

## **DEFINITION OF FAMILIES AT RISK OR OF HIGH RISK FAMILIES**

Many of the families served by Umatilla Morrow Head Start can be considered at-risk. It is important when dealing with all families those assumptions not be made based on what appears on the surface. Getting to know the children and their parents, as well as siblings, is important in the identification of family strengths and needs. If there appears to be a question as to the risk status of individual families ask for assistance from the appropriate component director.

The following should be considered indicators of high risk for the purpose of determining appropriate services:

1. economic stress issues (i.e., loss of job, unable to pay bills, loss of primary income source, homeless)
2. substance abuse, child abuse and neglect issues, or domestic violence in the home
3. parent is failing/dropping out of an educational program
4. recent divorce or loss of family members due to death or estrangement
5. child development issues (ie., low score on the developmental screen or issues noted from recruitment notes, health history, or general observation)
6. extreme or questionable health, mental health, or nutrition issues
7. changes in otherwise typical behavior
8. families involved with community agencies where a current family plan exists
9. children with documented disabilities
10. other factors which contribute to the family's inability to deal with stress in a way that is healthy and productive
11. family literacy issues