

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH POTENTIAL DISABILITIES

PURPOSE:

The purpose is to give prompt attention to developmental issues and provide early intervention and comprehensive services to all children, including children with special needs. To work collaboratively through interagency agreements with the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ESCE) programs in our service area to identify children with potential disabilities in accordance with “Child Find,” program policy and Head Start Performance Standards and refer them for evaluation and determination for the purpose of providing disabilities services as needed.

PROCEDURE:

It is imperative that identification of children with potential disabilities occur early in the program year to ensure that children are referred and evaluated, and if eligible, receive additional services at the earliest possible time. UMCHS staff will not use labels to identify disabilities or disorders without authorized documentation from an LEA or qualified medical professional.

1. Center Staff

- a. Complete developmental screens within the first 45 days of enrollment or on an annual basis when children are continuously enrolled or re-enrolled (See Screening and Assessment Policy in Education Services Policies and Procedures.)
- b. Complete behavioral screens and observations and record any concerns in the progress notes of the child’s file.
- c. Review and discuss observations, recruitment notes, and Developmental History with the parent.
- d. Record observations of potential special needs and parent concerns in the Progress Notes located in the child’s file.
- e. Record any concerns as a result of the ongoing assessments in the progress notes in the child’s file.
- f. Complete Pre-referral checklist with all necessary information for all referrals (internal or external.)
- g. Complete the Internal Referral form with all necessary information as applicable.
- h. Refer all speech/language, developmental, behavioral, and other special needs concerns to the Associate Director of Child and Family Services utilizing the Internal Referral and include the pre-referral checklist. Include a completed Head Start Teacher Input form, upon request, when referring to the administrative team or Program Manager.
- i. WIC program staff (Women Infants and Children) will assist WIC clients when their children exhibit developmental concerns by providing information about the Education Services District (the LEA) and its services. The fixed point referral number will be made available and information on how to refer will be provided when concerns are noted by staff or parents.
- j. Staff working with Child Care Resource and Referral will assist child care providers serving children with developmental concerns by providing information about the Education Services District (the LEA) and its services. The fixed point referral number will be made available and information on how to refer will be provided when concerns are noted by child care providers.

2. Parent Participation

- a. Involve all parents of children with a potential disability or special needs in the decision to refer to the LEA (Local Education Administration.)
- b. Appropriate center staff will work with the child's parents in helping them to understand and participate in the evaluation and IFSP eligibility process including the need for further evaluations.
- c. Encourage parents wishing to refer their child to the LEA to contact the ESD directly.
- d. Obtain written permission to refer from parents opting to go through the Head Start referral process by including the ESD on the Authorization for Release of Information form.

3. Education/Disabilities Director

- a. Upon receiving the Internal Referral Checklist from staff wishing to refer, the Education/Disabilities Director, in conjunction with the Administrative Team, will respond in writing to the staff referring the child within ten working days as to the decision made.
- b. In conjunction with the Education Managers (and if needed, the Health Services Director, WIC Director, Family Development and Mental Health Director) the Education/Disabilities Director will make a determination of need for observations or assessments to be complete or for additional information to be gathered.
- c. The Education/Disabilities Director, in conjunction with the Mental Health Director, Education Managers, and appropriate education staff will develop a classroom management plan as appropriate.
- d. In conjunction with the WIC Director (EHS) or Health Services Director, the Education/Disabilities Director will determine any additional health services that may be needed.
- e. With parent permission, the Education/Disabilities Director will refer to ESD for evaluation and disability determination by:
 - calling the fixed point referral at the ESD
 - sending a copy of the Head Start Teacher Input Form, signed parental permission, and the pre-referral checklist and Pre-referral/Screening Information
 - providing a copy of the child's physical examination to ESD, to ensure that evaluation will eliminate the possibility of misdiagnosis due to an underlying physical condition
- f. The Education/Disabilities Director or other designated and appropriate staff will participate in the IFSP eligibility meeting.