

Selection Criteria Policy '26 – '27

Policy/Approach:

To ensure that all eligible families are considered for Head Start services and the highest-need families are served, we have established the following selection criteria. To ensure continuity of services, returning families and EHS transitioning families are selected first. For the remaining slots, selection lists will be sorted from highest to lowest points, and the families with the highest points will be given priority. Once the school year has started, EHS transitioning children will be selected first rather than HS transfers with the same aforementioned approach being followed for remaining slots.

Before classes start, prioritize in the following manner:

- a. Reserved staff members
- b. EHS/HS Returners
- c. EHS Transitioning Children
- d. Categorically eligible children sorted from highest points to lowest points

After classes start, prioritize in the following manner:

- a. Reserved staff members
- b. EHS Transitioning Children
- c. EHS/HS Transfers
- d. Categorically eligible children sorted from highest points to lowest points

Each applicant will be assigned points for the following seven selection criteria. The total of the seven assigned points will be their eligibility point total.

Head Start Program Performance Standards:

1302.14 (a) (1) (3) Selection process

1302.15 (a) (c) Enrollment

Selections are completed to ensure full enrollment on the first day of class. Throughout the school year, as vacancies occur, selections will be completed to ensure the vacancies are filled within 30 days. If there are no categorically or income-eligible families on the waitlist when a vacancy occurs, that vacancy may be converted to a reserved slot. These slots are specifically reserved for families experiencing homelessness or children in foster care. No more than 3% of the programs' funded-enrollment slots will be reserved at any one time. If the reserved slot is not filled within 30 days, the slot becomes vacant and will be filled within the next 30 days.

Selection Criteria	Description	Points
1. Parental Status	Two parents	25



Family

Constellation

One parent	75
Parent is 19-21 years old	75
Parent is 18 years old or younger	100
Foster child	125
Child is a ward of the state, but living with birth parents	125
Not the child's parent (This includes grandparents and other relatives)	100

2. Special Need

Parent reported speech/behavior concern	25
Identified or suspected disability (including children in referral)	35
Child is receiving Mental Health Services or has an ADHD diagnosis	35

3. Income

Over income – 201% and higher	5
Over income – 31% to 200%	25
Over income – 1% to 30%	50
Below poverty guidelines 24% – 0, ERDC recipients or SNAP recipient	75
Below poverty guidelines 49% – 25% and SSI recipients	100
Below poverty guidelines 74% – 50% and TANF cash grant recipients	125
Below poverty guidelines 75% or more due to Social Security or military disability benefits	50
Below poverty guidelines 75% or more, Foster children and Homeless families	500

4. Age

Head Start	
3 years old by September 1st	100
4 years old by September 1st	50
Early Head Start	
Children Birth to 2 years old by Sept 1st	75
Prenatal	100

5. High Social Service Need

Substance abuse, treatment, or recovery	25
Incarcerated parent	25
Parent or sibling with a disability	25
Parent or sibling with mental illness	25
Household member has a serious health issue	25
Family is impacted by a recent death	25
Homeless family	25
Family lost housing or was otherwise negatively impacted by wildfire or other natural disaster within the last 5 years	25
Abuse or neglect	25
Domestic violence	25

	Social Isolation	25
	Separation or divorce	25
	Unsheltered homeless	100

Selection Criteria	Description	Points
6. Other Social Service Need	EHS — 2 relocations since the child was born	25
	HS — 3 relocations since the child was born	25
	Prior parent who has participated in Head Start, Early Head Start, LISTO, Migrant Seasonal Head Start or an AIAN Head Start Program	75
	Current Head Start parent	100
	Multiple EHS applications per family	100
	Written referral from another agency	50
	High-risk pregnancy — For prenatal applicants only	50
	Parent has prior or current military service	25
	Child's serious health problem	75
	Child's primary language is not English	100
	Military parent is currently deployed	100
	Staff Child (SOHS, public schools, board members)*	100
8. Returners (before classes start)	Head Start/EHS Returners	1000
	EHS Transitioning Child	1000
	OCDC Transfer	500
9. Transfers points after classes start	HS/EHS Transfer due to move/guardianship change/priority transfer	2000
	EHS Transitioning Child	1500
	HS/EHS Transfer	1000
	OCDC Transfer	500

10. Working points (For HS centers with duration and part-day classes and <u>EHS</u> duration centers)	Single or Both Parents work or go to school full time	100
	Single or Both Parents work or go to school part time	75
	Two Parents - 1 works full time, 1 works part time	75
	Two Parents – 1 works, 1 goes to school	50
	Two Parents – 1 works, 1 stays home	25
	Not working or going to school	0
	<u>Needs duration to work or school</u>	50

Procedure:

- Categorically Eligible:** Homeless and Foster children will be enrolled based on categorical-eligible status and the aforementioned process for sorting selection lists from highest selection criteria points to lowest.
- Income Eligibility:** At least 90% of the pregnant women and children will be from low-income families or families who receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), support services from TANF (cash grant and ERDC benefits), or are receiving Supplemental Security Income. Over-income families will be selected according to the regular selection criteria. Not more than 10% of the enrollment shall be filled with over-income children. In the event that it is not possible to fill 90% of slots with income- or categorically eligible families, the remaining slots, not to exceed 35% of total enrollment, will be filled with children from families who are between 101% and 130% of poverty. If selection occurs in this category, reports will be submitted to the Secretary of Head Start in accordance with Section 645 of the Head Start Act.
- Age Eligibility:**
 - Head Start:** Serves children who are 3 or 4 years old by September 1st of the enrollment year.
 - For children enrolled in Early Head Start through the entire duration of the previous program year who turn three two weeks after the September 1st cutoff date, they can enroll into Head Start services to minimize additional transitions for the child. Consulting will occur to determine if the child is developmentally ready for transition into Head Start services.**
 - Early Head Start:** Serves pregnant women and children less than 3 years of age prior to September 1st of the enrollment year.
- Disability:** A minimum of 10% of enrollment shall be filled with children with disabilities by January of each year. For children with identified disabilities, the Disabilities and Mental Health Department will review the appropriate placement

by Consulting with the child's Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) provider and Southern Oregon Head Start Management team respectively, to ensure appropriate placement that best meets the child's need. Refer to the Disabilities and Mental Health selection procedure for more detail.

- a. For children whose IFSP states ECSE Classroom is the most appropriate placement, Southern Oregon Head Start will inactivate their Head Start application until their IFSP states that community placement is most appropriate. Children's records will be updated annually according to their annual IFSP meeting.

5. 30-Day Turnover:

- a. ERSEA Coordinator, and in their absence, ERSEA Manager will run selections weekly on Thursdays for both Early Head Start and Head Start to ensure vacancies are filled as soon as possible. Once a child has been accepted for a vacancy, the spot will be considered filled. The family will still be expected to complete their registration paperwork within seven days, or the child will get put back on the waitlist. Exceptions and extensions to the seven-day deadline can be approved by the 0-5 Head Start Director.
 - i. If a child who was accepted to fill a vacancy is dropped from the program, then the 30-day turnover deadline will start again from the date the accepted child was dropped until another child is accepted.
- b. Special consideration will be taken for selections completed before our two-week winter break. Any child accepted in the last selection before winter break will have the option to have their child enrolled after winter break to support a smooth, successful enrollment experience for families. This will also ensure pre-enrollment requirements are completed and clearances approved by Health in addition to center staff. For this circumstance, documentation will be provided on the 30-day turnover reporting tool completed by the ERSEA Manager.

6. Geographic and Other Requirements for Head Start/Early Head Start:

- a. **Head Start:** Children will be assigned to the center in which their residential or child care (e.g. daytime) address is located. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the ERSEA Manager to ensure full enrollment and compliance with all regulations. For centers where there are both part-day and full-day and/or duration service options, prioritize full-day/duration for families working or going to school (points listed above). When there are other considerations, such as school district transportation, or special collaborations, these will be added considerations to the selection procedure.

- b. **Early Head Start:** Applicants who live within the service area as outlined in the EHS grant, will be assigned to the center and program that fits their age. For Early Head Start duration programs, working points will be assigned as addressed above. Families who move outside the service area after enrollment may continue to receive services if the EHS program can reasonably accommodate their needs.
- c. For centers that cannot be filled with categorically eligible children, ERSEA Manager will run a center preference list to attempt to fill the program with categorically eligible families before offering vacancies to families who are over-income. See center preference procedure for more details.

For programs that have teen parent programs, selections will be done in the following order:

- 1. Pregnant teen or teen parent attending school within the School District where the teen parent program is located.
 - 2. Parent attended school within the last two years in the School District where the teen parent program is located.
 - 3. Residents within the School District where the teen parent program is located who work and/or attend school.
 - 4. All other applicants.
7. **Returning/Transferring Children:** Pregnant women and children who remain enrolled in EHS or Head Start at the end of a program year and are still age-eligible for the following year will be assured a slot. A child's placement in duration or AM/PM classes cannot be guaranteed. Policy will be followed when considering children for duration slots at centers with part-day/duration options to give priority to guardians working or going to school. Classroom assignments for part-day classes will occur at the center-level depending on the needs of the child and classroom. Placement for children on IFSPs and Guidance Plans will be reviewed by the Education Department and the child's IFSP Coordinator. As appropriate, a child may remain in EHS following his/her third birthday for additional months until he/she can transition into Head Start or another program. For transferring/transitioning children, refer to the Education Department's Transition Policy and Procedure.
- a. Special consideration will be made for EHS transitioning children to ensure the oldest three-year-old gets priority.
8. **Head Start Enrollment:** Classes may be increased up to the maximum number of children allowed by the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) and regulations with the approval of the 0-5 Head Start Director. Total program enrollment will remain the same.
9. **Early Head Start Program Options:**

- a. Home-Based Option: This option serves pregnant women, infants, and toddlers, birth to 3 years old.

Early Head Start will select eligible pregnant women and their age-eligible children prior to selecting eligible infants and toddlers for these home-based options. Eligible infants younger than 1 year and their age-eligible siblings will be selected next for these options.

- b. Part-Day Option: This option serves children age 24 months to 3 years old
- c. Full-Day Duration Option: This option serves children 6 weeks to 3 years old. Families who work and/or attend school will be given priority.

10. **Prioritization of End-of-Year Enrollees**: When there are 60 days or less remaining in the current school year, only children who will remain age-eligible for the following program year will be enrolled. A child who will be transitioning may be enrolled if there are no income-eligible younger children on the waitlist.

- a. At this 60-day mark, ERSEA will only accept applications for centers whose waitlists pose concern about 30-day vacancies being filled. This will allow ERSEA staff to streamline enrollment processes to support a successful transition into the new school year in addition to supporting families who have been on the waitlist throughout the year (for centers with longer waitlists) with a better opportunity of getting into the program.

11. **Interagency Collaborations**: Exceptions to this policy may be made by 0-5 Head Start Director to accommodate enrollment priorities agreed to in interagency collaborations.

- a. **Josephine County OCDC Partnership** – To promote a comprehensive collaboration with a local early childhood education provider, children can transition from OCDC services into Head Start services one month before they are age eligible for Head Start services. Interagency collaborations will be completed to ensure proper staffings/debriefings occur before the child enrolls in Head Start services. OCDC children will be given transfer points to support a continuity of education services.

- i. While we are prioritizing our local community and strengthening our partnership with a local entity, children from around the state/country will be given points as past EHS/HS children as defined by our Selection Criteria section, “Other Social Service Needs.”

12. **Over income Staff Children**: In order to promote diversity in our classrooms and support staff, we have reserved a total of 8 Early Head Start over income slots and 15 Head Start over income slots for age eligible children of SOHS staff. SOHS staff must meet the following requirements: (1) Have completed a Successful Trial Service (2) Be in good standing with the agency (i.e.; no progressive discipline within 6 months). The selection for these slots will be run concurrently with the main selections including selecting returning and

transitioning staff children first, then filling any remaining reserved slots. In the event we have more applications than available slots, the 0-5 Head Start Director and the ERSEA Manager will review the applications and determine which ones will be placed on the waitlist. If a staff member is not over income, then 95 points will be assigned to applications placed on the waitlist under the Other Factors category.

- a. HR Department will confirm over-income staff reserved slots are allocated to current staff members that meet the above-mentioned criteria.
 - i. If a staff members employment is terminated while their child is in an over-income reserved spot, the child can remain in that spot until the next logical period (i.e., end of checkpoints, holidays breaks, etc.) determined by the ERSEA Manager and 0-5 Head Start Director. The child will go back on the waitlist to be included in selections and have their points adjusted to reflect they are no longer a SOHS staff member's child.
 - ii. All staff members utilizing an over-income staff reserved slot will sign an acknowledgement form agreeing to the procedure mentioned in 12(a)(i)
 - b. Consideration at public schools that we are in contract with will be given to staff members within the school district. Current board members will be given the same consideration. For these circumstances, families will receive 100 points as referenced in the Selection Criteria.*
 - c. will be given special consideration for all Head Start and Early Head Start programs (see Selection Criteria above)*.
13. **Exceptions to this policy** may be made by the 0-5 Head Start Director to ensure full enrollment, compliance with all regulations, and accommodate exceptional family circumstances/center needs as discussed in weekly selection Consults.
14. **Preschool Promise:** Families will be given priority for Preschool Promise slots in the following order:
- a. Preschool Promise transfers
 - b. Head Start transfers
 - c. Children whose sibling is already enrolled in the program
 - d. All other categorically eligible families