

STANDARDS IN ACTION

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR IDEA



The Head Start Program Performance Standard, §1302.61 (a) and (b) requires programs to meet the needs of children with disabilities, including but not limited to those eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It also requires all children have access to the full range of activities and services. Programs must provide any necessary modifications to the environment, many different formats for instruction, and individualized modifications to support children with and without disabilities. In fact, while a child is going through the process to determine IDEA eligibility, programs must provide individualized services and supports to meet the child's needs. In addition, programs also need to support children who may have delays in development or be at risk for disabilities, but don't qualify for services under IDEA. This set of briefs is about the responsibilities Head Start and Early Head Start programs have related to providing additional services for children who are not eligible under IDEA, and how to support programs in doing so. It shares different options for plans that support children in classrooms, during group socializations, or during home visits. This brief describes a disability services coordinator's experience deciding how to provide

What is IDEA?

- Children who qualify for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are eligible to receive those services as indicated in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Children age 3 and older are covered under [Part B of IDEA](#). A child is deemed eligible if he or she requires special education and related services. Under Part B, children with a disability are provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs. Local educational agencies must offer special education and related services to children who qualify.
- Children under age 3 are covered under [Part C of IDEA](#), which provides guidelines for determining eligibility for early intervention services. Part C only provides early intervention services and does not guarantee a FAPE, but does indicate that the services must be provided in the child's "natural environment," that is, the place where the child spends the majority of his or her time.

STANDARDS IN ACTION

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR IDEA

additional services to a child who did not qualify for services under IDEA. It is a companion piece to *Fact Sheet: Services for Children Who Do Not Qualify for IDEA*, which describes the relevant laws and approaches when deciding how to provide additional support to children who need it.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Tameka is a disability services coordinator at Spruce Mountain Head Start, which offers both Early Head Start and Head Start. Earlier this year, Tameka was approached by Sarah, a lead teacher in a Head Start classroom. She was concerned about four-year-old Ethan, a student in her classroom. Ethan was a bright child who had a hard time paying attention during circle time. He frequently poked and bothered other children who sat beside him in circle. During transitions, he wandered the room or played with blocks—ignoring his teachers. He got very emotional when it was time to transition to the next activity, often falling on the floor crying, yelling, and kicking his feet. Sarah found this behavior very disruptive to the classroom. Tameka also learned that his parents had seen similar emotionally intense reactions from Ethan during transitions at home. They described the way that Ethan reacted during a recent transition from dinner to bath time. Tameka knew there were different ways to provide Ethan with additional support. She knew that she would need to work closely with Ethan's teachers and parents to gather information and decide which approach would best support Ethan.



Tameka knew that she needed to get more information about Ethan's behavior at home and school to better understand his teachers' and family members' concerns. First, she got more detailed descriptions of Ethan's behavior from his teachers. She already knew transitions were hard for him but learned that this was especially difficult when he had to stop playing in centers and clean up. In addition, he could pay attention in circle time for about five minutes—then started poking children, which created conflicts that disrupted circle time. This information helped Tameka narrow down the time of day that she should observe him in the classroom. She did a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) during the transition to circle time from centers, during circle time, and then during the transition from circle time to breakfast. Doing an FBA would help Tameka understand what was happening in the classroom right before Ethan's difficulties started (the antecedents of the behavior), what exactly the behavior looked like (how long it lasted, how intense it was), and what happened afterward (the consequences of the behavior). She would also get input from the mental health consultant (MHC) who observes the classroom regularly. She reviewed the behavioral screening assessment done at the beginning of the year, and asked Ethan's teachers and family members to complete a more in-depth rating scale focusing on Ethan's behavior. This would help Tameka understand the concerns from Ethan's teachers and family members compared to other children his age.

STANDARDS IN ACTION

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR IDEA

THE SITUATION: NEXT STEPS

After trying several strategies to support Ethan, Sarah and Ethan's family remained concerned. Together, they agreed that the next best step was to develop a Child Action Plan based on the FBA, and then refer Ethan for an evaluation by the school system to see if he qualified for IDEA services. If deemed eligible, the school system would work with Ethan's family and develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) detailing specialized services that the school system offered to children with disabilities. The Child Action Plan guided the strategies that Ethan's teachers and family used during the interim period while the evaluation was conducted. Ultimately, the evaluation



results showed that Ethan did not meet the criteria for a disability under IDEA and therefore did not qualify for IDEA services. However, since Ethan was still having a hard time in the classroom, Tameka knew that she and the MHC would need to monitor the situation closely and update the Child Action Plan as necessary.

THE SOLUTION: THE STORY CONTINUES

Tameka set up a meeting with Ethan's teachers, parents, the program's education manager, and the MHC to review the results of the evaluation and identify two to three target behaviors and goals for Ethan. These goals would be incorporated into the Child Action Plan and would prepare him for successful transitions and engagement during circle time. Tameka planned to work with the MHC to provide most of the support to Sarah and her team. The education manager would offer teachers extra support, and Ethan's family would also provide important feedback and ideas to insure consistent use of strategies across home and school. The team gathered their ideas for behavior goals for Ethan at home and in the classroom, as well as strategies to support these goals. Some strategies the team discussed included using a picture schedule and transition warnings with visual cues, teacher modeling to take deep breaths when he started to get frustrated, and seating him next to the teacher during circle time. The team also decides to use behavior specific praise and access to Ethan's favorite activity as reinforcements when he demonstrates the targeted behaviors in his plan. Tameka and the MHC updated the Child Action Plan with the goals and strategies and included an activity matrix that the teaching team could use to organize strategies and collect ongoing data throughout the day. The team then signed the plan and set out to implement these structured supports for Ethan. Tameka reminded everyone that it takes time to change behavior, so they would need to check in frequently to discuss how the plan was working and if they needed to make any changes. Tameka also marked her calendar to check-in with Sarah as well as Ethan's family in about three weeks to see how things were going at home. Finally, Tameka wrote a brief note in the program's tracking system about the goals and strategies in Ethan's plan and the timeline for checking in on Ethan's progress.

STANDARDS IN ACTION

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR IDEA

SELECTED RESOURCES

- [What is Functional Behavior Assessment?](#)
- [Sample 504 Plan](#)
- [Break It Down: Turning Goals into Everyday Teaching Opportunities](#)
- [Supporting Children Who Do Not Qualify for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)
- [Tips for Teachers: Using an Activity Matrix](#)
- [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#)
- [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [Section 1401 Definitions](#)
- [Subpart D -Evaluations, Eligibility Determinations, Individualized Education Programs, and Educational Placement](#)



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

This document was developed with funds from Grant #90HC0012 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, and the Office of Child Care by the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.