child’s permanent file by the staff.
person completing the application. At the time of application, families are to be verbally informed and provided a written notice stating that the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services and the Illinois Missing Child Records Act requires a certified birth certificate be provided within 30 days of the child’s enrollment into the program. Families who provide a passport or visa for age verification must also provide an affidavit or notarized letter explaining why a certified birth certificate cannot be provided.

- Age verification documents provided by the family will be reviewed by staff (generally a family/community service worker (FCSW) or center director) at the time the application is completed. The staff person who reviews the documents will mark on the application the type of age documentation provided and sign or date to verify that information was given to families regarding the certified birth certificate requirement when providing other forms of age verification.

Income Verification—
- Documents provided by the family will be reviewed by staff (generally a FCSWs or a center director) at the time the application is completed. The staff person who reviews the documents will mark on the application the type of income documentation provided and sign and date to verify documents were examined. 
- Period of time to be considered for eligibility is the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the month in which application or reapplication for enrollment of a child is made, or for the calendar year immediately preceding the calendar year in which the application or reapplication is made, whichever more accurately reflects the family’s current needs.
- Families who claim no income during the twelve (12) months must verify this by signing and dating the appropriate line on the application form and the Zero Income form. Staff should discuss the income status with the family to assess how the family is living and what support services may need to be offered and document on the Zero Income form. The Zero Income form should also be completed whenever a family claims zero income for the household for one month or more, except when using a 1040, W-2, SSI or TANF to verify income. Staff must attempt to obtain a release and verify that the family has had zero income whenever this has occurred for more than 6 of the last 12 months.
- The staff person will total the annual income for the family using the income calculation worksheet.
- Family is determined to be “income eligible”, “over income”, or “categorically eligible” based on the federal poverty income guidelines
- Once the determination is made, the appropriate box is marked on the application and then the applications signed and dated.
- Income documents used to verify income include, but are not limited to:
  - Letters – Illinois Department of Public Aid, General Assistance, Veteran’s Administration, Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, Universities, Financial Aid, etc.
  - Written statement from employers
  - Recent pay stubs; pay envelopes
  - W-2 forms
  - Internal Revenue Tax Form 1040, 1040A, 1099
OHS Eligibility Verification –

- Staff responsible for ERSEA will review each child’s file and complete the Head Start Eligibility Verification form, which will be maintained in the child’s file.
- This form is completed prior to the child being accepted into the program.
- This form is to be updated if a child is to be enrolled for a third-year when updated income is verified.
REGULATION REFERENCE:

POLICY: SIU Carbondale Head Start provides the opportunity for families to receive full day school year Head Start services by operating five full day classrooms in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)/Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Families must meet the guidelines set forth by the CCAP in order to qualify for full day services. In addition, slots in these full day classrooms are made available for foster children needing full day care as determined by the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (IDHS). These classrooms are located in the Marion (1), Murphysboro (1) and Carbondale (3) Head Start centers. In addition, the program offers full day/full year Head Start services in a collaboration with childcare provider Malone’s Early Learning Center.

PROCEDURE: Families interested in full day Head Start services must meet the eligibility requirements of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)/CCAP and agree to make a co-payment determined by the CCAP. The SIU Carbondale Head Start program works with the family and the local Childcare Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) in completing required paperwork and determining eligibility. Families must:

- Complete an SIU Carbondale Head Start full day application which indicates school and/or work schedule
- Complete and submit the appropriate CCAP paperwork
  - Families without a current CCAP case complete an application and submit along with pay stubs, work and/or school schedule to CCR&R
  - Families with a current CCAP case complete a provider change form to CCR&R indicating the child will be attending an SIU Carbondale Head Start center or child care collaboration site
- Submit re-determination paperwork/information when requested by the CCAP
- Make a monthly co-payment to SIU Carbondale Head Start or the collaboration site as determined by the CCAP

Families who apply for full day services but do not qualify for the CCAP or families who no longer qualify after going through the re-determination process, are offered a transfer to a half day slot when one becomes available.

Foster families must meet the guidelines of the IDCFS to qualify for full day services for foster children. Foster families do not make a co-payment as IDCFS covers the cost of providing full day care.

A full day selection criteria form is completed for all families interested in full day school year Head Start services in order to prioritize selection for the available slots.
REGULATION REFERENCE: Performance Standard 1305.5

POLICY: Recruitment is a systematic process which utilizes the results of the community assessment to assure enrollment of eligible children from the most disadvantaged homes. Also, recruitment must result in the enrollment of eligible children with disabilities (10 percent of available enrollment opportunities). Recruitment is ongoing throughout the school year although mass recruitment is conducted in March and April of each program year for startup in August. All staff have a role in the recruitment process.

PROCEDURE: Family/community partnership coordinator (FCPC) has the responsibility for development, implementation and monitoring of the program’s recruitment plan. Recruitment materials must be developed, partnerships and alliances must be maintained, markets must be defined and effective strategies developed and implemented to reach these markets.

Recruitment materials may include but are not limited the following:
- Flyers
- Posters
- Brochures
- Press Releases
- Letters/mailings
- Banners hung in strategic locations
- Door hangers utilized during door-to-door recruiting
- Ink pens or other imprinted items

In addition to a description of the program, printed recruitment materials should include the following information:
- A statement describing the type of transportation services offered
- A statement indicating a child cannot be denied placement based on disability status only

Markets include:
- Current parents who have children age eligible to return
- Current parents who will have age eligible children by or on Sept. 1
- Current parents who refer friends/contacts who have/will have age eligible children
- Families who are assisted by IDHS who have not been enrolled
- Families living in homeless or women’s shelters
• Families on the waiting list who still have age eligible children
• Families who applied in the past (or expressed an interest), but did not complete verification who still have age eligible children
• Families who visit/frequent area community/public service agencies/organizations serving low-income families
• Businesses serving low income families
• Families with children with disabilities
• Special Education Cooperatives
• Early Head Start referrals
• DCFS referrals
• Targeted low income geographic areas
• Low income families receiving child care subsidies

Strategies to reach the specific markets are as follows:
• FCPC is responsible to utilize currently enrolled parents in the recruitment process. Positive feedback received from parents about Head Start experiences should be documented by staff. FCPC is responsible to include this information in brochures, newsletters and other recruitment information.
• A re-enrollment form is sent to all current parents asking them to indicate plans for next year’s enrollment. The form is sent to parents in April and asks for preferences for session/full day and other comments. The coordinator responsible for ERSEA will ensure that each family has the opportunity for re-enrollment and a status report is prepared.
• FCSWs will prepare a list of and directly contact families who have younger siblings who should be age eligible by September 1 in April.
• The April agency newsletter will inform parents that applications for the upcoming program year are being accepted.
• Parents will be encouraged at the March and April parent meetings to make referrals. Parents will be provided with recruitment flyers and brochures for distribution as follows:
  o At the April parent meetings
  o Via all staff (teachers, center directors, specialists, coordinators) that will offer parents, when they are in contact with current parents, recruitment materials to pass along, post at work, take to church, etc.
• In March/April, a letter will be prepared and mailed to families whose names appear on the IDHS lists received from Jackson & Williamson county IDHS offices. An updated list is received in July and another mailing occurs by August.
• FCSWS contact families who were placed on the waiting list and encourage them to reapply or complete the unfinished application on file.
• FCPC develops a list using the Community Resource Guide and Interagency Partnerships and prepares a packet of materials for agencies/organizations, which frequently serve low-income families. The packet will contain information that agencies can use in their newsletters/materials that are distributed to families, flyers for posting, flyers and brochures for distributing. FCSWs deliver packets to the agencies.
• FCPC develops a list of local churches and ensures they receive information to use in church bulletins and announcements and are provided flyers for posting and/or distribution.
• FCPC develops flyers for distribution to families with children currently attending the primary grades at public schools. Schools are contacted for permission to deliver the fliers to schools/programs along with the number of fliers needed.

• Staff participation in community activities (multicultural fairs, family expos, child finds, etc.) in both counties occurs as opportunities are available.

• FCSWs are provided with flyers to post at business and social service agencies; permission to post flyers must be received. Businesses may include:
  o Thrift/resale stores
  o Laundromats
  o Gas stations/convenience stores
  o Fast food locations
  o Housing/rentals/apartment/mobile home park offices
  o Hair salons/barbers
  o Grocery and retail stores
  o Physician and dental offices accepting medical card
  o Employers (frequent employers of current families)
  o Homeless shelters
  o Women’s shelters

Children with disabilities:
• Program staff participates with area Child Find events generally held in March, April, and August. In general, the Child Development Specialist (CDS) represents the program at Child Find events. The child development coordinator (CDC) will determine if additional staff will be needed at Child Find events. Materials are distributed to early intervention providers and special education school districts.

• Referrals from EI/Special Ed agencies are handled with priority year-round.

• Interagency agreement is established and implemented with staff from The H Group Early Head Start regarding families enrolled in EHS who will be age eligible to transition into Head Start. See Community Partnerships Referrals - Early Head Start for procedures for handling referrals from Early Head Start.

Door to door canvassing:
• Targeting & canvassing door-to-door low-income geographic areas are determined by center directors/collaboration specialist; appropriate tracking of canvassing activities is completed and submitted to the FCPC.

➤ Flyers are not to be placed in mailboxes.

Additional recruitment methods/information:
• Enrollment banners will be displayed in communities as needed and space is available.

• Press releases and public service announcements are written by FCPC, submitted to the program director who forwards to the University’s Media department. This usually occurs during the spring and summer and on an as-needed basis, throughout the school year.

• The number of recruitment contacts is reported weekly to the FCPC.
**REGULATION REFERENCE:** Performance Standard 1305.6

**POLICY:** The program must establish selection criteria points annually with input and approval of the policy council and advisory board. Information from the communitywide strategic planning process/community assessment is utilized in the development of the selection criteria. The selection criteria points are used to prioritize the enrollment of children and families into the program. If the program has exhausted all income eligible applications, it may serve 35% of children whose families’ income falls between 100% and 130% of the poverty income guidelines and an additional 10% of children whose families’ income falls above the 130% of the poverty income guidelines. At least 10% of the total number of enrollment opportunities must be made available to children with disabilities who meet the definition for children with disabilities per IDEA.

**PROCEDURE:**

**Selection Criteria**
- The program director presents the selection criteria form, which may have been modified based on the data from the community wide strategic planning process, to the policy council and advisory board each spring for review and approval.
- Staff are to complete the approved selection criteria form after completing an application with the family. Families with an interest in full day services must also have a completed Full Day Selection Criteria Form on file.
- Center directors review the form to verify points.
- Staff responsible for ERSEA will review the file and verify selection criteria points prior to initialing the Enrollment Application Notes page in each child’s application. This will be done before child is accepted into the program.

**Selection**
- The program’s enrollment period takes place in March, April and May for the next program year; and continuously throughout the program year.
- Enrollment events are held at each center, generally in early April, and enrollment appointments are scheduled with families throughout March, April, and May.
- Children remain on the eligibility waiting list until there is an opening in the program option that meets the family needs or until it’s determined that the family is no longer interested in enrollment.
- Using the eligibility waiting list developed from the selection criteria, the following time frames are used to accept children from this pool of enrollment applications:
May/June
- Children who are determined income eligible (IE) and are four years of age on or before September 1 can be accepted regardless of selection criteria points due to the need for school readiness.
- Children who are determined income eligible (IE) and are three years of age on or before September 1 and selection criteria points total 100 or more points can be accepted.
- Children who are determined to be categorically eligible (i.e. homeless or foster child)
- Children who are age eligible, regardless of the family’s total selection criteria points, can be accepted if the child/family:
  - Has an IEP or IFSP on file or
  - Is referred by or receiving DCFS services, or
  - Is transitioning from Early Head Start/Head Start Services

July/August
- Children who are determined income eligible (IE) and age eligible regardless of selection criteria points can be accepted.
- To ensure the program meets the 10% enrollment of children with disabilities, it may be necessary to accept children who are over income (OI).
- Typically, acceptances are prioritized as follows:
  - Income eligible 4 year olds
  - Income eligible families are accepted based on point rankings (higher points taken first)

Ongoing Selection
- The selection criteria process will be used to determine enrollment.

Exceptions
- Generally, the enrollment of children who were not three years of age on or before September 1, but turn three during the school year should occur when there is not an older child on the waiting list to occupy the slot.
- Efforts to distribute over-income families per the allowable percentage of the funded enrollment slots by sites will be made.
  - The goal of maintaining full enrollment, however, will impact the distribution of OI slots. Given that in general, priority is given to IE applications, some sites may not have vacancies for OI applications. Therefore, some sites may have less than the allowable percentage of OI slots filled and other sites may have more than the allowable percentage of OI slots filled.
REGULATION REFERENCE: Performance Standard 1305.7(a)

POLICY: Children enrolled in SIU Carbondale Head Start will be allowed to remain in the program until kindergarten is available for the child except when there is a compelling reason for the child not to remain, such as a change in the child’s family income and there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services.

PROCEDURE:
- See Procedure Number: E.05.5.2 for additional information for re-enrolling a child eligible for a third program year.
POLICY: SIU Carbondale Head Start is required to maintain a funded enrollment of 368 children. Once a vacancy is determined, that vacancy will be filled within 30 days. In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, a vacancy that occurs with 60 calendar days or less remaining in the enrollment year does not have to be filled.

PROCEDURE:
Enrollment of Children
- Families can begin the enrollment process at SIU Carbondale Head Start using either method listed below:
  - Families interested in applying can call or walk-in to the center that they are interested in during business hours and request to schedule an appointment for enrollment. Whoever schedules the appointment will be responsible to complete an Enrollment Interest Form.
  - If administration staff or community partners learn of an interested family, they will complete an Enrollment Interest Form.
- Completed Enrollment Interest Forms should be sent to ERSEA staff.
- ERSEA staff will enter the Enrollment Interest Form into COPA under the recruitment tab. ERSEA staff will then forward the form to the corresponding center director to alert them that a new family has expressed interest and has been added to COPA.
- Center directors and FCSWs are responsible to contact the family to schedule an enrollment appointment (if this has not already been done) and to follow-up with the potential family until their application is complete.
  - Multiple methods must be used when attempting to contact potential families. These methods could include, but are not limited to home visit, telephone, mailed letter, or face to face contact at the center.
  - Documentation of these contacts will be made in the case notes section on COPA.
- Center directors and FCSWs will continue to work with the family on completing the application process. Once the application is complete, FCSWs and center directors will convert the recruitment information to an application in COPA. They will ensure that all information is entered correctly and that all additional information gathered during the enrollment is added.
- The staff member completing the application will determine if the child is eligible based on age and income verification and assign selection criteria points.
The names of the children will appear on the eligibility waiting list ranked in order of highest to lowest points. The eligibility waiting list also indicates the age of the child and the percent at which the child is either under or over income.

Service area coordinators are responsible to ensure that each accepted child’s file is reviewed prior to attendance.

Once it is determined that a child will be enrolled an ERSEA request (add/drop) form is to be completed and approved by ERSEA staff.

Once approval is given, the ERSEA staff will move children to the eligible/accepted list. Center director will enroll children into the classroom.

ERSEA staff will notify the family in writing of acceptance.

Any additional information concerning the child’s enrollment will be included in the acceptance letter (health requirements, birth certificate, start date, etc.)

Terminating Children
- Terminations (drops) are defined as children who have been enrolled and are terminated from the program.
- Once follow-up has occurred with families and it is determined that the child will not continue in the program, the center director is required to complete and submit the ERSEA Request (add/drop) form to ERSEA staff. The ERSEA staff will determine the official drop date when approving the request.
- ERSEA staff will terminate (drop) the child in the COPA database.
- The center director returns the child’s file to central office

Re-Enrollment of Children
- Center director notifies ERSEA staff of the child that will be returning.
- ERSEA staff will pull the child’s original file and determine, based on when child was previously enrolled, what information needs to be updated.
- The ERSEA coordinator will forward file to health staff for review. The file will be given to center staff who are responsible to work with the family to complete needed updates.
- Once all needed information is gathered, the center director will send an ERSEA request to un-archive the child/family in COPA. Center staff will also be responsible to updating information in COPA. ERSEA staff will ensure that the child/family are un-archived.
- The child will then be placed on the waiting list in COPA and can now be considered for enrollment under the procedures listed in the selection process.

Transferring Children
- Children wishing to transfer from center to center will be given priority over children who are on the eligibility waiting list for a particular center. ERSEA staff will assign the child in the database and ensure the file is transferred to the newly assigned center.
**Subject:** Enrollment and Re-enrollment - Income  
**Number:** E.05.5.2  
**Service Area:** ERSEA  
**Section:** Enrollment and Re-enrollment  
**Relevant Forms:** Located on P:/common drive  
**Date Effective:** 05/2015

**REGULATION REFERENCE:** Performance Standard 1305.7(c)

**POLICY:** Children found income eligible and who are participating in the SIU Carbondale Head Start program will remain income eligible through the current program year and the immediately succeeding program year. Families with children who may be eligible for a third year must provide updated income to determine eligibility.

**PROCEDURE:**
- Re-enrollment forms are sent home each spring to all families of enrolled children who are eligible to return for the next program year, to determine if families plan for their child to return.
- Re-enrollment forms are collected by the center directors and submitted to the ERSEA staff.
- Information gathered from the re-enrollment form is used to determine the number of slots to be filled for the next program year.
- Third year enrollee-obtain new income documents for children age eligible for a third year
  - Complete new selection criteria and the Age and Income Verification Section of the enrollment application
  - Determine eligibility and send appropriate letter to the family.
REGULATION REFERENCE: IDCFS 407.250

POLICY: A certified birth certificate or other reliable proof of child identity and age must be provided within 30 days of enrollment into the program. The Illinois State Police will be notified if the proof of identity is not submitted within the 30 day time frame. Parents will be notified in writing when the Illinois State Police have been contacted and advised they have an additional 10 days to comply.

PROCEDURE:

- Families are asked to provide a certified birth certificate at the time of application to verify the child’s age. A copy of the certified certificate is made and placed in the child’s permanent file by the FCSW, center director, or other staff person completing the application with the family.
- Families that cannot provide a certified birth certificate at the time the application is completed may provide another form of age verification (hospital birth certificate, medical card, visa, passport or other legal document showing the child’s date of birth). A copy of the provided documentation is placed in the child’s permanent file by the FCSW, center director, or other staff person completing the application with the family. Families will be verbally informed and provided a written notice at the time of application, and the notice will be kept in the child’s file, stating that the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services and the Illinois Missing Child Records Act requires a certified birth certificate be provided within 30 days of the child’s enrollment into the program. Families who provide a passport or visa for age verification must also provide an affidavit or notarized letter explaining why a certified birth certificate cannot be provided.
- Center directors are to report to the Illinois State Police any affidavit received which appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content. Following contact to the Illinois State Police, center directors must immediately contact the ERSEA Coordinator both verbally and in writing that a report was made regarding suspicious affidavits.
- Age verification documents provided by the family will be reviewed by staff (generally a FCSW or center director) at the time the application is completed. The staff person who reviews the documents will mark on the application the type of age documentation provided and sign and date to verify what documents were examined and that information was given regarding the certified birth certificate requirement to families providing other forms of age verification.
- If a family fails to submit the certified birth certificate by the required 30 days date, Center directors will notify the Illinois State Police in writing. A copy of both notices will be placed in child’s file and forwarded to the ERSEA Coordinator.
SIU CARBONDALE HEAD START
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Subject: Attendance  |  Number: E.05.6
Service Area: ERSEA  |  Section: Attendance
Relevant Forms: Located on P:/common drive  |  Date Effective: 3/2014

REGULATION REFERENCE: Performance Standard 1304.40(b)

POLICY: The program will ensure that daily attendance for each child is recorded. Absenteeism will be tracked and reasons for the absences will be documented. If absences are due to illness or other excused reason, no further action is required. If however, the absences are excessive or are unexcused and result from other factors that affect a child’s daily attendance, the program will initiate appropriate family support procedures. Contacts with the family will emphasize the benefits of regular attendance, while at the same time remaining sensitive to any specific family circumstances influencing attendance patterns. All contacts with the child’s family as well as any support services will be documented.

PROCEDURE:
Parents are required to call or send a note to account for each day that their child cannot attend and to explain the reason for the absence. Anytime a child is absent and the parent has not reported the reason, FCSWs will follow-up with the family by phone or other method. While talking to the parent, FCSWs will remind them to call whenever their child will be absent and talk to them about the benefits of regular attendance.

All absences will be categorized as excused or unexcused. The following absentee reasons are considered excused.

- Sick
- Inclement Weather
- Doctor/Dental Appointment
- Agency/Health Requirements Pending
- Transportations Problems – Use when the Head Start Bus is not running
- IEP – Use only when a child is not in attendance due to their Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Temporary Family Situation – Use for situations that are temporarily affecting the child’s attendance such as
  - Subsidy
  - Parent provides transportation to and from the center and is unable to transport their child
  - Family has relocated or moved within the service area
  - Child is court ordered to visit a noncustodial parent
  - Family Emergency/Death
All other absentee reasons will be considered unexcused. FCSWs will document all contacts and attempts to contact families regarding attendance. All absences will be recorded in the database in the attendance and meal count report.

- Using the drop down menu, FCSWs will indicate the type of absence (i.e. unexcused or one of the excused reasons listed above) as well as selecting how they received this information (i.e. center visit, home visit, notification letter, referral, or telephone).
- FCSWs will use the comment box to briefly describe the absentee reason.
- More detailed documentation of discussions with the family about attendance, family circumstances that relate to attendance, and/or information/support provided to the family should be documented in the database in family case notes as appropriate.
- Absentee reasons can be updated anytime in the month they occur if information is received from the family.
- No changes to absentee reasons should be made after the end of the month due to monthly enrollment reporting.

FCSWs will conduct home visits to follow-up on chronic absenteeism. **Chronic absenteeism is defined as any child that has 4 consecutive absences.** Children who accumulate 4 absences in one month should receive the absenteeism form via in person or sent home for informational purposes. More than 4 absences within a month will be discussed with FCP staff to determine the best plan of action.

- Visits need to be made in a timely manner. Whenever possible, visits should be made on the fourth day that the child is absent. In rare circumstances, when approved by ERSEA staff, a home visit may not be needed. This can only occur when the reasons for the absences are known and adequate follow-up has been conducted and documented.
- During these visits, FCSWs will discuss the importance of regular attendance with the family and brainstorm ways that attendance can be improved, including offering assistance whenever appropriate.
- FCSWs will also complete an attendance form with the parent and help them create a goal to improve their child’s attendance.
- FCSWs will follow-up on the goal frequently to ensure that attendance has improved. In addition, home visits and/or programmatic support can be offered to any family whenever the FCSW or supervising staff feel that it could help improve a child’s attendance.
- While conducting home visits for children who have had 4 consecutive absences the FCSW assigned to the family will copy homework to take to the child’s home during the attendance visit.
- If a visit is attempted and the family is not home, the FCSW will attempt a second home visit. If the second visit is unsuccessful, follow-up for those specific absences can be conducted by phone.
- Documentation of the visit, attempted visits and phone calls will be in family case notes.
- If a child’s absences become excessive and attendance does not improve after follow-up and appropriate support has been offered and documented, the first attendance letter will be mailed to the family to inform them of their child’s frequent absences and to request that they improve their child’s attendance.
• If the child’s attendance does not improve, the center director will evaluate the situation to consider if the child should be dropped from the program. The center director will consult with ERSEA staff and take into consideration the number of all absences, the reason for absences, the family’s desire to remain in the program and all pertinent information.
• Parents/guardians will be notified in writing via a second attendance letter if their child is being considered for dismissal from the program. A copy of any letters sent to families should be provided to ERSEA staff.
• Once determined that the child will be dropped from the program, the child will be placed on the waiting list utilizing the ERSEA Service Request Form. The child’s slot must then be considered an enrollment vacancy.

ERSEA staff will analyze the monthly daily attendance rate when it falls below 85%. The analysis will include a study of the pattern of absenteeism for each child as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. ERSEA staff will also report average daily attendance and reasons for absenteeism monthly.
REGULATION REFERENCE: Performance Standard 1305.9

POLICY: SIU Carbondale Head Start does not prescribe a fee schedule or charge fees for participation in the program portion providing Head Start services. The program does not solicit or encourage the voluntary payment of fees as a condition of a child’s enrollment.

For Head Start programming offered for full day services in collaboration with Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and childcare partnerships, fees are determined by the state of Illinois CCAP guidelines.

PROCEDURE: See childcare subsidies/family co-payment procedures.
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Operating Policies and Procedures Manual

| Subject: Childcare Subsidies/Family Co-Payment | Number: E.05.8 |
| Service Area: ERSEA | Section: ERSEA |
| Relevant Forms: Located on P:/common drive | Date Effective: 08/2015 |

REGULATION REFERENCE:

POLICY: SIU Carbondale Head Start operates five full day classrooms in collaboration with Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R). These classrooms are located in the Marion (1), Murphysboro (2) and Carbondale (2) Head Start Centers.

The collection of family co-payments is to be implemented at these respective centers. The Head Start co-payment/income guideline is the existing IDHS co-payment/income guideline sheet provided by CCR&R. SIU Carbondale Head Start will charge the same co-payment recommended by IDHS. Family co-payment amounts are governed by the State and may increase at the State’s discretion. SIU Carbondale Head Start Administration reserves the right to change the SIU Carbondale Head Start co-payment amounts which are never to exceed IDHS recommended co-payment amounts. All staff must honor all policies and procedures developed regarding the collection of family co-payments and the maintenance of the cash drawer at all times.

PROCEDURE:

Family Co-payment Schedule/Parent Responsibility Agreement (PRA)

- When a new child enrolls and applies for childcare subsidy, a Child Care Subsidy Parent Responsibility Agreement (PRA) will be signed by the family. The PRA form is in triplicate so the parent, the center and the central office will all have a copy. The PRA outlines the policies and procedures the family must adhere to regarding eligibility for the extended child care program as well as important co-payment procedures that must be followed.
- The central office copy of the PRA will be forwarded to the Office Manager by the center director prior to the child attending the full day classroom.
- Once CCR&R approves childcare subsidy applications, official payments will be collected regularly on the 1st of each month for both centers. Payments are due by the first of the month but no later than the 5th of every month. Bills will be submitted to families on the 3rd Friday of each month.
- Once CCAP approval is received, the regularly scheduled payment plan pattern of the payment due by the 1st but no later than the 5th of every month will be followed. If a parent chooses to pay in installments, installment can be made on the 1st and the 15th of every month or weekly on Friday.
Accepting Co-Payments from Families- Center Director Responsibility

- Family co-payments will only be accepted by the center directors at the Marion/Carbondale/Murphysboro centers. Families must make their co-payments in person to the center directors. No other staff at the Head Start locations will be authorized to accept a family co-payment. At the co-location, families will make co-payments according to the co-location procedures.
- As families make a co-payment at the center, a receipt will be given to them, from the receipt book kept by the center director and copies of those receipts are due to the Office Manager every Friday.
- The receipt will list the amount of co-payment, payment method, name of parent, name of child, month payment is intended for and date of payment.
- Center director will maintain a cash drawer for the acceptance of family co-payments. The cash drawer must remain locked, at all times other than to deposit an accepted payment. The center director is the only staff who may access the cash drawer at their particular center.
- Center director may accept co-payments at any time during the month; however parents are encouraged to make co-payments by the 5th of each month.

Co-payment Collection at Centers- Collaboration/Training Specialist Responsibilities

- The Collaboration/Training Specialist will collect the monies from all of the co-payments made by families from the center directors each month.
- The Collaboration/Training Specialist calculates the total amount of monies collected and provides the center director with one receipt for the full amount of co-payments collected. The Collaboration/Training Specialist maintains a copy of the receipt, in the receipt book and returns to central office and gives the receipt book and monies collected to the Office Manager to complete the Deposit Collection Report form. The Office Manager will track the co-payments using the SIU Carbondale Head Start Co-payment Tracking form for billing purposes.

Deposit of Co-Payment Procedures- Office Manager and Business Manager Responsibilities

- To prepare a deposit, a SIU Carbondale Head Start Deposit Collection Report is to be filled out by the Office Manager after receiving the monies from the Collaboration/Training Specialist.
- The Office Manager reconciles parent co-payments and notifies the Business Manager that the deposit is ready.
- The deposit collection report and monies are kept in a locked location. The keys to that location are held by assigned staff per the director.
- The Business Manager verifies parent co-payments and verifies state reimbursement. The Business Manager will then complete a University approved deposit report for deposit at the Bursar’s office as state reimbursement checks are received.
- SIU Carbondale Head Start is responsible for collecting co-payments. The state takes no recourse against families who do not make their family co-payments. The center directors are responsible for tracking co-payments and notifying families if they have not made their co-payments.
The office manager will prepare a monthly Subsidy Reimbursement Report. The report will include an attendance report (via COPA). The Subsidy Reimbursement Report and Attendance Reports will be used to compare children that are in attendance in full day classrooms to the children who have approvals on file from CCR&R. Children listed on the Attendance Report but not approved need appropriate follow-up with CCR&R to determine enrollment/attendance in the full day classroom.

Family Co-Payment Exemptions and Grace Periods
Families may be eligible for a grace period if special circumstances arise. Families with special circumstances should contact CCR&R to determine what options are available and what paperwork needs to be completed. Head Start will deal with these special circumstances as dictated by CCR&R.

Parent Provider Changes/ Parent Acknowledgement Form
- If an applicant is changing providers to attend SIU Carbondale Head Start, the former provider must be notified 2 weeks in advance.
- If an applicant is leaving SIU Carbondale Head Start to go to another provider, SIU Carbondale Head Start must be given 2 weeks’ notice and prorate parent co-pays. SIU Carbondale Head Start reserves the right to waive the 2 weeks’ notice due to special circumstances. “Special Circumstances” will be determined on a case by case basis.
- Families must complete a Request for a Child Care Provider Change form to provide notice of a change of provider or the addition of a provider.

The State Reimbursement
The program receives a billing statement (child care certificate) monthly. The monthly attendance report on COPA is utilized in completing the child care certificate. Steps in completing the certificate are as follows:
- Indicate on the form the number of days the center was open during the month
- Indicate on the form the number of days each child was eligible during the month
- Indicate on the form the number of attendance days for each child
- Total all the eligible days
- Total all the attended days
- Divide eligible days into attended days to determine the ADA

Certificate is to be mailed to Child Care Resource and Referral (700 College Road, Carterville, Illinois 62918) by the 15th of the following month. A copy of the certificate is made for the file.

Head Start Policy on Failure to Make Co-payments
- Parents taking part in Child Care Assistance Program will be charged a full co-payment amount for all months in which their child is enrolled in a full day session, as listed on their CCR&R Approval Form, regardless of the number of days enrolled during any given month. This applies to all months of the program year, August - May.
• A parent, who has already made a co-payment to another provider in August before coming to Head Start, may be exempted from paying the August co-payment once proof of that payment has been verified by the Head Start center director.

• If the co-payment is not received by the 5th of the month, the family will be notified that their payment is past due with a Child Care Subsidy Status Report. This report is to be mailed on the 10th of the month. This report will state the past due amount and request the parent make a payment or contact the center director within 10 days to keep the child in a full-day slot. Copies of all status letters will be provided to the office manager for filing with parent subsidy information.

• If a family continues to ignore notices for payment, without contacting the center director, at the end of 10 days, the following will take place:
  • A Final Notice letter will follow the Child Care Subsidy Status Report stating that the amount of money owed must be paid by a specific date or the child may be moved to a half day slot, and/or placed on the waiting list. Copies of the final notice letters will also be provided to the office manager for filing.

Family Co-Payment Amount Changes

• A family’s co-payment amount may change due to a re-determination of child care subsidy approval by CCR&R. Typical reasons for change in the amount of family co-payment include a change in family size or income.

• Family co-payment amounts are governed by the State and may increase at the State’s discretion. SIU Carbondale Head Start complies with Illinois Department of Human Service (IDHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).