Transition: Next Steps

What happens when my child turns three?

What is Transition?

When your child turns 3, he/she is “age eligible” to enter the Head Start classroom. 6 months before your child’s 3rd birthday, you will begin working with your child’s teaching team to schedule a transition conference and determine the most appropriate placement for your child when they turn 3. When a decision is made for a child to transition to Head Start, sometimes there is not a space available right away. Families will work with their Early Head Start teaching team to create a plan to continue services in Early Head Start.

What is the purpose of a Transition Conference?

A Transition Conference will be scheduled 2-3 months prior to your child’s 3rd birthday. The purpose of the conference is to determine the most appropriate placement for your child at the age of 3. Your teaching team and you will consider the following before deciding if your child should transition into the HS classroom (or alternative community preschool), or remain at EHS through the program year:

- child development (social-emotional, cognitive, language & literacy, math, and physical)
- progress made by family and child
- disabilities
- medical needs
- family circumstances

What can we do to support our child?

Tips on how you can help your child and your family make smooth transition decisions:

- Participate in the Transition Conference by talking about what you want for your child.
- Keep a notebook about your child’s activities and interests and help create a transition book with your Early Head Start Specialist.
- What may be helpful to advocate for your child? You know your child’s needs best. Work with your child’s teaching team to assess if your child is ready for the Head Start classroom, or if he/she may need more time at Early Head Start.

What happens after we make a transition decision?

If your child will transition to Head Start at the age of 3, you will:
• Be contacted by our Enrollment office 1 month before your child’s 3rd birthday to re-verify income and receive information of which center your child will attend
• Receive notification when there is an opening at the center and the potential start date
• Be connected with a Family Advocate at the Head Start center
• Be invited to attend a Parent Meeting or center visit to your new school
• Create a Family Transition Goal with your EHS Specialist or Family Advocate
• Create a Transition Book with your EHS Specialist or Family Advocate
• Review your child’s Transition Report (completed by your EHS teaching team)

If your child will remain with Early Head Start through the rest of the program year, you will:

• Develop a Family Transition Goal with your EHS Specialist or Family Advocate (one step will include attending a Parent Meeting or center visit to your new school)
• Create a Transition Book with your EHS Specialist or Family Advocate
• Be contacted by our enrollment office in the Spring to re-verify income
• Participate in the May Parent Meeting that discusses Transitioning to Head Start

Additional Information:

Early Head Start and Head Start are Similar

• We both focus on relationships between staff, children, and their families. We believe that parents and guardians are their child’s first and primary teachers and encourage volunteering at the center.
• We use picture schedules, labeling, and consistent routines to foster self-help skills.
• We use positive guidance and reinforcement to remind children of our class rules (We take care of ourselves, We take care of others, We take care of our things).

Early Head Start and Head Start are Different

• Class ratios at EHS are 1 adult for every 4 children with a class size of 8-9 children. We have 3 classroom staff assigned to each class. Class ratios at HS are 1 adult for every 10 children with a class size of 17-20 children. They assign 3 classroom staff to each class.
• At EHS, you and your Specialist or Teacher and Family Advocate create child and family goals, and you have a home visit one to four times a month depending upon which EHS program option you are enrolled in. At HS, there is a Teacher who will meet with you 4 times a year to discuss child goals and progress. The HS Family Advocate will support family goals and progress. They will do a home visit 2 times a year.
• EHS services continue through early August. Head Start classes end in early June, except for a few duration classes which end in mid-July.

Please feel free to let us know what else you need to help feel prepared for your child’s transition process.