Mental Health Referral Process
Head Start

GENERAL PLAN/APPROACH:
Mental Health referrals are determined through information from many sources, including health and development history taken at registration and during the Initial Home Visit, developmental and behavioral screenings, parent concerns and input, teacher and family advocate home visits, and classroom observations made by staff and Child Development Specialists. CDSs will suggest a referral when they believe treatment services may be needed. Family Advocates will provide support to parents through the referral process if needed.

HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARD:

PROCEDURES:

A) Child Development Specialist (CDS) Referral

- The CDS does an individual observation (contingent upon a signed Release of Information) and completes the Classroom/Family Consultation Report. The CDS will debrief with HS staff to discuss the recommendation for a referral. HS staff and sometimes the CDS meet with the parent to discuss the recommended referral.

- When a referral has been recommended by the CDS the FA enters the recommendation into the data system and begins the referral process. For each county there is a referral packet that explains the procedure for a referral and contains checklists and forms necessary to complete the task.

- Family Advocates (FA) assist the parent in the referral process, helping to fill out paperwork that completes a Mental Health packet that is then faxed to the appropriate agency. The FA sends a copy of the referral packet to the Disabilities and Mental Health Department. If necessary the FA arranges transportation for the family to the appropriate agency.

- The FA does a minimum of one contact per month to follow-up with the family on the referral process and how the services are going once they begin. Families who entered the program already receiving services receive a minimum of one follow-up contact per month, as well. The corresponding information is entered into the data system by the FA.
B) Parent Requested Referral

- A parent can begin the referral process at any time independent from the agency. When this is the case, the FA completes the same procedure as indicated above to assist the parent in obtaining services.

C) Mental Health Release of Information (ROI-MH-2)

- Mental Health Release of Information (ROI) is used to obtain permission to initiate the process of obtaining Mental Health services for children attending Head Start. The ROI gives Head Start staff permission to correspond with the specified agency to which that child is referred. Parents who are already receiving services when their child enters Head Start are also asked to complete an ROI. The ROI is part of the Mental Health Referral packet that is faxed to the appropriate agency. A copy of the ROI is kept in the child’s file at the center.