

Disabilities Service Plan Overview

For Children with Special Needs Enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start

The education program for children with disabilities and special needs in Umatilla Morrow Co. Head Start, Inc. demonstrates that a child with a disability is a child first. The program values and includes all children who meet eligibility requirements, regardless of nature or severity of the disability. We believe that the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities is determined by the child's ability to function in the environment. In order to help children with disabilities develop in a typical way, an atmosphere that provides the opportunity to build on their strengths and that fosters their developmental needs will be provided. We believe that every child learns through positive, success-oriented experiences where they can do for themselves as much as possible. Children with disabilities learn through interaction with their learning environment, contact with and modeling from adults, and meaningful interaction with typical peers.

Umatilla Morrow Co. Head Start, Inc. values parents as the primary educators of their children. Staff provide support and assistance to parents of children with disabilities and are available to act as the parent/child's advocate in the IFSP process. Head Start/Early Head Start education staff participate in IFSP meetings and in addition, with parent input, write goals related to the whole child. When there are concerns of possible disabilities, the LEA (local education association) completes the evaluation with appropriate parent consent. Actual IFSP documents are written by the staff of the LEA (refer to Inter-agency agreements: Inter-Mountain Education Services District and North Central Education Services District/Early Intervention Program.)

The program actively recruits children with disabilities and special needs and prides itself in acting as a major community placement. A minimum of ten percent of funded enrollment in Head Start/Early Head Start will be identified children with disabilities by at least the mid-point in each program year. A full range of services are provided to these children with special needs, ages birth to five, which includes all services provided by Head Start/Early Head Start as well as collaborative services with the LEA. In addition to children documented through an LEA, UMCHS provides a full range of services to children with other health impairments (as defined in PS 1302 Subpart F.) This approach reinforces the development of a positive self-image, physical abilities, nutrition, health and safety awareness, knowledge of the world around us, and self-awareness.

Umatilla Morrow Co. Education & Disabilities Director coordinates with the Health Services Director and Caregiver Education & Support Director to ensure that the special needs of each child with a diagnosed disability are met throughout the assessment process and during their time in Head Start/Early Head Start.

Umatilla Morrow Co. Head Start's Education & Disabilities Director ensures that Interagency Agreements with all applicable LEAs in the service areas covered by Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start are developed and reviewed and signed annually. These interagency agreements ensure that coordination between programs occurs for the delivery of full services to children with documented disabilities and a process for identification and evaluation of children with potential disabilities is in place. (Refer to policies "Service to Children with Disabilities" and "Identification of Children with Potential Disabilities.")