



# The Center at Lake County Elementary School

Lake County School District

## Eligibility

### POLICY:

Program eligibility is based on age of children, family income, and child and family needs.

*Head Start Performance Standard 1302.12*

### PROCEDURE:

1. To be eligible for Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Special Education, or tuition services, a child must be at least three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school. The Lake County School District has determined this date to be October 1.
2. Birth Certificates will be used to verify that a child will be three by October 1st for enrollment purposes. If a parent cannot produce a birth certificate, other documentation will be accepted. Other forms of age documentation that will be acceptable are:
  - Immunization Card
  - Medical Card
  - Community Based Service list (TANF List)
  - Documentation from appropriate agencies who have previously verified a child's age.
3. Head Start and Early Head Start is a child whose family has an annual income that is equal to, or less than the poverty guidelines or any child whose family is eligible for public assistance. The Center can enroll an additional 35 percent of participants whose income is below 130% of the poverty line. Up to 10% of the children who are enrolled in the program may be children from families whose income exceeds the 130% range of

the low income guidelines but who meet the criteria the program has established for selecting such children and who can benefit from Head Start.

4. Children who are experiencing homelessness or are in foster care are also considered to be income eligible.
5. Children with a diagnosed disability may be considered for enrollment on or after their third birthday at any point of the calendar year. Children must be determined eligible for special –needs services through a process of evaluation by an IEP Staffing Team, and placed on an Individual Education Plan.
6. The family income is verified by the Director of Operations before determining if a child is eligible to participate in the Head Start program. Income verification is required the day the application is returned. Verification includes examination of any of the following:
  - Individual Income Tax Form 1040
  - W-2 forms
  - Pay Stubs
  - Pay Envelopes
  - Written Statement from Employers
  - Documentation showing current status as recipients of public assistance.
7. An “Eligibility Verification” sheet will be completed and signed by the Director of Operations and kept on file for each child who has returned an application and is admitted into the program. The sheet will identify the documentation used to determine income eligibility.
8. If a family presents check stubs as income verification, it must show a full consecutive month and the ending date of pay must be no older than 30 days from the present day.
9. Early Head Start
  - Children birth to three, and expectant mothers are eligible for the Early Head Start program.
  - Children who turn three, but are not able to transition into the Head Start program can continue to receive services up to 6 months or until the child transitions into the Head Start Program
  - When a child turns three and can enroll in the Head Start Program income must be re-verified
  - Children must be eligible according to income guidelines

10. A child is eligible for the Colorado Preschool program if the child is 3 or 4. Children who are four must have one risk factor and have enrollment priority. A child who is three must have three risk factors to be eligible. Children who are eligible for the Colorado Preschool Program only on parent reported concerns of language or social emotional delays should be cleared with the Director of Operations and the Child Collaboration Team.
  
11. Children who do not meet the requirements for Head Start or the Colorado Preschool program will then be eligible for the tuition program. Children are placed first if they have a parent that works for the Lake County School District. Other children who have qualified for tuition based will then be selected by their birthdate and highest needs. Highest needs are determined by The Center's selection criteria form that all applicants are required to have on file and is determined and completed by the Director of Operations. IF there are two children that share the same birthdate and points, these children will move to a lottery system. The Center will use their Childplus appointed numbers and will be selected by the Lake County School Districts Board of Education.

**Determining Eligibility:**

Each application that is returned to The Center will proceed with the same eligibility procedure regardless of program intent.

- Applications will be reviewed and signed by a Director or Manager upon submission. This will be to confirm that all required documents are attached.
- The Director or Manager will conduct an in person interview that will be included in the selection process. This can be conducted in person or over the phone.
- Application then are reviewed by the Director or Operations and the following documents are filled out to determine eligibility:
  - Head Start Income Eligibility Form
  - Selection Criteria Form
  - Colorado Preschool Program State Qualified Risk Factors

After these are completed the child then moves to the selection process.

Policy Council Approval: 2/23/22

Lake County School Board Approval:



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## Recruitment

### POLICY:

The Center Early Childhood Program will establish and maintain an outreach and recruitment process for all Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children. This recruitment outreach will encourage all eligible children to apply for admissions to the program.

*Head Start Performance Standards 1302.13*

### PROCEDURE:

1. The Agency -wide beginning date of recruitment will be February 1 for each upcoming program year.
2. Identify the demographic data and needs of the community to determine areas to be targeted for recruitment.
3. Staff will solicit applications from as many families within the recruitment area as possible.
4. Special efforts will be made to recruit and serve children with disabilities. These include children who are on IFSP and IEP. The Center will also work with Child Find and offices of Social Services.
5. Children who are eligible for a second year of services will be notified of the required new application for the following program year. Applications will also be placed in their cubbies along with new recruitment information.
6. Current families on the waitlist will also be notified through email and phone calls that a new application must be submitted for the new program year. Addresses of eligible families are accessed by utilizing the network the Lake County School District uses to reach families with eligible children. Families will be contacted by mail of upcoming enrollment information.

7. Develop an annual recruitment plan to meet recruitment goals and to ensure all areas of the community and schools have an adequate number of recruitment materials.
  - Update fliers, posters, and brochures
  - Identify areas for distribution, including post office, doctors/dentists, health departments, WIC, TANF, ect. Updated distribution lists will be revised before recruitment takes place for the upcoming program year.
  - Submit information to local media outlets to promote program activities
  - Provide recruitment materials to staff and Policy Council that help with recruitment.
  - Coordinate and attend community meetings and events as well as create evening recruitment and enrollment opportunities for families.
  - Attend community scheduled dates with the Mobile Learning Center to reach different families within the community.
  
8. Recruitment will continue throughout the program year to ensure that there is a competitive waitlist for the Early Head Start and Head Start program.

Policy Council Approval: 2/23/22

Lake County School Board Approval:



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## Selection

### POLICY:

The program has a formal process for establishing selection criteria and for selecting children and families that considers all applicants for the Early Head Start and Head Start programs along with other offered programs at The Center.

*Head Start Program Standard 1302.14*

### PROCEDURE:

1. The Center Early Childhood Program will use information from the annual Community Assessment to determine appropriate selection criteria for enrollment. This information will be discussed with all parties involved including staff, parents, and Policy Council. The selection criteria will be approved by the Policy Council and the Lake County School Board. This will take place on an annual basis
2. The income of families, the age of the child, and the extent to which a child or family meets the criteria that is established will be considered. When a child's information is loaded in Childplus, the child will be ranked by the number of points given based on selection criteria used during the program year.
3. At least 10 percent of the total number of enrollment are made available to children with disabilities.
4. A maximum of 10 percent of enrollment may be from over-income families who meet the criteria and who could benefit from Early Head Start or Head Start services. Over Income children are only enrolled in the absence of enough under income children to fill the program spots.
5. Parents and staff review and update the programs selection process and criteria annually to make sure enrollment opportunities continue to be based on community needs.
6. The program develops at the beginning of each enrollment year, and maintains during the year, a waiting list that ranks children with highest needs according to the selection

criteria to assure that eligible children enter the program as vacancies occur. Each enrollment spot is filled as soon as vacancy occurs and not to exceed 30 days.

7. Once applications have been processed first selection will occur the first Friday in June. At first selection the Child Care Collaboration Team meets and reviews all lists for all programs. Children are placed in this order:
  - Income Eligible, including Foster Care and Homelessness
  - Over Income 10%
  - Income Families ranging 101-130% up to 35%
  - Colorado Preschool Program
  - Children with Disabilities 10%
  - Tuition Based Children who are School District Employees
  - Tuition Based which are selected by birthdate closest to kindergarten and selection criteria point.
  
8. If there are still available spots and they have not yet all been filled, a second selection meeting will take place the first week of August, and the same process will be followed as #7. Selection continues for Early Head Start throughout the program year as expectant mothers have their babies and children become age eligible and are enrolled in our Head Start Program. After the second selection has been completed applications will still be accepted for the program year, and these applicants will be placed on waitlist.

Policy Council Approval: 2/23/22

Lake County School Board Approval:



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## Enrollment

### POLICY:

To establish a process that ensures that families fully understand requirements for enrolling their child, which provides equal and fair access to Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment opportunities to families in Lake County.

*Head Start Performance Standard 1302.15*

### PROCEDURE:

1. Applications are available throughout the program year for The Centers Early Childhood Programs.
2. Only parents or legal guardians can apply for a child's spot. An Application must be signed by at least one adult who's name appears as a parent on the birth certificate or legal document showing custody.
3. A returned application will be reviewed for completeness by a Director or Manager at The Center who will sign that all required documents are included. Required documents include:
  - Birth Certificate
  - Income Documentation from all working members of the household.
  - Copy of Health Insurance
4. Complete applications are reviewed by the Director of Operations. Income is reviewed with every application, and children who are income eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start are placed first on the list. A list of children for enrollment selection ranked highest to lowest depending on birthdate and criteria points. Based on the number of points received children are identified as accepted or waiting.



5. Waiting list categories include:
  - Income eligible, income below the Federal poverty guideline
  - Over Income, Income above the Federal poverty guideline
  - Income eligible between 101-130% of the Federal poverty guideline
  - Colorado Preschool Program-no Head Start
  - Children with Disabilities
  - Over income children of School District Employees
  - Over income tuition based children ranked by birthdate and points
  
6. The parent or guardian of the selected or waitlisted will be informed of their child's enrollment status within one week of the first and second selection meeting conducted by the Child Care Collaboration or of two weeks of submitting an application mid year.
  
7. Mid year vacancies will be filled with use of the waitlist by a qualifying child within 30 days. A vacant spot can be held for an additional 30 days for a child experiencing homelessness or foster care. Applications will be accepted year round to ensure that each program option openings are filled and maintained.
  
8. Students on the WaitList will not be enrolled in the program less than 45 calendar days before the end of the program year. Exceptions will be made for new IEP students who require immediate enrollment and referrals from the Department of Human Services.
  
9. A preliminary class list is given to the teaching staff, Special Education Teacher, Specialty Teachers, Directors, and Managers of enrolled children; they will be listed alphabetically with their enrollment code identified.
  
10. The master copy will be printed and updated as enrollment changes occur.
  
11. The eligible waiting lists maintain the names of children who were not selected for enrollment initially. The Director of Operations will monitor this list frequently and when a vacancy occurs, will refer to the list to determine the next eligible child to enroll.
  
12. Children enrolled in no cost programs mid-year, who have an outstanding tuition balance at the time of the program change will be put on a payment plan to pay down the existing balance.

13. If a child is on the waitlist after being dropped for non-attendance, parents must submit a plan for compliance with all program requirements, including improved attendance.

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## Attendance

### POLICY:

To encourage regular attendance and assist families who children are frequently absent

*Head Start Performance Standard 1302.16*

### PROCEDURE:

1. Each delegate program will have a written attendance policy. At orientation families will have a discussion and be given a copy of these policies. If a parent cannot agree and sign the attendance policy, the child will not be given an enrollment slot.
2. The Center does not allow for the “part-time” enrollment / attendance of any child.
3. Children who are enrolled in a tuition based slot, and need to postpone a start date, or are out on an extended leave must pay the full amount of tuition, holding their child spot.
4. Parents will be urged to provide information on their child’s absence by calling their child’s teacher or the front office of The Center.
5. The Director of Operations and the Child Care Collaboration Team will designate the reasons why children are absent on the daily attendance record in Childplus.
6. Teachers will take attendance daily in their classrooms during drop off. The Director of Operations will collect attendance records daily. If there is an absent child and there is no documentation or contact from the parent within an hour of program start time, the Director will contact families to ensure their child’s well being.
7. The Director of Operations will conduct a monthly average of attendance from each classroom and student. If a child's attendance rate drops below 85% the causes of absenteeism are analyzed.

8. Upon multiple unexplained absences or consecutive absences, staff will make attempts for direct contact with the family including a home visit as necessary. Part of this step will include identifying barriers to attendance or family needs in order to improve/maintain attendance.
9. If no improvement in attendance is seen following these steps, the family in partnership with the program will complete an agreement to support success with regular attendance. The family may be asked if they would like to make their child's Head Start slot available to a child on the waiting list.
10. Following 15 consecutive calendar days of absence with or without notice and communication from the family and no improvement to overall attendance, the selection committee may consult on enrollment of another child from the waitlist, to meet the needs of families and the program.
11. The Early Head Start program will document the number of completed weekly home visits to ensure a total of 46 occur for the program year.
  - Weekly home visits will be tracked by the home visitor and entered into childplus by the Director of Operations. Attendance at group socialization events will also be tracked and entered.
  - Home visits cancelled by home visitor or program staff will be rescheduled at the convenience of the family in that same week whenever possible. Any cancelled group socialization events will be rescheduled to ensure a total of 22 offered for each program year.
  - Following 3 consecutive missed home visits or more than 2 a month for 2 consecutive months with or without completion of home visits, the selection committee may consult the enrollment of another child from the waitlist, to meet the needs of families and the program.
12. Special considerations and support will be provided to families experiencing homelessness in accordance with provisions in 1302.16.

Policy Council Approval: 2/23/22

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