

## **Transition Procedure**

### **POLICY/APPROACH:**

SOCFC will support every child and family with the tools they need to experience a smooth transition entering Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS), between EHS and HS, and from HS to public school. Transition planning will take into account each child and family's individual needs and support parents in their role as their child's primary teacher. EHS and HS staff will be well-trained in supporting healthy transitions and expectations regarding communication between home, programs and public school.

#### **HEAD START PERFORMANCE STANDARD:**

*1304.41(c)(1-3) Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous childcare programs into EHS or HS and from HS into elementary school, a Title I pre-school program, or other childcare settings.*

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **A) Annual Staff Training:**

1. EHS and HS education staff will be trained annually in supporting healthy transitions for children and families.
2. EHS and HS education staff will visit each other's programs to support staff communication and a shared understanding of our 0-5 program services. Staff visits will take place in February/March each year.

#### **B) Child and Family Transitions: Home or Childcare into EHS**

1. EHS Specialists will plan individualized supportive transitions in partnership with parents at enrollment.
2. An "Individual Care Schedule" will be completed at enrollment for each child entering the Toddler Combination and Part-Day program options. This will inform and support each child's routine care needs including sleeping, feeding and toileting.
3. For children on IFSPs, the IFSP goals will be reviewed and incorporated in the transition process.

4. All parents will receive an orientation prior to attending services. At orientation parents will be informed about strategies to support healthy transitions.
5. Parents will be encouraged to volunteer in the classroom to support their child's secure transition.
6. Specialists will follow-up on the transition process on home visits.

**C) Child and Family Transitions: EHS to HS:**

1. Every EHS child will have a transition plan in place by age 30 months developed in partnership with parents.
2. In January of the EHS child's transition year, a Transition Plan Update will be completed by specialists in partnership with parents that establishes individual goals for each child based on their needs. If parents are interested in their child applying to Head Start, staff will facilitate completion of the application including current income documentation. All EHS children must be re-determined income eligible at the time of application to HS.
3. The complete HS application will be submitted to the enrollment department before the first HS selection whenever possible. Income eligibility will be determined by HS and EHS applicants selected according to the Selection Criteria Policy.
4. HS acceptance letters will be routed to the EHS Administrative Assistant who will send these letters to EHS families selected. Letters will include the HS center placement.
5. The transitioning children selected into HS will participate in EHS class visits to the HS center they will attend the following year (based upon home address or known childcare address). One or two visits per EHS class will take place in April and early May of the transition year and will be scheduled prior to spring break. EHS centers will coordinate class visits for children who will be transitioning and the HS center will arrange for both a teacher and family advocate to be present to speak to parents whenever possible.
6. EHS transitioning children with diagnosed disabilities will have placement determined at their scheduled IFSP team meeting. The EHS Specialist will accompany the parent whenever possible to this meeting. EHS staff will support parents in advocating for their child's needs. EHS staff will assist with transition as indicated on the IFSP Family Outcomes and Transition from Early Intervention section of the child's IFSP. HS staff will attend the meetings whenever possible.
7. If the HS center placement for an EHS transition child changes, an individual visit will be scheduled whenever possible.
8. EHS transitioning children will visit HS center play yards during June and July.
9. EHS/HS transition staffings will be scheduled and completed prior to EHS children attending HS services.

10. Head Start teachers will complete an initial home visit with the family and transitioning child prior to the child's first school day. Teachers will complete an initial Home Visit Form, which supports the development of their partnership.

➤ **EHS Transition Parent Meeting:**

EHS Centers will schedule a transition parent meeting in April/May of each year for families of EHS children who will transition into Head Start. A Head Start Teacher and Family Advocate will attend. An agenda will be developed by EHS and HS staff with the goal of providing information about the transition process and what to expect in the Head Start program. EHS and HS staff will convey a strong positive team approach. The agenda for this parent meeting will include:

- How EHS and HS staff all work together to support families – promoting a 0-5 culture.
- How to support healthy transitions and the family's role in that process. This includes the importance of family members volunteering in the HS classroom during the first few weeks of school.
- That staff will be working with families to create a "Transition Book" for each EHS child and how this book may be used as a tool to support the transition to HS.
- The logistics of the HS day for children and how EHS routines reflect what children will experience in the HS classroom routine.
- The Family Advocate's role in HS and the opportunities for involvement in the HS center.
- The purpose of the transition staffing in ensuring that each child's strengths and needs are communicated between EHS and HS staff to support each child's smooth transition.

➤ **Transfer of Records from EHS to HS:**

- EHS child and family files on all transitioning children will be transferred to the EHS office at the end of the EHS program year.
- The EHS child and family transition file will be routed to the enrollment department prior to HS class division. Significant information important for class division will be included in the file. Electronic child and family records and education records will be transitioned according to the agency Student Education Records Policy.

**D) Child and Family Transitions: Home, Childcare or Pre-School into Head Start**

Staff will recognize families as the child's forever teacher. This can happen in all interactions, especially at registration, orientation and the Initial Home Visit. They will encourage families to share photographs, portfolios, screening, assessment data and any other information about a previous setting the child has been in, including childcare or preschool. Staff may request that the family sign an ROI if the family thinks the previous teacher has some valuable information to share about the child in the previous setting. All families will participate in orientation prior to the child attending class. This will include information about supporting healthy transitions. Families will be encouraged to volunteer in the classroom to support their child's secure transition.

**E) Child and Family Transitions: From HS to another HS Center or Pre-School Program**

Families will receive the child's portfolio, copies of conference forms to share with the new teacher and any other student record information the family requests for in writing. Families whose children are transferring to another head start center will be notified that all information is transferred to the staff at the new center. When possible, a transition booklet will be created to help the child and family with the transition. Staff will support the child as they say goodbye to their class. We will facilitate visits to the new center when possible.

**F) Child Concurrently Enrolled in Head Start and another Program**

When a child is enrolled in Head Start and another program, the Head Start staff will talk with the family about how that is working for the child, if the child needs any transitional objects or routines, and if they would like any curriculum ideas or strategies to be shared between the programs. If so, the parent can sign a release of information and specify what information and/or materials could be shared. Our focus will be on supporting the child and family and encouraging partnerships among the family and all programs involved.

**E) Child and Family Transitions: Head Start to Public School**

Our school readiness goals as well as individualization for each child will be considered.

1. Family Conference Forms will be developed in partnership with families and will summarize the child's development in each of the following areas: Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical, Language, Social Studies, Art, Science and Technology, as well as considerations for Dual Language Learners and children on IFSPs.
2. The third Family Conference Form will also contain the following:

- The Kindergarten class the child will be attending and information regarding school readiness.
  - Family comments, observations and specific steps for home activities to do over the summer to continue to prepare the child for kindergarten and strengthen the family-child relationship.
3. The teacher will leave two copies of the Family Conference Form with the family along with the Child's Portfolio and Family Observation Journal. The second copy of the Family Conference Form is for the family to take when they meet with their child's kindergarten teacher.
  4. The Family Conference Form will become a part of the Student Education Record. A copy of the Family Conference Form and a summary form of the child's developmental screening will be forwarded to the appropriate kindergarten.
  5. Family Advocates will give parents their child's certificate of immunization form (CIS) at the end of the HS program year to assist them in kindergarten enrollment.

➤ **Transition Activities:**

- Representatives from schools the children may attend are invited to speak each spring at parent meetings. It is important to represent all the schools children will attend. If a staff representative cannot attend, that school's information will be shared.
- Field trips with children and their families transitioning to the kindergartens they will be attending will take place. These visits will be scheduled by Area Managers. Children who will return to Head start will not participate.
- Advocates will publicize and attend Kindergarten round-ups with families and make connections with school personnel (e.g. social worker, homeless liaison) to facilitate connections between Head Start parents and schools.
- Family advocates will encourage families to develop transition goals during their child's pre-kindergarten year.
- Advocates will educate families about the achievement gap and 'summer slide' and ensure that parents are aware of activities and resources such as reading programs and free lunch programs available in the community.
- Transition booklets will be provided to all Head Start parents. This resource will provide parents with information on how to best prepare their child for public school and how to maintain an active role in their child's educational experience.

- Transition from Early Childhood Special Education plans are addressed on the child's IFSP. These plans are determined by the child's IFSP team. Head Start staff will assist as indicated on the child's IFSP.
- Children on IFSPs have scheduled transition to public school meetings that generally take place in the spring, as scheduled by each school district.
- Families of children who are not on IFSPs but who need extra support and planning upon entering their next placement will meet with the HS teacher. Families will be encouraged to support a meeting between the HS teacher and the school. If the family agrees and signs a Release of Information, Head Start schedules a meeting with the school to discuss supporting the child in their new setting, and the family is invited to this meeting as well. If the school does not wish to schedule a meeting the concerns are addressed in the final Family Conference Form which goes on to the public school. Teachers will make every effort to attend this meeting.