ERSEA Assessment Tool

Introduction

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) services are essential for identifying and enrolling the children most in need of Head Start services. They also help programs achieve and maintain full enrollment. This assessment tool will help you identify ways to improve your program's ERSEA services.

Instructions for use

Review the success indicators in each area. These indicators are based on regulations and best practices. Use the following rating scale to evaluate how your program is responding to each indicator.

Rating Scale

- **E**: Excelling – This practice is strong and has resulted in success.
- **P**: Progressing – This practice is well underway.
- **S**: Starting – This practice is just being implemented.
- **D**: Desired – This practice is not yet implemented.

Action Planning

After you have rated your ERSEA services, use the action planning chart on page 7 to identify next steps, establish timelines, determine responsible parties, and highlight necessary resources. Consider these action steps:

1. Celebrate the Es and consider where you can replicate those practices in other ERSEA areas.
2. Review indicators rated a P, S, or D.
3. Identify which indicator you can address in the short term.
4. Identify an implementation team to address long-term indicators.
5. Share your plans and your progress with your program specialist during your monthly call.

Contact your program specialist or regional technical assistance network for additional support.

Eligibility *Eligibility services ensure the identification and enrollment of children and families with the greatest need.*	Rating	Notes
EL1. Community assessment data is used to locate and actively recruit all income-eligible children, including those that are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), children with disabilities, children in families experiencing homelessness, and children living in foster care.		
EL2. Systems support appropriate data collection to ensure eligibility and timely updates to application information.		
EL3. Eligibility policies and procedures align with the McKinney-Vento Act.		
EL4. The program uses the Head Start Eligibility Verification Form (or its contents) to ensure all required verification is included in the eligibility determination record.		
EL5. Eligibility policies and procedures include, but are not limited to, eligibility terms and definitions, identified requirements, applicable poverty guidelines, violation protocols, and the local policies and practices used to adhere to the federal guidelines.		
EL6. Procedures are in place for the ongoing review of eligibility records.		
EL7. Criteria for accepting over-income children is consistent with the needs identified across the community.		
EL8. Policies and protocols address the handling of personally identifiable information (PII) and the retention and disposal of records.		
EL9. Eligibility verification is conducted in a confidential, responsive, and respectful manner for families of all backgrounds and uses materials that meet the cultural and linguistic needs of all families.		
EL10. Program leadership and staff receive training to ensure consistent, appropriate, and equitable enrollment practices.		
EL11. Appropriate ERSEA training is provided and adapted for staff, governing body/Tribal Council, and Policy Council.		
EL12. The program collaborates with other agencies, when possible, to train staff on culturally and linguistically responsive family interviewing skills.		

Eligibility Resources:

Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility, 45 CFR §1302.12
Head Start Eligibility Verification Form
1303 Subpart C—Protections for the Privacy of Child Records
Community Assessment: The Foundation for Program Planning in Head Start

Rating Scale — E = Excelling; **P** = Progressing; **S** = Starting; **D** = Desired

Recruitment *Head Start recruitment is a systematic year-round process that reaches out to families in your program's service area. Recruitment should be inclusive, data-informed, and measurable.*	Rating	Notes
RE1. Data from the community assessment is used to identify recruitment areas within the program's larger service area and focus messaging that addresses specific needs.		
RE2. Leadership recognizes and supports all staff in understanding their role in the program's recruitment efforts.		
RE3. Various types of technology are used by the program to connect with families and community partners to support recruitment efforts.		
RE4. Recruitment efforts are adequately staffed with oversight, and operational responsibilities are clearly delineated.		
RE5. Policies and procedures direct the use of social media as a recruitment tool.		
RE6. A program-wide waiting list, representative of the needs at all sites, is maintained and updated regularly.		
RE7. The program has an established follow-up system for inquiries.		
RE8. The program has developed a system for training ERSEA staff on how to respect diverse families and cultures.		
RE9. The program tracks and monitors recruitment efforts and analyzes data to make data-informed decisions and improvements,		
RE10. The program engages in a wide range of recruitment activities that involve past and present families, staff, and the community, including outreach to fathers and male-caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren, and same-sex caregivers.		
RE11. The program engages in a MyPeers group or other networking opportunities to discuss recruitment activities and the improvement of ERSEA services.		
RE12. Recruitment and enrollment materials reflect the community's cultural, language, and literacy needs.		
RE13. The program's recruitment efforts include audience-specific messaging that highlights its ability to provide safe and high-quality learning environments.		
RE14. Partners promote and support the outreach and recruitment process.		
RE15. Partners are educated on the program's service and avenues to enrollment.		

Recruitment Resources:
Recruitment of children, 45 CFR §1302.13
ERSEA: Developing Effective Recruitment Services
Social Media Essentials for Getting Head Start Programs Connected

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Selection *Data-informed and transparent selection policies and procedures ensure that children who would benefit most from Head Start services are identified and enrolled.*	Rating	Notes
SE1. The program uses up-to-date, reliable and aggregated community assessment data to establish the selection criteria; Developed by a diverse representation of families, staff, and community.		
SE2. Up-to-date selection criteria are used for the selection of participants and contains, at a minimum, consideration for the required elements, such as family income, homelessness, foster care, age, and special needs.		
SE3. Selection criteria include a scoring mechanism that is transparent and weighs risk factors that are supported by grant recipient data, such as parent incarceration, teen parents, drug and alcohol misuse, and domestic violence.		
SE4. The program prioritizes younger children where Head Start eligible children can enroll in high-quality, publicly funded pre-K for a full school day.		
SE5. Program leadership and staff receive relevant communication and training needed to ensure consistent, unbiased, and appropriate selection criteria practices are maintained.		
SE6. Internal technology, recordkeeping, and communication systems support the selection criteria process.		
SE7. At the beginning of each enrollment year, and maintained during the year, waitlists prioritize children according to the program's selection criteria.		
SE8. A ranked waiting list is actively maintained and used to fill openings in a timely fashion. Families not selected are referred to other programs and/or partners in the community.		
SE9. The program communicates with parents in a respectful and culturally responsive manner that guarantees the timely exchange of information regarding application status, enrollment appointments, necessary enrollment documents, and position on the waiting list.		
SE10. To support the 10% mandate, considerations are included in the selection criteria for children with diagnosed disabilities.		
SE11. The program has a process in place for testing the validity of selection criteria and waiting list to make sure priority is given to children most in need of services.		

Selection Resources:
Selection process, 45 CFR §1302.14
Thoughtful Selection Policies and Procedures

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Enrollment	Rating	Notes
Equitable and responsive enrollment services ensure that systems are in place to identify and address current and future community, child, and family needs in order to enroll the neediest families in a timely manner and maintain full enrollment throughout the program year.		
EN1. Management systems adapt to changing family and community needs to meet and maintain full enrollment.		
EN2. The program ensures communication and collaboration with governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council members, community partners, Regional Office staff, and training and technical assistance providers to establish and maintain full enrollment.		
EN3. The community assessment is up to date and used to monitor changing demographics and family needs.		
EN4. Leadership engages in data-informed, strategic conversations about center locations and service.		
EN5. Full enrollment goals are based on the strengths and needs identified in internal and external data, such as the self-assessment, the community assessment, and other data used throughout the program year.		
EN6. The program's options, schedule, and calendar are assessed annually and adapted to meet the needs of families.		
EN7. Enrollment opportunities are offered through a variety of locations and methods (virtual or in-person) with varied hours to meet the diverse needs of families.		
EN8. Staff are trained to conduct enrollment interviews in a welcoming and culturally respectful manner. This includes support for non-English speaking parents and those who speak English as a second language.		
EN9. Enrollment is completed in a family-friendly, safe, and confidential environment and there is a process for providing resources and referrals as needed.		
EN10. Internal technology and recordkeeping systems sufficiently support the enrollment processes.		
EN11. There is a process in place to ensure that staff receive the initial and ongoing training needed to communicate respectfully and responsively about enrollment.		
EN12. A system of ongoing monitoring, is in place to measure the effectiveness and continual improvement of enrollment practices.		

Enrollment Resources:
Enrollment, 45 CFR §1302.15
ERSEA: Maintaining Full Enrollment

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Attendance *Regular attendance helps to ensure that all children benefit from full participation in their Head Start program and develop important life habits that will serve them in school and beyond.*	Rating	Notes
AT1. Community assessment data is used to identify trends, health concerns, and cultural traditions and backgrounds that may affect regular attendance.		
AT2. Internal data is collected and analyzed to identify and address causes and patterns of inconsistent attendance.		
AT3. During and after enrollment, parents are educated about the importance of regular attendance through a variety of communication methods, such as home visits, family conferences, phone, text, and social media.		
AT4. Staff are trained on the importance of consistent attendance and strategies for supporting diverse families in their attendance efforts.		
AT5. Consistent attendance practices include supporting children and families transitioning into and throughout the program.		
AT6. Strengths-based family conversations are used to support consistent attendance.		
AT7. Staff and family supports are in place to address child behavioral needs that facilitate consistent attendance and maintain the child's enrollment.		
AT8. Individualized improvement plans are equitably developed for children who are at risk of missing 10% of the program year.		
AT9. The program works with partners to address communitywide issues that may affect regular attendance such as transportation, neighborhood safety, or health concerns.		
AT10. Barriers to consistent attendance for vulnerable populations have been identified and support has been implemented.		

Attendance Resources:
Attendance, 45 CFR §1302.16
Health Services to Promote Attendance
Transitions
Preventing Suspension and Expulsion

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ERSEA Action Plan				
	Next Steps	**Timelines**	**Responsible Parties**	**Standards/ Resources Needed**
Eligibility	Indicators and next steps to address in the short term:			
	Indicators and next steps to address in the long term:			
Recruitment	Indicators and next steps to address in the short term:			
	Indicators and next steps to address in the long term:			
Selection	Indicators and next steps to address in the short term:			
	Indicators and next steps to address in the long term:			

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ERSEA Action Plan

	Next Steps	Timelines	Responsible Parties	Standards/ Resources Needed
Enrollment	Indicators and next steps to address in the short term:			
	Indicators and next steps to address in the long term:			
Attendance	Indicators and next steps to address in the short term:			
	Indicators and next steps to address in the long term:			

More Resources to Support ERSEA Services
Managing the Community Assessment Process
Parts of an Ongoing Monitoring Plan (Sample)
The Four Data Activities