

ERSEA Essentials: How Responsive Strategies Support Full Enrollment

[Music begins]

Narrator: Hello from Family Building Blocks in Oregon. Today, I want to share some thoughts on enrollment. Head Start programs want to serve as many eligible families as they can. This means maintaining fully funded enrollment throughout the year. Programs must fill any vacancy within 30 calendar days. An active waitlist is one important tool in achieving this goal.

Enrollment is a year-round continuous process. This includes ongoing communication and relationship-building with families before, during, and after enrollment. Successful relationship-building is conducted in a respectful, nonjudgmental manner. Staff must also be intentional in supporting families' access to services by offering multiple options to complete the enrollment process.

Enrollment in programs focuses on those most in need and is based on the needs identified in the community assessment and current selection criteria. If a program determines families are experiencing homelessness, or children are in foster care, they may reserve one or more enrollment slots for these groups. Up to 3% of funded slots may be reserved for a maximum of 30 days.

Programs must comply with all state immunization and attendance requirements during the enrollment process with exceptions for children experiencing homelessness. Strong recruitment, eligibility, and selection policies and procedures will help achieve enrollment goals and ensure a smooth enrollment process for the family and the program.