

December 2017

New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

**A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies,
Head Start Programs, and the Early Childhood Field**



The National Head Start Association

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) is a nonprofit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life. NHSA represents 1,600 Head Start grantees and their staff in the United States. Since 1974, NHSA has worked for policy changes that ensure all at-risk children have access to the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family and the community.

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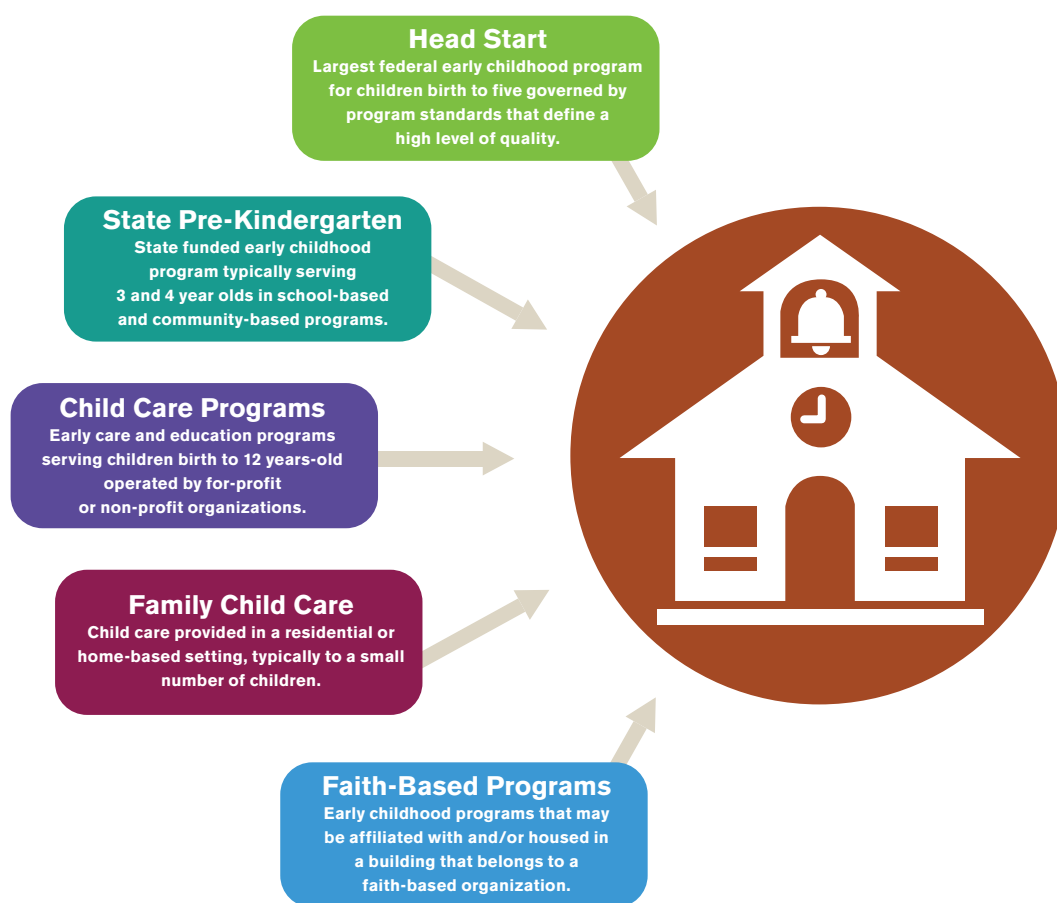
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INTRODUCTION

The **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** (ESEA), as amended by the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA), requires local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving Title I funds to develop agreements with Head Start and other early childhood providers to increase coordination.¹ This new federal requirement represents an important opportunity for better coordination between school districts and Head Start and other community-based early childhood education programs to provide higher-quality learning experiences and a more seamless transition to kindergarten.

In the year prior to kindergarten, children may be in federal Head Start programs, publicly-funded preschool programs, child care centers, family child care homes, or faith-based programs (**Figure 1**). These settings provide a wide range of early experiences that impact each child's preparation for school.

Figure 1: Early Childhood Settings Prior to Transitioning to Kindergarten



As a result, children enter kindergarten with varying degrees of school readiness and understanding of the social norms associated with a school environment.

Coordination between LEAs and Head Start, as well as other community-based early childhood programs, provides an opportunity to support children's development and success in school.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, references to the ESEA in this document refer to the ESEA as amended by the ESSA.

Effective coordination can create a nearly seamless educational system with a continuity of learning, supportive relationships, and engaging experiences. These elements promote school success and help to maintain the gains achieved through high-quality early childhood programs. Conversely, a lack of coordination can be challenging for children, families, teachers, and school administrators. Different pedagogical approaches, different organizations, and different policies across the two systems make it difficult for early childhood programs and schools to create a seamless experience for children. These differences are precisely why cross-systems coordination and collaboration are vital to support child development and learning.

Recognizing the opportunities and challenges of coordination, Congress added the new agreement requirement to ESEA. By requiring written coordination agreements between school districts receiving Title I funds and early childhood education programs, including Head Start categorically, the law creates an opportunity to promote coordination in a way that supports high-quality educational experiences and facilitates the transition of children from early childhood settings to kindergarten. This toolkit provides information and resources to support state and local policymakers; school and early childhood administrators; teachers; and other decision-makers in implementing the new coordination requirement.

The Challenges and Opportunities of Early Childhood/School Coordination

When moving from an early childhood setting to an elementary school, children and families may struggle with a new setting, adjusting to new teachers and other non-familiar adults, and being exposed to fundamentally different instructional methods. For example, in high-quality early education and care settings, such as Head Start, programming will focus on literacy and math, but also include social-emotional learning, strong parent and family engagement, and a commitment to provide or connect families to health and social services. In elementary school, the primary emphasis is on academic learning, even during the earliest elementary grades, which may not be aligned with the children's prior learning experiences. Local educational agencies have different requirements and processes related to family engagement, as well as varying approaches to connecting children and families with health and social service supports.

Elementary school teachers and administrators also face significant challenges related to a lack of coordination between the early childhood and school systems. Kindergarten teachers often begin the school year with little information about the developmental level, early care and education history, or family situation of the children in their classrooms. Moreover, teachers must provide instruction to a classroom of learners who may vary dramatically in their social-emotional skills, academic levels, and understanding of school norms. Similarly, school administrators, in addition to preparing their current students' families for the new school year, must successfully integrate new kindergarten parents into the school community—parents who may be from diverse cultures and income levels, and who vary in their experience and comfort level interacting with school personnel.

Given these challenges, strong coordination between LEAs and Head Start and other early childhood providers is essential to facilitate a successful transition to school. Coordination has shown several benefits, most notably reduced child stress, higher ratings of social-emotional competence at the beginning of the school year, improved academic growth, and increased family involvement, particularly for children and families living in poverty.²

Schools also benefit from a deliberate approach to coordinating with early care and education providers. High-quality early childhood programs, including Head Start, provide a strong social-emotional and academic foundation for schools on which to build. This fact is true particularly for the country's most vulnerable children. Head Start, for example, has been shown to support the positive long-term outcomes most important to LEAs such as increased graduation rates and postsecondary completion.³

These benefits provide the rationale for the new coordination requirement in ESEA. While ESEA has always highlighted coordination, the new provision *requires* that LEAs document the coordination through a written agreement between the LEA and Head Start programs, and agreements with other early childhood programs, if feasible. The new requirement provides an opportunity to more seamlessly connect the programs and services offered through Head Start and other early childhood programs to those offered in elementary schools.

Although the requirement is new, some states and localities have already been successfully supporting coordination between the LEA and early care and education providers (see “Examples of Successful Early Childhood-LEA Coordination”). However, for many LEAs, the coordination between early childhood education programs and LEAs has been superficial, ad-hoc, or nonexistent altogether. According to data from Head Start’s Program Information Report, nearly 18 percent of Head Start programs have no formal agreement with the LEAs in their community even though it is a federal statutory requirement of the Head Start program.⁴ Because this requirement of the federal Head Start Act was limited to actions by Head Start programs and could not compel LEAs to enter into a formal agreement with Head Start, school districts sometimes ignored this requirement. This one-way condition was another driving factor motivating Congress to adopt a reciprocal coordination agreement requirement for LEAs by mirroring the Head Start requirement in ESSA.



2 The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2014). *Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten: Why it Matters and How to Promote Success*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/transition-brief.pdf>.

3 See, for example, Schanzenbach, Diane and Bauer, Lauren. (2016). *The long-term impact of the Head Start program*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

4 Calculations using the 2016 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data. The PIR includes: (1) Number of LEAs in the Head Start Service Area; (2) Number of LEA Agreements to Coordinate Disabilities Services; (3) Number of LEA Agreements to Coordinate Transition Services; (4) Whether the Head Start program has Pre-K Collaboration and Resource Sharing Agreements. The number of Head Start programs reporting at least one agreement to coordinate services in each category (or # of programs reporting “Yes” for Pre-K collaboration) was divided by the total number of programs in the PIR database (N = 3,237) to obtain the percentage of programs with agreements in place.

PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

Given the requirement for each LEA receiving Title I funds to “develop agreements,” this toolkit provides information and resources for State Educational Agencies (SEAs), LEAs, Head Start and other early care and education programs on:

- ESEA’s statutory requirements for LEAs receiving Title I funds regarding coordination with early childhood programs;
- Other federal policies, most importantly the 2007 Head Start Act, that include similar requirements for Head Start programs;
- The alignment between the coordination requirements of ESEA and Head Start;
- Specific actions and activities that SEAs can take to support local coordination;
- Specific steps that LEAs can take to develop coordination approaches that comply with ESEA regulations and support children, families, and elementary teachers;
- Sample guidance on best practices for SEAs to provide LEAs when meeting the coordination requirements;
- Guidance on how to write a strong, actionable memorandum of understanding (MOU) between an LEA and a Head Start program that complies with both federal laws and promotes coordination; and
- The challenges and barriers to coordination and the resources available to overcome them.

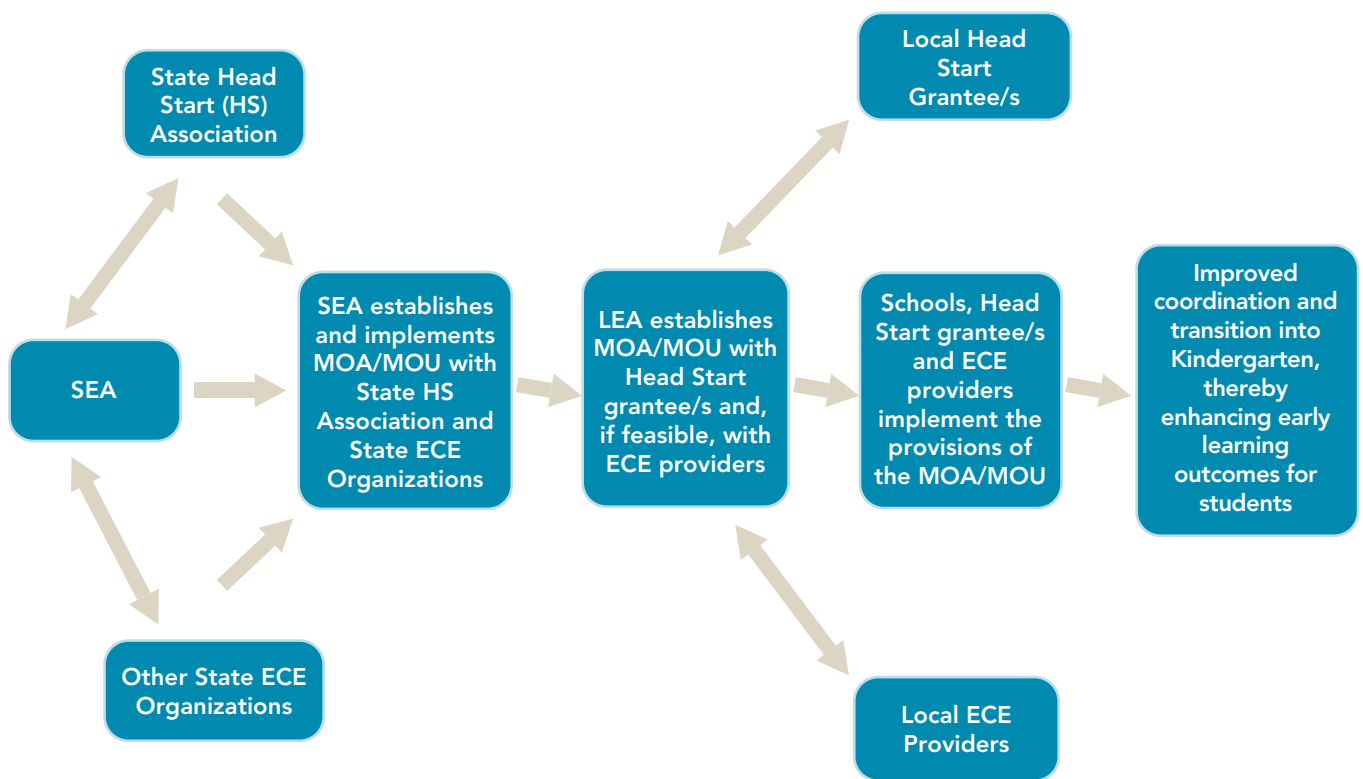
The Vision for the Toolkit’s Implementation

Although the new ESEA coordination requirement applies specifically to LEAs, the resources and information provided in this toolkit are designed to support the active engagement and participation of both state and local educational stakeholders in fulfilling the requirement (**Figure 2**). At the state level, the SEA’s role is to reach out to state-level early childhood organizations, including the state Head Start association, advocacy groups, and other state-level organizations, to coordinate messaging, guidance, and best practices to LEAs regarding the coordination agreements. This state-level coordination should be documented in a memorandum of understanding/memorandum of agreement



(MOU/MOA) between the state-level partners.⁵ The state-level partners should also work on guidance to the local partners that supports coordination. This state-level coordination serves as a model for the LEAs and supports the implementation of the local agreements. At the local level, LEAs use the state MOU/MOA and state guidance to develop local MOUs/MOAs with Head Start programs and other early childhood programs as feasible. The activities specified in these local MOUs/MOAs should improve coordination and transition to kindergarten, enhancing outcomes for young children.

Figure 2. Implementation of Toolkit Resources to Support Local Coordination Agreements and Student Outcomes



⁵ Section 642 (e)(5) of the Head Start Act specifically requires Head Start programs to enter into a “Memorandum of Understanding” with LEAs. ESEA as amended by ESSA requires local educational agency to develop “agreements” with Head Start programs and other early childhood programs, if feasible. Given the difference in language across the two pieces of legislation, the Toolkit uses MOU/MOA to characterize the written agreement between LEAs and Head Start and other early childhood programs.

Examples of Successful Early Childhood-LEA Coordination

Texas

In 2009, Avance Head Start and the Houston Independent School District (ISD) entered into a partnership to collaborate on a longitudinal study to track students' academic progress into elementary school using test scores. Avance was interested in learning how kindergarten and third grade math and literacy skills of children who attended the Head Start program compared to the scores of other economically disadvantaged children. This partnership also helped programs work together to support children's learning. Avance uses the data to drive program improvement, and the school district is better able to help children be ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

The key responsibilities of Avance Head Start were to collect signed consent from parents or guardians and provide the school district with personal identification information, years in Head Start, home language, parent level of education, household income and teacher's level of education. The role of the Houston ISD was to assign unique identifiers for each child, ensure compliance with ethical conduct guidelines and data privacy requirements, and provide data reports.

Missouri

The Central Missouri Community Action Program Head Start and the Columbia Public Schools entered into a partnership to create the BRIDGE (Building Resilience Through Inter-Disciplinary, Developmentally Guided Engagement) program, which supports family engagement for Head Start children and families through 3rd grade. The program has three main goals: developing child success plans to enhance the resilience and social-emotional competence of children; developing family success plans to continue progress in meeting family-identified, long-term goals; training and education for elementary school teachers. Key components of the program include: monthly home visits with a Head Start Parent Partner (social worker) and two times a year with a participating child's teacher; provision of interpretive services in 13 languages; monthly parent-child activities; assessment of child, teacher, and parent (social/emotional/DESSA/and stress scales); goal setting, family and child success plans; and professional development (prior and ongoing to teaching).

West Virginia⁶

The West Virginia State Board of Education requires counties to conduct specific transition activities for children moving from the state's universal preschool program to kindergarten. For example, each county's collaborative early childhood team must develop a written transition plan for incoming kindergarten students that includes coordination strategies such as allowing preschool students and their families to visit their future kindergarten classroom, providing written information to parents about the registration process, and facilitating meetings between preschool and kindergarten teachers. The county teams must utilize best practices for transition activities as outlined in the state's school readiness framework, such as developing a process to share assessment data from a child's Kindergarten Transition Report with the kindergarten teacher.

6 A. Loewenberg. "Connecting the Steps: State Strategies to Ease the Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten" New America Foundation, July 2017. Available at: <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/connecting-steps/>

Oregon⁷

State Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KRPI) grants fund a range of transition programming for incoming kindergarten students and their families. Grantees have used the funding to hire P–3 coordinators in high-need schools, while others used KRPI funds to support joint training and professional development events for early learning providers and elementary school staff to learn about positive behavioral intervention and supports or the Conscious Discipline model, both focused on the social–emotional development of young children. KRPI funds have also been used to hold events and workshops for families of young children to help them prepare for kindergarten and learn strategies to support their child’s learning in the home environment.

Maryland⁸

The Allegany County and Overlook Judy Center Partnership⁹ in Garrett County conducts several transition activities to increase children’s exposure to their future elementary school and teacher. For example, the Overlook Judy Center holds a one-week kindergarten summer camp at the partnering elementary schools for students to learn from kindergarten teachers. Each spring, teachers communicate information about the child’s abilities, special needs, and medical issues. Preschool children are also invited to special events at the elementary school to increase their familiarity with the new environment.

California¹⁰

The state offers a free program for 5-year-old children—Transitional Kindergarten (TK)—as an innovative way to bridge early learning gaps between preschool and kindergarten. Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District in Fresno County holds monthly Kindergarten Articulation Team meetings for educators from child care, preschool, and kindergarten classrooms to discuss how best to ensure smooth transitions for kindergarten students as well as best practices for sharing data between early childhood education and kindergarten programs. While kindergarten teachers already have access to children’s preschool and TK assessment data, they brainstorm ways to share other types of information on the child that can support his or her academic transition. Each year, the Kindergarten Articulation Team develops a written plan that is shared with families at the start of the school year.

7 A. Loewenberg. “Connecting the Steps: State Strategies to Ease the Transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten” New America Foundation, July 2017. Available at: <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/connecting-steps/>

8 C. Patton, J. Wang. “Ready for Success: Creating Collaborative and Thoughtful Transitions into Kindergarten,” Harvard Family Research Project, September 2012. Available at: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/ready-for-success-creating-collaborative-and-thoughtful-transitions-into-kindergarten>

9 Maryland has 25 state-funded ECE programs designed to provide comprehensive, coordinated services for children from birth through age five and their families. These programs are called Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Education Enhancement Program centers, or “Judy Centers.”

10 C. Patton, J. Wang. “Ready for Success: Creating Collaborative and Thoughtful Transitions into Kindergarten,” Harvard Family Research Project, September 2012. Available at: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/ready-for-success-creating-collaborative-and-thoughtful-transitions-into-kindergarten>

WHAT ARE ESSA'S STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR LEA COORDINATION WITH HEAD START AND OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

As noted above, ESEA now requires LEAs receiving Title I funds to “develop agreements” with Head Start programs and other early childhood “entities” to carry out activities that increase coordination.¹¹ The legislation mandates these agreements with Head Start programs and applies to other early care and education programs in the community “if feasible.” In most cases, LEAs should find it feasible to coordinate with other early childhood programs making the requirement apply to all Title I elementary schools and early childhood programs within an LEA. The specific coordination activities outlined in the legislation include:

- Receiving and transferring children’s records, enrollment, parent communication;
- Establishing channels of communication between school staff and Head Start staff;
- Conducting parent meetings with Head Start teachers and kindergarten or elementary school teachers;
- Organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of Head Start staff, school staff, and early childhood education staff, as appropriate; and
- Linking LEA educational services with Head Start agency services.¹²

The requirement applies categorically to Head Start programs because it is the country’s primary federal early childhood education program with centers in communities across the country. Given that only a small proportion of a kindergarten class will transition from Head Start, ESEA requires coordination, if it is feasible, with “other entities carrying out early childhood education programs serving children who will attend the schools of the local educational agency.”¹³ These other entities include child care centers and homes, preschool programs, and other early learning programs. It is important for LEAs to identify these programs and determine with which it is possible to form coordination agreements. Because there are often many child care programs in an LEA service area, it may be helpful for local education leaders to communicate with state and local human services departments and child care resource and referral agencies to gain a better understanding of the early childhood education programs in the area.

The new agreement requirement in ESSA is more actionable than prior reauthorizations of the education law and parallels language contained in the current Head Start Act that requires Head Start programs to develop MOUs with LEAs. Prior to ESSA’s changes to ESEA, the coordination requirement was only in the Head Start law and applied only to Head Start programs. This fact resulted in one-sided and incomplete implementation of coordination agreements between LEAs and Head Start programs. With the reciprocal requirement for LEAs now in ESSA, Head Start programs and LEAs are on more equal footing regarding the development of agreements

11 ESSA, Section 1119(a); 1119(b).

12 ESEA under NCLB, Section 1120B.

13 ESSA, Sec. 1119(b).

to coordinate. More importantly, the agreement requirement encourages dialogue about and implementation of best practices about how to link early childhood education programs and Title I elementary schools. ESSA requires that LEA plans describe how they will “support, coordinate, and integrate” their educational services with early childhood education programs at the LEA or school, including transition of participants to elementary school¹⁴.

Other ESSA Provisions that Address Early Childhood Education

In addition to the requirements in ESSA regarding coordination between LEA receiving Title I funds and early childhood education programs, early learning is incorporated across the new law. These provisions provide additional opportunities for collaboration to support children’s transitions and success in school. As such, it is important to consider the coordination requirement within the context of the overall legislation, which includes provisions related to:

Joint Professional Development

In ESSA, Congress added a new provision allowing school districts to use their Title II funds to support joint professional development between early childhood educators and early elementary school teachers. The provision allows funds to be used to provide programs and activities to increase “the ability of principals or other school leaders to support teachers, teacher leaders, early childhood educators, and other professionals to meet the needs of students through age 8, which may include providing joint professional learning and planning activities for school staff and educators in preschool programs that address the transition to elementary school.”¹⁵

Student Success Strategies

Schools that receive Title I funding, whether through schoolwide programs or targeted assistance, can include early childhood education as a strategy to support student achievement.



Schoolwide Programs: Schools that serve at least 40 percent of students eligible for Title I funds (below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level) are eligible for “schoolwide program” funds. This designation allows those schools to access Title I funds for all students regardless of their individual eligibility for Title I. Under ESSA, a Title I school with less than 40 percent poverty may request a waiver from the SEA to operate a schoolwide program. Under ESSA, schoolwide program schools must describe in their plan how they will address the needs of students at risk of not meeting the state academic standards.

¹⁴ ESSA, Sec. 1112(b)(8).

¹⁵ ESSA, Sec. 2103(a)(3)(G)(ii).

Schools can address at-risk students' needs through transition strategies for preschool children moving from early childhood education to elementary school¹⁶ and through enhancing or expanding preschool.

Targeted Assistance Programs: Schools with less than 40 percent of students eligible for Title I funds may receive "targeted assistance," which funds them based on the number of enrolled Title I-eligible students. ESSA similarly requires these schools to help their students meet challenging academic standards by using academic strategies that may include "services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education to elementary school programs." This provision specifies that such early childhood education programs may include Head Start, state-run preschool, or the ESSA-authorized literacy program.

Preschool Development Grants

ESSA includes a new competitive Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program that has a strong emphasis on coordination and collaboration.¹⁷ The previous PDG was authorized in the annual federal appropriations bills, beginning in FY 2014, and provided grants to 18 states to support either the development of new or nascent preschool programs or the expansion of existing preschool programs.

The ESSA PDG aims "to assist states to develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early childhood care and education in a mixed delivery system across the state designed to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten and to improve transitions from such system into the local educational agency or elementary school that enrolls such children."¹⁸ The new PDG also encourages "partnerships among Head Start providers, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, private entities (including faith- and community-based entities), and local educational agencies, to improve coordination, program quality, and delivery of services."¹⁹

The new PDG law requires the following activities for initial grants:

- Recommend collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities, including transitions;
- Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among existing programs; and
- Recommend partnership opportunities among Head Start providers, local educational agencies, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and private entities.²⁰

The program is contingent on federal appropriations. If funded, states may use PDG grants for increasing state-level coordination.

¹⁶ ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(v); Sec. 1114(c).

¹⁷ ESSA, Sec. 9212.

¹⁸ ESSA, Sec. 9212(a)(1).

¹⁹ ESSA, Sec. 9212(a)(2).

²⁰ ESSA, Sec. 9212(f).

State Family Engagement Centers

ESSA added a new family engagement grant program to support family-school partnerships. The grants will be awarded to a statewide organization or consortium of organizations to support training and technical assistance to SEAs and LEAs to conduct effective family engagement policies, programs, and activities. The goals of these grants are to support student achievement, further the developmental progress of children, and improve parents' relationships with their children's schools. This initiative presents a great opportunity to link the family engagement work done in Head Start with schools' efforts in this area so families can be supported as their child progresses along the learning continuum. Family engagement is crucial to the Head Start model and programs have always placed a significant emphasis on two-generation approaches and helping families.²¹ This program is also contingent on federal appropriations.



Other Alignment and Coordination Provisions

ESSA continues and adds several coordination provisions that complement the agreement requirements. It maintains the No Child Left Behind language that requires schools that use federal Title I funds for preschool to meet Head Start education performance standards.²² ESSA also adds language requiring LEA-funded programs supporting English learners to “coordinate activities and share relevant data under the plan with local Head Start and Early Head Start agencies, including migrant and seasonal Head Start agencies, and other early childhood education providers.”²³

²¹ ESSA, Sec. 4501, et seq.

²² ESSA, Sec. 1112(c)(7).

²³ ESSA, Sec. 3116(b)(4)(D).

WHAT ARE THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS TO COORDINATE WITH LEAS?

The current Head Start Act, which has been in place since 2007, recognizes the importance of coordinating Head Start, other early childhood programs, and schools. As the country's largest early childhood program serving almost one million children, the federal Head Start law identified several purposes of coordination, including:

1) Improving the Availability of Services²⁴

Outreach, communication, and sharing information helps identify eligible children and makes delivery of services more efficient and less duplicative.

2) Improving the Quality of Services²⁵

Sharing resources, such as professional development, educational activities, curricular objectives, instructional strategies and technical assistance improves the quality of children's early learning experiences.

3) Supporting Children's Transitions²⁶

As children move from preschool, Head Start, and child care into the public schools, their transition is facilitated by involvement from both early childhood and K-12 systems.

The Head Start law requires that programs "take steps to coordinate activities with the local educational agency serving the community involved and with schools in which children participating in the Head Start program will enroll following the program." The statute references coordination in sharing curricular and instructional resources and professional development, as well as coordination on communication, information sharing, outreach, facilities, and children's transitions.^{27,28} The law also requires Head Start programs to enter an MOU "with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start agency."²⁹ This entity is typically an LEA, which includes school districts and sometimes charter schools.

In addition to the Head Start Act, the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act added coordination language that applies to state child care subsidy programs. The Act requires that state child care plans include "how the State ... will efficiently, and to the extent practicable, coordinate services ... with programs operating at the Federal, State, and local levels..."³⁰

24 Sec. 642(e); Sec. 642(e)(2)(B)(i).

25 Sec. 642(e)(2)(B); Sec. 642(e)(4)(b).

26 Sec. 642(e)(2)(B)(iii).

27 Sec. 642 (e)(2)(B).

28 Sec. 642(e)(4)(A).

29 Sec. 642(e)(5).

30 Child Care and Development Block Grant Act. Sec 658E(c)(2)(O).

ALIGNMENT OF ESSA AND HEAD START COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

With the inclusion of the coordination requirement in ESSA, early childhood programs, like Head Start, and schools now have similar coordination goals. Both the Head Start Act and ESSA include many of the same coordination elements, but some of the components of the Head Start Act MOU requirement are not specifically included in the required ESSA agreement (See **Appendices A and B** for the statutory language in the Head Start and ESSA laws, respectively). **Table 1** on p. 15 illustrates the elements covered in both laws and which are unique to the Head Start Act. As LEA leaders look to develop the agreements under ESSA, they should work intentionally to develop agreements with Head Start that are tailored to suit their unique community needs and consider a comprehensive approach, rooted in best practices, by including those pieces of the Head Start Act not explicitly referred to in ESSA. These agreements can include:

- Sharing information, such as assessment results, health records, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), or other information, to help teachers meet individual student needs;
- Locating Head Start classrooms in elementary schools to better leverage resources;
- Planning community-wide transition activities, such as summits that bring together elementary school and Head Start teachers, parents, and community partners;
- Involving families in their child’s learning, such as hosting family field trips to the local schools to acclimate incoming children and their caregivers to their new environment;
- Communicating assessment results to help drive program improvement;
- Organizing joint professional development opportunities so elementary teachers can learn about developmentally appropriate practices and early childhood educators can better understand standards and expectations for children entering elementary school;
- Aligning curricula and instruction to support the sequential progression of children’s learning; and
- Partnering on infrastructure resources, such as facilities and transportation.

Table 1. Coordination Requirements for LEAs and Head Start Programs in ESEA (as amended by ESSA) and the Head Start Act

	ESSA Section 1119 – Coordination Requirement^[1]	Section 642A - Head Start Transition and Alignment with K-12 Education and Section 642 (e)(5) - Memorandum of Understanding^[2]
Data and Records Sharing/Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for receiving records regarding such children, transferred with parental consent from a Head Start program or, where applicable, another early childhood education program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and implementing a procedure for transferring program records for each participating child to the school in which the child will enroll. Sharing information on selection priorities for eligible children served by Head Start programs and service areas.
Professional Development /Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of school staff, Head Start program staff, and, where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing and participating in joint training of staff on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula, and social and emotional development. Coordinating program technical assistance.
Coordinating Services/ Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, social workers, and health staff) in such Head Start agencies or other entities carrying out early childhood education programs, as appropriate, to facilitate coordination of programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school. Developing and implementing a system to increase program participation of underserved populations of eligible children. Provision of additional services to meet the needs of working families . Establishing channels of communication between Head Start staff and their counterparts in the school. Establishing communications between a Head Start agency and a local educational agency for developing continuity of developmentally appropriate curricular objectives.

	ESSA Section 1119 – Coordination Requirement ^[1]	Section 642A - Head Start Transition and Alignment with K-12 Education and Section 642 (e)(5) - Memorandum of Understanding ^[2]
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers or, if appropriate, teachers from other early childhood education programs, to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting outreach to parents and elementary school (such as kindergarten) teachers to discuss the educational, developmental, and other needs of individual children. Helping parents of limited English proficient children understand the instructional and other services provided by the school in which such child will enroll after participation in Head Start; and the information provided to parents of limited English proficient children under section 3302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7012). Developing and implementing a family outreach and support program, in cooperation with entities carrying out parental involvement efforts under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), and family outreach and support efforts under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.), taking into consideration the language needs of parents of limited English proficient children. Assisting families, administrators, and teachers in enhancing educational and developmental continuity and continuity of parental involvement in activities between Head Start services and elementary school classes. Helping parents (including grandparents and kinship caregivers, as appropriate) to understand the importance of parental involvement in a child's academic success while teaching them strategies for maintaining parental involvement as their child moves from Head Start to elementary school. Helping parents understand the instructional and other services provided by the school in which their child will enroll after participation in the Head Start program.

	ESSA Section 1119 – Coordination Requirement ^[1]	Section 642A - Head Start Transition and Alignment with K-12 Education and Section 642 (e)(5) - Memorandum of Understanding ^[2]
Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking the educational services provided by the local educational agency with the services provided by local Head Start agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking the services provided by a Head Start program with educational services, including services relating to language, literacy, and numeracy, provided by a local educational agency. Coordinating activities and collaborating to ensure that curricula used in the Head Start program are aligned with the HHS Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and state early learning standards, as appropriate, with regard to cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competencies that children entering kindergarten are expected to demonstrate.
Facilities and Transportation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating the provision and use of facilities, transportation or other programs.

SEA ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT COORDINATION BETWEEN LEAS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

SEAs can play an important role in supporting local coordination by issuing state guidance on local coordination and modeling strong coordination and collaboration at the state level. Below are a series of steps that SEAs can take that not only comply with the ESSA requirements but address the law's intent of promoting strong coordination and linkages at the local level.

Conduct a State-Level Self-Assessment on Coordination

To start the coordination process at the state level, it is first important to understand the state's current coordination efforts and assess those efforts against a set of criteria that define strong coordination. **Appendix C** provides a self-assessment that states can use to determine the strength of the state's current coordination efforts. The self-assessment tool is framed around three phases of successful coordination:

- (1) Visioning and stakeholder engagement,
- (2) Identifying components of a coordination agreement, and
- (3) Measuring success and monitoring implementation.

The criteria are intended to assess a state's progress through the phases of conceiving, developing, and measuring state-level coordination efforts.

Engage a Broad Coalition of State Stakeholders

As the next step in the coordination effort, SEAs can lead the effort to bring together state-level early childhood and K–12 stakeholders to discuss approaches to state- and local-level coordination. State educational agency leaders can designate their early learning administrators (directors of state offices of preschool and/or early elementary education) to lead efforts to engage stakeholders. The stakeholders can be organized into a working group or task force with the goal of supporting a state-level coordination agreement. Key stakeholders should include State Head Start Collaboration Directors.

Whether housed in state health and human services agencies, education agencies, governor or lieutenant governor's offices, or in a non-profit entity, the directors help connect Head Start policies with related state and local policies, particularly for low-income families. These include health, mental health, nutrition, child welfare, family support and education, housing, transportation, and workforce issues. Head Start Collaboration Directors should coordinate with SEA leaders and staff about their communication with LEAs to ensure that important Head Start aspects are considered in coordination agreements, especially health, mental health, nutrition, social services, and family engagement. They can also play a critical role in monitoring the implementation of MOUs at the state and local levels and help resolve conflicts should they arise.

State Head Start Associations:

State Head Start associations represent the perspective of the Head Start programs in a state. State associations would work with their SEA leaders in any organized process to support LEA–Head Start coordination agreements. Head Start programs should reach out to local school district administrators and school board members in the districts in which they operate, along with relevant charter schools, and school principals and teachers to communicate with them about the specific components needed for effective coordination agreements. Head Start program policy councils and parent committees can help facilitate strong partnerships and serve in advisory capacities to local school boards.

Other Possible Key Stakeholders Include:

- Representatives from other state agencies including the human services and health departments
- State Board of Education
- State Early Childhood Advisory Council
- State elementary school principals association
- State Title 1 directors association
- State superintendents association
- State teachers association
- State’s community action program association
- State legislators
- State Parent Teacher Association
- State charter schools association

Create a formal agreement between the SEA and the State Head Start Association that can serve as a model for LEAs and their Head Start and other ECE Partners.



The SEA should establish an MOU with the state Head Start association and other state-level organizations that outlines how the SEA will coordinate with Head Start stakeholders and other state-level programs. These state-level agreements would provide a model for local agreements. As part of the stakeholder engagement process, the state could invite LEA leaders who have already adopted MOU policies with Head Start programs to support this process. Appendix D provides guidance for developing

an MOA between an SEA and a state Head Start association, including key considerations for the process and how to get the process started.

Issue SEA Guidance to LEAs on Coordination

The SEA could provide guidance to LEAs to help them understand their obligations and options for the ESSA requirements. The guidance could include relevant context related to the state's early childhood and K-12 policies and programs, especially its preschool policies, and the status and ongoing administration of federal early childhood initiatives and grants, such as Preschool Development Grants, or Comprehensive Literacy Grants. The guidance could discuss timelines for LEA adoption of coordination agreements, minimum requirements for the agreements, and offer technical assistance to assist LEAs, which could include a sample agreement. The State Board of Education (SBE) may want to consider formalizing and standardizing the process through a state policy that outlines the timeline, minimum requirements, and future monitoring of the coordination agreements. If the SBE decides to issue a rule, it would be important to hear testimony on the content of the rule from state education staff, LEA and school leaders, state and local Head Start leaders, the State early learning advisory council, and early childhood and elementary school advocates. Appendix E provides information to support the state process of issues guidance.

Implementation and Oversight

State administrators who have oversight over early care and education and those who have oversight over elementary schools within a K-12 system are responsible for ensuring their involvement with LEAs to guide their coordination policies. This affects employees of an SEA and those housed at state human services or state early education agencies.

LEA ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AGREEMENTS WITH HEAD START AND OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

LEAs have the primary responsibility for meeting the ESSA coordination requirements, and district superintendents and local school boards may need to establish LEA policies considering any state guidance that is provided. As with the SEA process, there are several steps an LEA can take to ensure broad stakeholder engagement in developing a coordination agreement that meets both the letter and intent of the ESSA regulations.

Conduct a Local-Level Self-Assessment on Coordination Practices

At the local level, it is important to understand whether there is a coordination agreement currently in place and whether the agreement meets the requirements of both the ESSA and Head Start laws. In districts where there is a coordination agreement, the ESSA requirement should be considered an opportunity to reevaluate and revise the agreement. Appendix F includes a local self-assessment tool that mirrors the state-level tool.

Engage a Broad Coalition of Local Stakeholders

Stakeholder buy-in is a critical element in the success of local coordination agreements. Similar to the state-level process, a second step in the coordination effort is to engage local stakeholders to discuss approaches to local coordination. Here are some important ways to include a wide range of stakeholders to inform the planning and implementation of a successful coordination agreement. **(Figure 3)**

Discuss Coordination at Public School Board Meetings

School board meetings and charter board meetings are useful settings for addressing key LEA coordination issues with Head Start and other early childhood education efforts. Including early childhood–LEA coordination on the agenda allows for board member questions and consideration, as well as on-the-record input from the public, including parents, Head Start, and other preschool programs. Head Start programs can also share their community needs assessment findings at these meetings to support a better understanding of the needs of the community from an early childhood perspective.

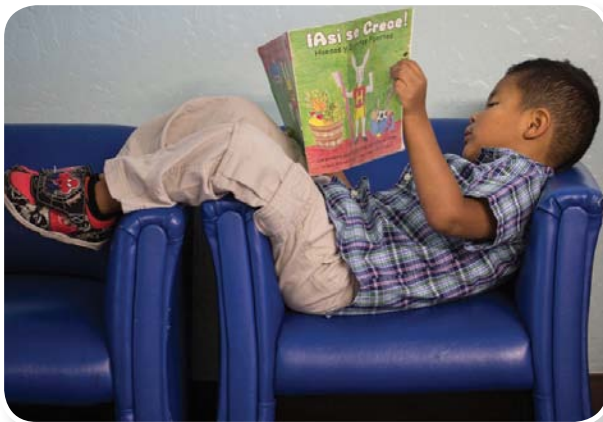
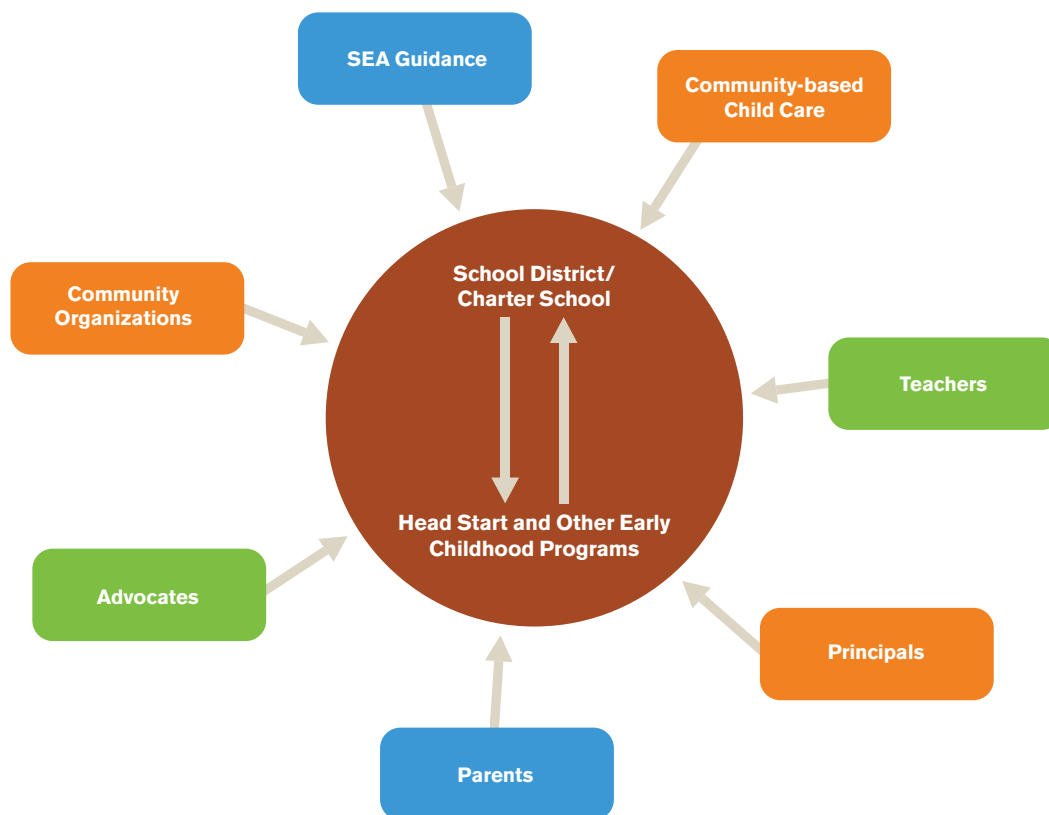


Figure 3. Stakeholders in the School District/Charter School and Head Start/Early Childhood Program Coordination Agreement Process



Engage Elementary School Principals

District leaders and charter schools operating as LEAs will benefit from the advice of elementary school principals, including charter school principals, about their needs, priorities, and top issues around coordination. As critical advisors to an LEA's school improvement plans, school principals are well positioned to connect with Head Start and other early childhood programs, which can be an essential ingredient to school improvement strategies. They can potentially even lead contracting efforts with Head Start programs to run part of their school improvement plans.

Involve Teachers

LEAs will also benefit from formal and informal input of its preschool, elementary school, and special education teachers, as well as Head Start teachers and assistant teachers, all of whom have direct experience with children's developmental and learning needs. School districts and charter schools would benefit from convening joint professional development and planning sessions with Head Start and other early childhood teachers to help support children's transition from Head Start and preschool to kindergarten.

Engage Head Start

Since the coordination agreements will need the sign-off of Head Start programs, it will be important to include them as a key constituency in the stakeholder process. Early outreach to top

Head Start leaders in the community for one-on-one meetings and invitations for them to engage in the agreement development process is essential. LEAs and Head Start programs can use existing MOUs developed under the Head Start Act as a starting point for promoting alignment under the new ESEA coordination agreement.

Coordinate with Community-Based Child Care Programs

To fulfill ESEA's requirement to coordinate with other early childhood education programs, if feasible, LEAs should engage in conversations with community-based child care programs in order to assess which other services make sense to include in the agreement. While child care programs also provide early learning services to young children, their policies, such as staffing requirements, funding streams, administration, standards, and others are usually different from Head Start. While it is likely unfeasible for LEAs to create agreements with each early childhood education program, they could establish agreed-upon transition activities for most or all early childhood programs in the district.

Gather Input from Other Community Stakeholders

Input from district and charter advisory groups, including district accountability and school accountability committees, and organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association or Organization (PTA/PTO), as well as other school and district advisory groups, advocates and support groups, will help ensure community voice and buy-in to the policy.

Engage Other Districts

To the extent possible, communication with other districts and charter schools in the state will help build thoughtful policies, especially in similar regions and demographics. The state school boards association and charter school associations can foster inter-district and inter-charter school connections.

Engage Parents

Parents and families are major stakeholders in the coordination agreements. Given that parent and family engagement is a key component of the ESSA legislation generally, it is a critical to engage parents and families to include their perspective in addressing coordination issues.

Draft Coordination Agreements

The stakeholder engagement process should result in a robust coordination agreement between the LEA and Head Start and other early childhood education programs that meet the requirements of both the ESSA and Head Start laws as described in **Table 1** on pp. 14-16. The coordination agreement should include these areas of coordination in addition to any others that are identified through the stakeholder engagement process. In addition, the MOU should address:

- The schools and early childhood programs covered by the MOU;
- The major activities to be undertaken by each party to meet the coordination requirements;
- The individuals in each party responsible for implementing the activities; and
- A timeline for implementing the activities.

Appendix G provides examples of local agreements.

Characteristics of a Strong Agreement

A clearly articulated agreement is critical for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and their local partners to effectively coordinate and deliver high-quality educational services. LEAs need to plan and discuss the terms of the agreement with each partner. At a minimum, the agreement should:

- Identify the parties involved;
- Outline the length or term of the agreement;
- Describe in detail the roles and responsibilities required of each party;
- Address the reporting requirements of all parties; and
- State how performance concerns will be addressed and what enforcement action will ensure that responsibilities are met.

In addition, a strong agreement should be able to address the unique needs of each partner and outline a process for making decisions and settling disagreements among the partners. Appendix G provides additional and more detailed characteristics of a strong agreement and examples.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Policy and Program Guidance for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP)* and the model Memorandum of Understanding provided by the U.S. Department of Education to support early childhood governance in the administration of Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge.

Implementation and Oversight

Once an LEA agreement is adopted by the school board or charter school board, ongoing outreach and offers of technical assistance to administrators and teachers at the school level will ease the implementation of the policy. The superintendent or other LEA leaders may want to consider a communications plan to all schools, local Head Start programs, local community-based child care, and preschool programs about the contents of the policy and resources for the school district or charter school to use to coordinate services.

School Role: Inform Implementation

School principals can support implementation of LEA-Head Start agreements by organizing their most appropriate school staff, such as early elementary and preschool teachers, assistant teachers and curricular leaders, to develop recommendations to district leaders about aspects of coordination that should be addressed. School personnel are well positioned to identify opportune areas for partnerships, such as data, standards, professional development, enrollment and recruitment, and effective strategies to carry out those connections. School staff and leaders can also improve this process by talking with Head Start and preschool parents about their transition, informational needs, interests, and experiences as their children prepare for school systems.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO COORDINATION AND POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

The early childhood and school systems consist of different organizations, individuals, information, and policies. These differences between the two systems have the potential to cause coordination challenges. **Table 2** provides additional information on various aspects of each system, ranging from governance to accountability systems. Aspects of each system are described, and potential challenges that may be caused by the differences are highlighted. Opportunities provided by ESEA that can help overcome these challenges are highlighted.

Table 2. Overcoming Barriers and Challenges to Coordination

Coordination Area	Head Start Approach	LEA Approach	Potential Challenges	Opportunities
Learning and Developmental Practices	Head Start programs utilize the federal Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework to align curricula, assessments, and professional development to school readiness goals.	LEAs comply with state and local requirements around standards, curricula, and professional development.	Disconnects can arise with different pedagogical approaches between early childhood programs and LEAs with regards to definitions of school readiness.	ESEA provides opportunities to consider challenging standards and developmentally appropriate assessments for the early childhood years. States can work with their state Head Start collaboration director to align state early learning standards with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. LEAs can also use coordination agreements to plan joint professional development opportunities for elementary teachers and Head Start staff. Local Head Start programs can collaborate with LEAs to align school readiness goals with kindergarten entry assessments.

Coordination Area	Head Start Approach	LEA Approach	Potential Challenges	Opportunities
Funding Mechanisms	Head Start funding is mostly federal (20% non-federal share). Some Head Start programs receive state funding through state-funded preschool slots, child care subsidies, and state supplemental funding. Head Start funds rely on discretionary appropriations, and more than half of eligible children lack access. Children are eligible for Head Start if their families are either below the federal poverty guidelines or meet other categorical criteria.	LEA funding is mostly state and local. Federal funding under Titles I, II, and III for public education are based on per pupil formulas. All eligible children of state-determined compulsory age receive a free public education. Some school districts are Head Start grantees and receive federal funding to operate Head Start programs.	Disconnects can arise with different eligibility guidelines, funding sources and cycles, reporting requirements, and cost allocation rules.	ESSA provides opportunities to work collaboratively to maximize resources to enhance service delivery and strengthen partnerships. LEAs can use Title I funding to support transition activities and fund preschool services, including more access and better quality. LEAs can also use Title II funding to support joint professional development. Head Start programs can use Head Start funding to support transition activities and professional development of staff. Title III funds can be used to support English learners.

Coordination Area	Head Start Approach	LEA Approach	Potential Challenges	Opportunities
Accountability Systems	<p>Head Start must comply with federal standards, program-set school readiness goals, state child care licensing requirements, and in some cases, if they are receiving other state funds, state standards.</p> <p>Head Start programs must engage in recompetition for their federal grant for a number of reasons, including having one or more deficiencies on a federal monitoring review, falling below the proficiency threshold or being in the lowest 10% of programs in a classroom quality assessment (CLASS), not establishing school readiness goals or taking steps to achieve them, or having its state child care license revoked.</p>	<p>LEAs must comply with federal, state and local standards, and meet student achievement goals outlined in their Title I plans.</p> <p>Public schools can be placed on school improvement after poor academic proficiency based on a variety of academic and other factors.</p>	<p>Different systems of accountability can cause confusion among LEA and early childhood partners when expectations are not clarified and mutually considered. Disconnects in this area may also lead to administrative burdens on programs and schools due to varying compliance and monitoring requirements.</p>	<p>Coordination agreements encourage SEAs and LEAs to focus on meeting or aligning with Head Start and other early childhood programs' quality early learning standards, policies, practices, and child outcome measures.</p> <p>By recognizing the impacts of quality early childhood education on later school achievement, states, school districts, and schools can use coordination agreements to strengthen and expand Head Start programs' resources and support and align with their early learning efforts. Some states have chosen to coordinate and align systems of accountability with those of Head Start by using common outcome measurements and streamlining monitoring systems.</p> <p>States can take a holistic approach to designing accountability systems that span the continuum of education by aligning child care licensing, Quality Rating Improvement Systems, and school accountability systems. States can incorporate the performance indicators used in Head Start as the basis for any accountability framework, work on creating monitoring systems that are efficient, and make use of integrated data systems to reduce burden on programs.</p>

Coordination Area	Head Start Approach	LEA Approach	Potential Challenges	Opportunities
Governance Structures	Head Start agencies operate with oversight from the federal Department of Health and Human Services. Each Head Start agency must establish and maintain a policy council responsible for the direction of the Head Start program at the agency level and a policy committee at the delegate level. In addition, a Head Start agency must also have a parent committee at the center level that advises the policy council.	Public schools are run by local school districts with governance by locally elected boards of education and input from district and school accountability committees.	Disconnects between early childhood programs and LEAs can arise when parties are unsure of leadership hierarchies and where decision-making roles, responsibilities, and authority lie.	State Early Childhood Advisory Councils and Head Start Collaboration Offices can support systemic connections between school and early childhood systems. The Preschool Development and Expansion Grants (PDG) are another opportunity to support early childhood coordination with school systems. By working together on coordination agreements, early childhood programs and LEAs can have discussions about leadership and fostering greater connections across governance structures. Head Start programs can encourage LEA leaders to attend policy council meetings, and LEAs can encourage Head Start program leaders to participate in local school board meetings.

LEAs will sometimes need to identify funding to overcome barriers and support the coordination requirements listed in ESSA. SEAs and LEAs may want to refer to the U.S. Department of Education’s *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*³¹ to explore ways in which Title I, Title II, Title III, and other programs can be used to support LEAs as they work to create smoother transitions for children and families. SEAs that receive Title I funds and distribute them to their LEAs must adhere to all of the requirements under Title I, including the coordination requirements, and will be monitored for compliance. As such, it is important to utilize these funding sources to the extent possible to support LEAs in developing these coordination agreements.

31 *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance11717.pdf>.

APPENDIX A: LANGUAGE ON COORDINATION BETWEEN HEAD START PROGRAMS AND LEAS IN *THE IMPROVING HEAD START FOR SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2007*

Sec. 642A Head Start Transition and Alignment With K-12 Education

SEC. 642A. [42 U.S.C. 9837a]

(a) In General- Each Head Start agency shall take steps to coordinate with the local educational agency serving the community involved and with schools in which children participating in a Head Start program operated by such agency will enroll following such program to promote continuity of services and effective transitions, including--

(1) developing and implementing a systematic procedure for transferring, with parental consent, Head Start program records for each participating child to the school in which such child will enroll;

(2) establishing ongoing channels of communication between Head Start staff and their counterparts in the schools (including teachers, social workers, local educational agency liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)), and health staff) to facilitate coordination of programs;

(3) establishing ongoing communications between the Head Start agency and local educational agency for developing continuity of developmentally appropriate curricular objectives (which for the purpose of the Head Start program shall be aligned with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and, as appropriate, State early learning standards) and for shared expectations for children's learning and development as the children transition to school;

(4) organizing and participating in joint training, including transition-related training for school staff and Head Start staff;

(5) establishing comprehensive transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school, including by engaging the local educational agency in the establishment of such policies;

(6) conducting outreach to parents and elementary school (such as kindergarten) teachers to discuss the educational, developmental, and other needs of individual children;

(7) helping parents of limited English proficient children understand—

(A) the instructional and other services provided by the school in which such child will enroll after participation in Head Start; and

(B) as appropriate, the information provided to parents of limited English proficient children under section 3302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7012);

(8) developing and implementing a family outreach and support program, in cooperation with entities carrying out parental involvement efforts under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), and family outreach and support efforts under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.), taking into consideration the language needs of parents of limited English proficient children;

(9) assisting families, administrators, and teachers in enhancing educational and developmental continuity and continuity of parental involvement in activities between Head Start services and elementary school classes;

(10) linking the services provided in such Head Start program with educational services, including services relating to language, literacy, and numeracy, provided by such local educational agency;

(11) helping parents (including grandparents and kinship caregivers, as appropriate) to understand the importance of parental involvement in a child's academic success while teaching them strategies for maintaining parental involvement as their child moves from Head Start to elementary school;

(12) helping parents understand the instructional and other services provided by the school in which their child will enroll after participation in the Head Start program;

(13) developing and implementing a system to increase program participation of underserved populations of eligible children; and

(14) coordinating activities and collaborating to ensure that curricula used in the Head Start program are aligned with--

(A) the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, as developed by the Secretary; and

(B) State early learning standards, as appropriate, with regard to cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competencies that children entering kindergarten are expected to demonstrate.

(b) Construction- In this section, a reference to a Head Start agency, or its program, services, facility, or personnel, shall not be construed to be a reference to an Early Head Start agency, or its program, services, facility, or personnel.

(c) Dissemination and Technical Assistance- The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall--

(1) disseminate to Head Start agencies information on effective policies and activities relating to the transition of children from Head Start programs to public schools; and

(2) provide technical assistance to such agencies to promote and assist such agencies to adopt and implement such effective policies and activities.

Sec. 642 (e)(5) Memorandum of Understanding

(5) Enter into a memorandum of understanding, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start agency, that shall--

(A)(i) provide for a review of each of the activities described in clause (ii); and

(ii) include plans to coordinate, as appropriate, activities regarding--

(I) educational activities, curricular objectives, and instruction;

(II) public information dissemination and access to programs for families contacting the Head Start program or any of the preschool programs;

(III) selection priorities for eligible children to be served by programs;

(IV) service areas;

(V) staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula, and social and emotional development;

(VI) program technical assistance;

(VII) provision of additional services to meet the needs of working parents, as applicable;

(VIII) communications and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten as required in paragraphs (3) and (6) of section 642A(a);

(IX) provision and use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements; and

(X) other elements mutually agreed to by the parties to such memorandum;

(B) be submitted to the Secretary and the State Director of Head Start Collaboration not later than 30 days after the parties enter into such memorandum, except that--

(i) where there is an absence of publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of a Head Start agency, this paragraph shall not apply; or

(ii) where the appropriate local entity responsible for managing the publicly funded preschool programs is unable or unwilling to enter into such a memorandum, this paragraph shall not apply and the Head Start agency shall inform the Secretary and the State Director of Head Start Collaboration of such inability or unwillingness; and

(C) be revised periodically and renewed biennially by the parties to such memorandum, in alignment with the beginning of the school year.

Source: Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, Head Start Policy and Regulations. Available at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act/sec-642a-head-start-transition-alignment-k-12-education>

APPENDIX B: LANGUAGE ON COORDINATION BETWEEN LEAS AND HEAD START PROGRAMS/OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD ENTITIES IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

SEC. 1119. [20 U.S.C. 6322] COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each local educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall carry out the activities described in subsection (b) with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other entities carrying out early childhood development programs. Each local educational agency shall develop agreements with such Head Start agencies and other entities to carry out such activities.

(b) ACTIVITIES.—The activities referred to in subsection (a) are activities that increase coordination between the local educational agency and a Head Start agency and, if feasible, other entities carrying out early childhood education programs serving children who will attend the schools of the local educational agency, including—

(1) developing and implementing a systematic procedure for receiving records regarding such children, transferred with parental consent from a Head Start program or, where applicable, another early childhood education program;

(2) establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, social workers, and health staff) in such Head Start agencies or other entities carrying out early childhood education programs, as appropriate, to facilitate coordination of programs;

(3) conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers or, if appropriate, teachers from other early childhood education programs, to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children;

(4) organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of school staff, Head Start program staff, and, where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff; and

(5) linking the educational services provided by such local educational agency with the services provided by local Head Start agencies.

(c) COORDINATION OF REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall work with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to coordinate regulations promulgated under this part with regulations promulgated under the Head Start Act.

Source: *The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, Available at: <https://www.ed.gov/esea>

APPENDIX C: SEA ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT COORDINATION BETWEEN LEAS, HEAD START, AND OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Conducting an SEA Self-Assessment

The SEA Self-Assessment is a tool that early childhood leaders at the SEAs can use to guide the process for developing the support, commitment, and ongoing engagement for developing a powerful Partnership Agreement³² that:

- Improves the availability of services;
- Improves the quality of services; and
- Supports children's transition.

The SEA Self-Assessment tool is framed around three (3) critical phases in the successful implementation of a Partnership Agreement. They are:

Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement to Support the Agreement

This phase occurs prior to developing the agreement but should be sustained throughout the entire process, especially during the implementation phase.

Defining the Components of the Agreement

This phase refers to the negotiations between the SEA and the state's Head Start association and other state organizations representing early childhood programs. It defines the components of the agreement (e.g., data and record transfer; coordination of services; curriculum/instruction; family engagement) and the mutual activities as well as responsibilities by each party, including how the agreement is monitored and enforced.

Measuring Success and Monitoring the Implementation of the Agreement

This phase starts as soon as the agreement has been approved and signed by the parties. The monitoring process and enforcement are integral to the Partnership Agreement, MOU, or MOA. Measurement of the partnership's success can be delegated to an independent evaluator or jointly conducted by the parties through internal data management systems. It is highly recommended to measure the success of the three aforementioned major goals, i.e., improving availability and quality of services, and supporting the transition of children from Head Start or other early childhood programs to public schools.

Conducting the SEA Self-Assessment

The SEA Self-Assessment intends to gauge the relationship between the SEA and the state Head Start association (or another state organization representing early childhood programs) and how the parties

³² MOA, MOU and Partnership Agreement are used interchangeably.

support the development of local agreements. This self-assessment, not unlike the one used by LEAs, local Head Start grantees, and other early childhood programs, will set the stage for developing an MOA that will serve as the framework for the local Partnership Agreements.

It is recommended to take a long-term view on establishing a firm foundation for the partnership. The Partnership Agreement will hold each party accountable, but the visioning and stakeholder engagement phase will focus on goals and purposes of forming the agreement. If the SEA is interested in developing an agreement with the state's Head Start association *and* with another state organization representing early childhood programs, it is recommended that the SEA develop the MOAs separately, due to the special circumstances of each party.

The *SEA Self-Assessment* can be completed by the two parties (i.e., the SEA and the state's Head Start association or another state organization representing early childhood programs) separately, or it can be done jointly. If it is being completed separately, it will be helpful to compare the information and determine the critical points that need to be addressed during each of the three phases. The Self-Assessment consists of leading statements, responses to the statements, and how to rate the risk level for each of the statements. The risk levels range from "high" (1) to "low" (3). The corresponding rubric defines:

"High" (1) as "Conditions of high complexity or previous failures;"

"Moderate" (2) as "Conditions that are already in place but not fully developed;"

"Low" (3) as "Conditions that have a proven and successful track record."

The determination of what the risk level might be is based on the prior experience and overall assessment of the buy-in, or lack thereof, by many or all stakeholders on creating a formal Partnership Agreement. Here is an example:

Phase 1: Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement	Response (entered by the SEA and/or the State Head Start Association)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<i>SEA leadership is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement</i>	State ESSA plan includes reference to formal LEA agreements with Head Start (or other early childhood education programs)	3
<i>State Head Start association is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement</i>	MOA was discussed with SEA in response to the Head Start Act of 2007 but was not developed	1

Note: Determining the risk level does not equate with the position of any of the parties. It only refers to prior or current conditions.

Each statement should be answered independently. However, as the Self-Assessment is completed, the responses and risk levels may either support or mitigate other statements. For instance, in the example above, the reference of the formal agreement in the ESSA plan might actually reduce the risk level for the state Head Start association's position on the MOA.

SEA SELF-ASSESSMENT

Phase 1: Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement

(Who to involve in the discussion?)

Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement	Response (entered by the SEA and the state Head Start association/ other state organization)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<i>The state has committed leadership for establishing a process of coordination between the LEAs and the Head Start grantees and other early childhood programs.</i>		
<i>There are strong relationships and trust among program administrators.</i>		
<i>The partners have established common vision and goals in planning for coordinated transitions.</i>		
<i>A plan exists for ongoing communication between partners.</i>		
<p><i>A plan for ongoing communication exists with stakeholders (see chart below)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>State Board of Education</i> • <i>State Early Childhood Advisory Council</i> • <i>State elementary school principals association</i> • <i>State Title 1 directors association</i> • <i>State superintendents association</i> • <i>State teachers association</i> • <i>State community action program association</i> • <i>State agencies (e.g., social services, health)</i> • <i>State Head Start Collaboration Office</i> • <i>State charter schools association</i> 		
<i>SEA leadership is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement.</i>		
<i>State Head Start Association is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement.</i>		

Phase 2: Components of the Agreement

(How to Support LEAs and Head Start and Early Childhood Programs in the Coordination Activities)

Components of the Formal Agreement	Response (entered by the SEA and the state Head Start association/other state organizations)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<i>Developing and implementing a <u>statewide</u> systematic set of procedures for receiving records, transferred with parental consent from Head Start and early childhood programs to the LEA.</i>		
<i>Facilitating the establishment of channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, social workers, and health staff) in Head Start and early childhood programs.</i>		
<i>Supporting the linkage of educational services provided by LEAs with the services provided by local Head Start and early childhood programs.</i>		
<i>Providing guidance in conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start and early childhood programs to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children.</i>		
<i>Providing opportunities for Head Start/ early childhood programs and LEA staff in organizing and participating in transition-related training.</i>		

Phase 3: Measuring Success and Monitoring the Implementation of the Agreement

(To Determine Whether the Partnership Agreement is working)

Measuring Success and Monitoring	Response (entered by the SEA and the state Head Start association/ other state organization)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
Improving availability of services <i>Outreach, communication and sharing information helps identify eligible children and makes delivery of services to children more efficient and less duplicative.</i>		
Improving quality of services <i>Sharing resources, such as professional development, educational activities, curricular objectives, instructional strategies and technical assistance, also improves the quality of children's early learning experiences.</i>		
Supporting children's transition <i>As children move from preschool, Head Start and child care into the public schools, their transition is eased by involvement from both early childhood and K-12 systems.</i>		
Providing training on measuring goals and monitoring		
Establishing a database of local agreements		

How to Use the Self-Assessment Information

The SEA Self-Assessment, completed by both parties (i.e., either SEA with the state Head Start Association or other state organization representing early childhood program), will offer a profile of the risk levels for the assessed statements. Some statements hold lower risks than others, which indicates that those areas provide better conditions for supporting the MOU. For instance, if the statement, *Supporting the linkage of educational services provided by LEAs with the services provided by local Head Start and early childhood programs*, is rated as low risk, the state has opportune conditions to build on existing support. However, if the same statement is rated as high risk, the state will have less opportune conditions, which will require conversations about how the SEA and the state's Head Start association (or another state organization representing early childhood programs) will improve those conditions in support of LEAs, Head Start agencies, and early childhood programs as they are developing the local MOAs.

APPENDIX D: GUIDANCE TO DEVELOP A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) BETWEEN THE SEA AND THE STATE HEAD START ASSOCIATION (AND OTHER STATE ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS)

Introduction:

While ESEA requires formal agreements between local educational agencies (LEAs) and Head Start programs, the state educational agency (SEA) has the option to set the stage for supporting LEAs in that effort. LEAs also have the option to establish formal agreements with other early childhood programs, such as those operating publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs.

Guidance from SEAs to their school districts about the Head Start and early childhood education coordination agreements will help LEAs understand their obligations and best policy options, including within the context of the state's early childhood and K-12 policies and programs, especially its preschool policies. Another significant factor to highlight in this process is the state's ongoing administration of and participation in federal early childhood initiatives and grants, such as Preschool Development Grants, Early Learning Challenge grants, or Comprehensive Literacy grants for children birth to age 5.

The checklist below provides guidance on how the early childhood lead or the Head Start collaboration director at the SEA can develop a statewide MOA between the SEA and the state's Head Start association. The MOA would define the working relationship between the SEA and the state Head Start association in terms of ensuring a successful transition of Head Start children to public school. The MOA would also describe the components that both parties agree should be reflected in the formal agreements between the LEAs and the local Head Start partners.

What to Consider when Developing a State MOA

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
Who is leading the effort to develop a State MOA?		
Who will authorize the MOA committee? ³³		

³³ Governor, State Board of Education, State Superintendent/Commissioner, Legislature, or State ECAC.

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
<p>How to identify the right stakeholders³⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>State Board of Education</i> • <i>State Early Childhood Advisory Council</i> • <i>State elementary school principals association</i> • <i>State Title 1 directors association</i> • <i>State superintendents association</i> • <i>State teachers association</i> • <i>State's community action program association</i> • <i>State agencies (e.g., social services, health)</i> • <i>State Head Start Collaboration Office</i> • <i>State charter schools association</i> • <i>American Indian Tribes</i> 		
How to plan for one or several SEA – Head Start coordination meetings ³⁵		
What goes in the MOA? ³⁶		
<i>How will the MOA define how to develop and implement a statewide systematic set of procedures for receiving records, transferred with parental consent from a Head Start and early childhood program to the LEA?</i>		
<i>How will the MOA describe the facilitation of establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, social workers, and health staff) in Head Start and early childhood programs?</i>		

³⁴ Included as stakeholders should be all organizations and agencies directly impacted by the MOA.

³⁵ The purpose of one or several of the stakeholder meetings is to find consensus on the how the ESSA required components in the MOA are being defined and executed.

³⁶ The following are components as required by ESSA.

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
<i>How will the MOA describe strategies that support the linkage of educational services provided by LEAs with the services provided by local Head Start and early childhood programs?</i>		
<i>How will the MOA provide guidance in conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start and early childhood programs to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children?</i>		
<i>What will be included in the MOA that provides statewide opportunities for Head Start/early childhood programs and LEA staff in organizing and participating in transition-related training?</i>		
How will additional components be presented in the MOA? ³⁷		
How will the MOA be monitored and enforced?		
What are the terms of the MOA?		
What process of legal review will be established?		
What policy levers will be established to codify the MOA? ³⁸		
How will the key decision-makers know about the MOA? What is the messaging?		
What kind of technical assistance and supports will be offered to LEAs and Head Start programs?		
What will a separate MOA between SEA and other non-Head Start early childhood programs look like?		

³⁷ Additional components might include data sharing or capital improvement.

³⁸ Some of the standard policy levers: Promulgation of regulation, non-regulatory guidance, grant requirement.

How to Get the Conversation Started – The Basics of Stakeholder Engagement

Identifying the owner/s: The SEA and/or the state Head Start association should quickly designate an internal owner to lead the work on developing the MOA.

Clarify the goals: The SEA and the state Head Start association must be clear on what they want to accomplish. Set up informal conversations with key stakeholders to fine tune the goals. Use the SEA Self-Assessment Tool to determine the risk levels for the three phases of developing the MOA. The goal might not only be compliance with the ESEA statute, but using the MOA as leverage to improve the coordination between the SEA and the Head Start and/or early childhood community.

Identify and engage with your stakeholders: When identifying the stakeholders, make sure that those directly impacted by the MOA and its implementation are at the table. There should also be a venue for families to be included in the conversation by conducting focus group discussions. While the stakeholder group will focus on policies, the input from families will identify particular needs that the MOA should address.

Link the stakeholder engagement to the decision-makers: Somebody has to charge the committee or workgroup with the task to develop an MOA. The charter could either be issued by the State Board of Education, the state superintendent or commissioner, or by the governor or state legislature. In any event, the internal owners need to facilitate the process to identify the vehicle for the charter (e.g., executive order, legislative request, State Board of Education resolution, state superintendent directive) and get the chartered committee established. At the end of the deliberation by the committee, the chartering decision maker(s) will be engaged in adopting or approving the MOA.

Facilitate, rather than control: The role of the internal owners will be to facilitate the stakeholder engagement. One effective strategy is either by-laws or, more appropriately in this case, committee rules. The rules should emphasize anticipated disagreements or conflicts that the rules will help resolve. For instance, rules could be established on how to reach decisions or onboard late-coming stakeholders. It is important that the committee agrees on and abides by the rules. Effort should be given to allow for broad input and exchange of ideas.

Make sure to keep good records: The point of the engagement is to solicit the best ideas in meeting the goals. The notes and minutes of committee meetings should be clear, concise, distributed in time for review, and focus on the components of the MOA and how LEAs and local Head Start programs will implement them.

Choose your best ambassadors: Stakeholders will bring with them long-standing relationships they have made with peers from other stakeholder groups. Those trusted working relationships and even friendships are the key to overcoming potential roadblocks during the deliberations. Create a “relationship map” to determine the best ways to reach your stakeholders (e.g., the state Head Start association might have a closer relationship with the state’s community action programs than the SEA, while the SEA might have a closer relationship with the state teachers union).

APPENDIX E: GUIDANCE FOR SEAS TO SUPPORT LEAS IN DEVELOPING AN MOU/MOA BETWEEN THE LEA AND HEAD START AND, IF FEASIBLE, OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The Head Start Act requires Head Start programs to develop agreements with the LEA in which it is located. The ESEA, as reauthorized by the ESSA, requires each LEA receiving Title I funds, regardless of whether it operates a Title I preschool program, to develop agreements and carry out coordination activities with Head Start programs and, if feasible, other early childhood programs.³⁹ In most cases, it is possible, practicable and reasonable for LEAs to develop agreements with many of the early childhood programs serving children prior to entering schools; it also helps to improve the success of these students in school. LEAs can often refer to student enrollment forms or contact local child care resource and referral agencies to compile a list of early childhood programs in the LEA catchment area. To locate Head Start programs, an LEA could use the Head Start Center Locator.⁴⁰

Guidance from SEAs to their school districts about the Head Start and early childhood education coordination agreements in ESEA and the Head Start Act will help LEAs understand their responsibilities and opportunities to ensure seamless transitions for children from preschool to kindergarten. In some districts, this may mean strengthening the coordination between a Head Start program or early childhood program serving two- or three-year-olds and the elementary school preschool program.⁴¹ It may also be helpful for individual schools to use their district's MOA as a model for creating their own agreements with local Head Start and other early childhood programs that feed into their school.

In addition to providing guidance to districts in establishing MOAs with Head Start and early childhood programs, SEAs can also support early learning by promoting implementation of high-quality Title I preschool programs as an improvement strategy for schools and LEAs. An SEA can use the State Advisory Councils for Early Care and Education, where they exist, to strengthen coordination between LEAs and Head Start and other early childhood programs. SEAs can help support professional learning by providing joint training on the *Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five*⁴² and the state's early learning and kindergarten through third grade standards.⁴³ At the state level, alignment can be done between early learning standards and kindergarten through third grade standards to support a continuum of learning. SEAs can also support alignment of curricula and provide training on appropriately administering, interpreting and using assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

39 ESEA, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act, Section 1119.

40 The Head Start Center Locator can be found at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>.

41 For example, in the District of Columbia, some children transition from early childhood programs serving two-year-olds to a school-based preschool program serving three-year-olds.

42 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start (2015). *Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/elof-ohs-framework.pdf>

43 Under ESSA Section 1112(d)(2), the U.S. Secretary of Education is required to disseminate the *Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five* to LEAs who use Title I funds to provide early childhood services.

LEAs will sometimes need to identify funding to support the coordination requirements listed in ESEA. States may want to refer to the U.S. Department of Education’s *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*⁴⁴ to explore ways in which Title I, Title II, Title III, and other programs can be used to support LEAs as they work to create smoother transitions for children and families. SEAs that receive Title I funds and distribute them to their LEAs must adhere to all of the requirements under Title I, including the coordination requirements, and will be monitored for compliance. States would benefit by holding LEAs accountable for having agreements in place with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood programs.

The checklist below provides guidance on how a local committee or workgroup can develop an MOA between the LEA and Head Start and early childhood programs. The MOA defines the agreed-upon working relationship between the LEA and Head Start and early childhood programs to ensure successful transitions of children to public school. In developing the MOA, it is important to engage key individuals and stakeholders from the beginning and throughout the entire process.

What to Consider when Developing an MOA Between the LEA and Head Start and Other Early Childhood Programs

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
Who from the LEA is leading the effort to develop an MOA?		
Which Head Start and other early learning programs will be part of the MOA, and who are the leads from each program?		
Who will lead the MOA committee or workgroup? ⁴⁵		

44 *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance11717.pdf>.

45 Mayor or other city official, district school board, school superintendent, city council, county commissioner or administrator, or local Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC).

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
<p>Which individuals should be considered to serve on the committee or workgroup to draft the MOA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>District, school, and early childhood administrators</i> • <i>Elementary school and Head Start and early childhood program directors, teachers and paraeducators</i> • <i>District, school, Head Start and early childhood program family engagement coordinators</i> • <i>Parents representing the diverse cultures of children served</i> • <i>District, school, Head Start and early childhood staff responsible for data collection and student records</i> • <i>District, school, Head Start and early childhood staff who work with children with disabilities,</i> • <i>Head Start Policy Council chairs, members</i> • <i>English learners, or other at-risk populations⁴⁶</i> 		
<p>Which stakeholder groups should be engaged in the process?⁴⁷</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>District school board</i> • <i>Local early childhood advisory council</i> • <i>Local teachers association</i> • <i>Local paraprofessional association</i> • <i>Local community action program</i> • <i>City agencies (e.g., social services, health)</i> • <i>Local parent committees or councils</i> • <i>District and/or School Accountability Committees</i> • <i>Other local community groups</i> 		

⁴⁶ E.g., migrant children, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory children, immigrant children or children from immigrant families, and children who are American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (if applicable).

⁴⁷ Included as stakeholders should be all organizations and agencies directly impacted by the MOA.

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
How to plan for one or several LEA – Head Start/early childhood programs coordination meetings? ⁴⁸		
How will the LEA-Head Start/early childhood programs MOA align with the state MOA (if applicable)?		
What is included in the MOA? ⁴⁹		
<i>How will the MOA define how to develop and implement a systematic set of procedures for sending and receiving records, transferred with parental consent from a Head Start/early childhood programs to the LEA?</i>		
<i>How will the MOA describe the facilitation of establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts in Head Start and early childhood programs (including teachers, social workers, family engagement coordinators, and health staff)?</i>		
<i>How will the MOA describe strategies that support the linkage of educational services provided by LEAs with the services provided by local Head Start and early childhood programs?</i>		
<i>How will the MOA provide guidance on conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start and early childhood programs to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children?</i>		
<i>What will be included in the MOA that provides opportunities for Head Start/early childhood programs and LEA staff in organizing and participating in joint transition-related training?</i>		

48 The purpose of one or several of the stakeholder meetings is to find consensus on the how the ESSA–required components in the MOU/MOA are being defined and executed.

49 The following italicized components, at a minimum, are required in ESSA.

Things to Consider	How We Do It	Comments
What additional components might be considered for inclusion in the MOA? ⁵⁰		
How will the MOA be monitored and parties held accountable?		
What are the terms of the MOA? How often will it be reviewed and renewed?		
What process of legal review will be established?		
What policy levers will be established to codify the MOA? ⁵¹		
How will the key decision-makers be informed about the MOA? How will it be communicated to the public? What is the messaging?		
What kind of technical assistance and support will be offered to LEAs and Head Start/early childhood programs?		
How will disputes between parties be resolved?		
Will a separate MOA between the LEA and non-Head Start early childhood programs be needed, and how will it differ?		
How might an individual school use the MOA to establish its own agreements with Head Start and other early childhood programs, if needed?		

How to Get the Conversation Started – The ABCs of Stakeholder Engagement

Identify the owner/s: The LEA and/or the local Head Start/early childhood programs should quickly designate an internal owner or owners to lead the work on developing the MOA.

Clarify the goals: The LEA and the local Head Start/early childhood programs must be clear on what they want to accomplish. Set up informal conversations with key individuals and stakeholders

⁵⁰ Additional components might include data sharing or capital improvement.

⁵¹ Some of the standard policy levers may include promulgation of regulation, non-regulatory guidance, school board policy, grant requirements.

to fine tune the goals. (Use the LEA Self-Assessment tool to determine the risk levels for the three phases of developing the MOA.) The goal might not only be compliance with the ESEA statute, but using the MOA as leverage to improve the coordination between the LEA and the Head Start/early childhood community.

Identify and engage with your stakeholders: When identifying the stakeholders, make sure that those directly impacted by the MOA and its implementation are at the table. There should also be a venue for families to be included in the conversation by conducting focus group discussions. While the stakeholder group will focus on policies, the input from families will identify particular needs that the MOA should address.

Link the stakeholder engagement to the decision-makers: Somebody has to charge the committee or workgroup with the task to develop an MOA. The agreement could either be issued by the district school board, mayor or other city official, school superintendent, city council, or local Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The internal owners need to facilitate the process to identify the vehicle for the direction (e.g., executive order, legislative request, district school board resolution, school superintendent's directive) and get the chartered committee or workgroup established. At the end of the deliberation by the committee or workgroup, the authorizing decision-maker/s will be engaged in adopting or approving the MOA.

Facilitating, not controlling: The role of the internal owners will be to facilitate the individual and stakeholder engagement. One effective strategy is through by-laws or committee or workgroup rules. The rules should emphasize anticipated disagreements or conflicts that can be resolved (e.g., establishing rules on how to reach decisions or onboarding of late-coming stakeholders). It is important that the committee or workgroup agrees on and abides by the rules. Effort should be given to allow for broad input and exchange of ideas.

Make sure to keep good records: The point of the engagement is to solicit the best ideas in meeting the goals. The notes and minutes of committee meetings should be clear, concise, and distributed in time for review and should focus on the components of the MOA and how LEAs and local Head Start programs will implement them.

Choose your best ambassadors: The stakeholders will bring with them long-standing relationships they have made with peers from other stakeholder groups. Those trusted working relationships and even friendships are the key to overcoming potential roadblocks during the deliberations. Create a "relationship map" to determine the best ways to reach your stakeholders (e.g., a local Head Start may have a closer relationship with the local community action programs than the LEA, while the LEA may have a closer relationship with the local teachers union.)

APPENDIX F: LEA ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT COORDINATION BETWEEN LEAS, HEAD START, AND OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Conducting a Self-Assessment at the LEA

The MOA Toolkit LEA Self-Assessment is one of four tools that early childhood leaders at LEAs can use to guide the process for developing the support, commitment, and ongoing engagement for developing a powerful Partnership Agreement⁵² that:

- Improves the availability of services;
- Improves the quality of services; and
- Supports children's transition.

The LEA Self-Assessment tool is framed around three (3) critical phases in the successful implementation of a Partnership Agreement. They are:

Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement to Support the Agreement

This phase occurs prior to developing the agreement but should be sustained throughout the entire process, especially during the phase when the agreement is being implemented.

Defining the Components of the Agreement

This phase refers to the negotiations between the LEA and the Head Start or other early childhood programs serving the attendance areas of the LEA's elementary schools. It defines the components of the agreement (e.g., data and record transfer; coordination of services; curriculum/instruction; family engagement) and the mutual activities as well as responsibilities by each party, including how the agreement is being monitored and enforced.

Measuring Success and Monitoring the Implementation of the Agreement

This phase starts as soon as the agreement has been approved and signed by the parties. The monitoring process and enforcement are integral to the MOA. Measurement of the partnership's success can be delegated to an independent evaluator or jointly conducted by the parties through internal data management systems. It is highly recommended to measure the success of the three aforementioned major goals, i.e., improving availability and quality of services, and supporting the transition of children from Head Start or other early childhood programs into public schools.

Conducting the LEA Self-Assessment

The LEA Self-Assessment intends to gauge the relationship between the LEA and the Head Start and other early childhood education partners in how both parties support the development of local agreements. This Self-Assessment may want to follow the lead of the SEA and the state Head Start

⁵² Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Partnership Agreement are used interchangeably.

association in case such an agreement was developed. The agreement at the state level will set the stage for developing an MOA that will serve as the framework for the local Partnership Agreements.

It is recommended to take a long-term view on establishing a firm foundation for the partnership. The Partnership Agreement will hold each party accountable, but the visioning and stakeholder engagement phase will focus on goals and purposes of developing the agreement. If the LEA is interested in forming an agreement with Head Start in addition to other early childhood partners (e.g., Preschool Development Grant recipients), it is recommended that the LEA develop the MOAs separately, due to the special circumstances of each party.

The Self-Assessment can be completed by the two parties (i.e., the LEA and the Head Start partner or other early childhood programs) separately or it can be done jointly. If it is being completed separately make sure to compare the information and determine the critical points, i.e., those rated as high risk, that need to be addressed during each of the three phases. The Self-Assessment consists of leading statements, responses to the statements, and how to rate the risk level for each of the statements. The risk levels range from “high” (1) to “low” (3). The underlying rubric defines:

“High” (1) as “Conditions of high complexity or previous failures;”

“Moderate” (2) as “Conditions that are already in place but not fully developed;”

“Low” (3) as “Conditions that have a proven and successful track record.”

The determination at what risk level each of the items might be is based on the prior experience and overall assessment of the buy-in or lack thereof by many or all stakeholders on creating a formal Partnership Agreement. Here is an example:

Phase 1: Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement	Response (entered by the LEA and/or the Head Start or other ECE partners)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<i>LEA leadership is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement</i>	State ESSA plan includes reference to formal LEA agreement with Head Start (and other ECE partners)	3
<i>Head Start program is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement</i>	MOA was discussed with LEA in response to the Head Start Act of 2007 but was not developed	1

Note: Determining the risk level does not equate with the position of any of the parties. It only refers to prior or current conditions.

Each statement should be answered by itself. However, as the Self-Assessment is being completed, the responses and risk levels may either support or mitigate other statements. For instance, in the example above, the reference of the formal agreement in the ESSA plan might actually reduce the risk level for the Head Start programs’ conditions to develop formal Partnership Agreements.

LEA SELF-ASSESSMENT

Phase 1: Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement

(Who should be at the table?)

Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement	Response (entered by the LEA and the Head Start and other ECE partners)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<i>The LEA has committed leadership for establishing a process of coordination between the LEAs and the Head Start grantees and other early childhood programs</i>		
<i>Strong relationship and trust among program administrators</i>		
<i>Established common vision and goals in planning for coordinated transitions</i>		
<i>Plan for ongoing communication between partners exists</i>		
<i>Plan for ongoing communication exists with stakeholders (see chart below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Board of Education • Local Early Childhood Advisory Council or similar stakeholder group • Elementary school principals • Title 1 director • Local agencies (e.g., social services, health) • Head Start Collaboration Office • Charter schools (if applicable) 		
<i>LEA leadership is committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement</i>		
<i>Head Start and other ECE partners are committed to supporting a formal Partnership Agreement</i>		

Phase 2: Components of the Agreement

(What to include in the MOA as required by ESSA?)

Components of the Formal Agreement	Response (entered by the LEA and the Head Start and other ECE partners)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<i>Developing and implementing a systematic set of procedures for receiving records, transferred with parental consent from a Head Start and early childhood program to the LEA.</i>		
<i>Establishment of channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, social workers, and health staff) in Head Start and early childhood programs.</i>		
<i>Creating linkage of educational services provided by LEAs with the services provided by local Head Start and early childhood programs.</i>		
<i>Providing guidance in conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start and early childhood programs to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children.</i>		
<i>Providing opportunities for Head Start/ early childhood programs and LEA staff in organizing and participating in transition-related training.</i>		

Phase 3: Measuring Success and Monitoring the Implementation of the Agreement

(How do we know the MOA is working?)

Measuring Success and Monitoring	Response (entered by the LEA and the Head Start and other ECE partners)	Risk Level (1 to 3)
<p>Improving availability of services</p> <p><i>Outreach, communication and sharing information help identify eligible children and make delivery of services to children more efficient and less duplicative.</i></p>		
<p>Improving quality of services</p> <p><i>Sharing resources, such as professional development, educational activities, curricular objectives, instructional strategies, and technical assistance improves the quality of children's early learning experiences.</i></p>		
<p>Supporting children's transition</p> <p><i>As children move from preschool, Head Start and child care into the public schools, their transition is eased by involvement from both early childhood and K-12 systems.</i></p>		
<p>Providing training on measuring goals and monitoring</p>		
<p>Establishing a database on local agreements</p>		

How should self-assessment information be used?

The self-assessment, completed by both parties (i.e., either LEA with Head Start or LEA with early childhood program), will offer a profile of the risk levels for the assessed statements. Some statements hold lower risks than others, which indicates that those areas provide better conditions for supporting the MOU. For instance, if the statement, *Supporting the linkage of educational services provided by LEAs with the services provided by local Head Start and early childhood programs*, is rated as low risk, the state has opportune conditions to build on the existing support. However, if the same statement is rated as high risk, the LEA will have less opportune conditions, which will require conversations of how the LEA and the Head Start or other early childhood programs will improve those conditions in support of LEAs, Head Start agencies, and early childhood programs as they are developing the local agreements.

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE MOUS/MOAS

The following examples of MOUs/MOAs between local educational agencies, Head Start, and other early childhood programs represent strong and actionable agreements designed to foster collaborative partnerships that support children and families as they enter the school system and staff as they work together to build a continuum of learning for students. Many of the examples are based on the requirements outlined in the federal Head Start Act or Elementary and Secondary Education Act; some take into consideration local and state needs and address other partnership priorities that extend beyond what is statutorily required. Below are issues to consider before drafting an agreement.⁵³ Also, for further context, refer to the guidance tools in the other appendices of this document.

Scope

- List the agencies and jurisdiction, as well as Head Start(s) and early childhood programs, to be included in the agreement
- Describe their relationship to the partnership
- Describe the beginning, middle, and end users of the agreement

Definitions

- Describe the operational and technical terms associated with the process to avoid confusion and uncertainty
- Address any community-specific terms or acronyms
- Provide multiple definitions when they differ between Head Start/early childhood programs and the school system
- Consider inclusion of definitions for each of these terms

Policy

- Clarify timelines
- Specify who authorizes resources
- Identify when resources should be used
- Cite relevant statutory and regulatory authority

Oversight and Compliance

- Describe the entity or entities that oversee and monitor the requirements of the MOU/MOA
- Articulate the responsibilities of each agency entering into the MOU/MOA
- Describe monitoring processes for MOU/MOA compliance
- Name who is responsible for ensuring that the MOU is followed and that personnel are trained appropriately

Updates to the MOU

- Name who has the authority to update or modify the MOU
- Describe how the MOU is updated or modified

⁵³ Adapted from Help Me Grow, *Guide for Writing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*, <http://www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov/professional/~media/3EBF3E5E54EA46A68DFFE2EADF933703.ashx>

A Generic Memorandum of Agreement between Appropriate Local Education Agency and Local Head Start,
and Seasonal Head Start Agency

I. Parties to the Agreement

The Parties in this MOA are the (Name) local Head Start Agency; and (Name) Local School Districts.

II. Purpose(s) of - The purpose(s) of the Head Start-School District MOA are:

- a. To improve availability and the quality of services in (Name the geographic service area) for the Head Start agency's children, age three to school entry, and their families.
- b. To support children's optimal development and readiness for school entry and long term success.
- c. To address the unique strengths and needs of the local population, such as homeless families, children in foster care, migrant families, or non-English speaking families.
- d. To promote collaboration regarding shared use of transportation, facilities, and other resources, as appropriate.
- e. To promote further collaboration to reduce duplication and enhance efficiency of services.
- f. To define the roles and responsibilities of the named parties toward coordination and greater collaboration; enhance linkages and relationships; and exchange information on the provision of educational and non-educational services.
- g. To coordinate a comprehensive system of activities, policies, and procedures among the named parties which guide and support their delivery of services to children and their families.
- h. To support ongoing communication and parent outreach for smooth transition to kindergarten.
- i. To coordinate staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula, and social and emotional development.

III. Authority

- a. Head Start's responsibility for coordination and collaboration with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start agency is mandated in the Head Start Act: Public Law 110-134, *"Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007."*
- b. The Head Start Act of 2007 requires that Head Start programs enter into a memorandum of agreement with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start agency.
- c. Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) regulations 45 CFR Chapter XIII Part 1307 requires all agencies to establish school readiness goals, defined as "the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve their readiness for kindergarten." (Part 1307.2).
- d. Head Start Act, SEC.642A. Head Start Transition and Alignment with K-12 Education [42U.S.C. 9837a] requires that each Head Start agency shall take steps to coordinate with the local educational agency serving the community involved and with schools in which children participating in a Head Start program operated by such agency will enroll following such program to promote continuity of services and effective transitions.

- e. The District shall work with the Provider to meet the requirements of the state policies, and any state guidance from the SEA and shall compensate the Provider in accordance with this Agreement.
- f. State-funded preschool programs in each school district shall include the elements established in this chapter as essential for the implementation of a high-quality preschool program as a condition of receipt of preschool education aid. This shall include, but not be limited to, all positions, supports, services, materials and supplies. The school district shall ensure that preschool programs offered in-district and by contracted private providers and local Head Start agencies receiving preschool funding meet all applicable requirements.
- g. The district board of education shall ensure the inclusion of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings to the maximum extent possible.
- h. The [Name of the Office of Early Learning in the SEA] has legal and programmatic responsibility for preschool programs. Working with preschool programs across the SEA, the [Office of Early Learning] is responsible for the development, implementation, and alignment of program components with a focus on standards, curricula, and assessment.

IV. Program Description and Service Area(s):

Head Start Program

- a. (Name of Head Start) offers a school readiness program for (number of children) ages three to school entrance within the geographic boundaries of (name boundaries). Name school districts within Head Start service areas and the number of Head Start children served in each school district.
- b. Head Start is a nationwide federal grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is a comprehensive child development program for families with young children in the areas of education, social services, health, and family engagement. Head Start preschool programs are for children from 3 to school entry and their families.
- c. Head Start is mandated to assume a leadership role in the development of partnerships with community agencies and service providers. Each program must have a written agreement with local school systems or local education agencies to coordinate and collaborate to best meet the needs of children and families.

V. Guiding Principles

- a. Create and maintain a meaningful partnership to promote school readiness so that children from low-income families in Head Start programs, or who are preschool ages, may receive comprehensive services to prepare them for elementary school and to address any potential "achievement gaps."
- b. Develop successful linkages within the context of "*the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015*," *the Head Start Act (2007)*, State Code, Race to the Top and the Preschool Expansion grant, as applicable.
- c. Plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have been proven to support children's school success.
- d. Respect the uniqueness of each locality's needs and resources.
- e. Promote the involvement of members of the early care and education communities.
- f. Share commitment, cooperation, and collaboration for a coordinated service delivery system.

VI. Joint Roles in System Review, Coordination, Collaboration, Alignment, and Implementation

The Parties agree to review and develop a plan of activities for the coordination, collaboration, alignment, and implementation of each of the following ten areas mandated by the Head Start Act of 2007.

Education activities, curricular objectives, and instruction

The [name of state] state-funded preschool programs and federally-funded Head Start programs must adopt a high-quality, research-based curriculum that provides learning goals and activities in key areas of children's development that reflect support for school readiness. School districts and Head Start programs should work collaboratively to meet state and federal regulations and maintain and enhance the quality of services to all children.

Parties agree to:

*** Implement a research-based early childhood curriculum that is aligned with the [name of State] Teaching and Learning Standards.**

- Strengthen and support collaborative partnership by sharing policies and procedures regarding transition, school readiness goals, parent engagement, home visits, special events, celebrations, multicultural experiences, etc.
- Strengthen and support effective practices, engaging interactions and environments in early childhood classrooms.
- Define and develop strategies to ensure high-quality preschool classrooms, which should include a well-organized and managed classroom, social and emotional support, and instructional interactions and materials that stimulate children's thinking and skills.
- Strengthen and support the home language of children while also helping children progress in the acquisition of English as expressed through vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Develop a transition plan of developmentally appropriate curricula objectives and shared expectations for children's learning and development as they transition from preschool to kindergarten:
 - Hold joint meetings to discuss education planning and developing strategies
 - Work as educational partners
 - Identify electronic methods through which local transition teams may raise and address challenges as well as share successes and resources.
 - Utilize data from the [Name of State] Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA).
 - Hold parent orientations
- Make available the name of the curricula, screening instruments and child assessment tools that are currently being used in each program and establish transition protocols.
- Use the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition* (ECERS-3) data and other assessments in developing school readiness goals.

The Head Start program agrees to:

- Provide the district(s) the curricula name and the assessment tool used.
- Develop strategies to implement curriculum to fidelity.
- Provide an aggregated summary of child outcome data.
- Use the ECERS-3.
- Staff members will be trained to reliability on the ECERS-3.
- Work toward aggregate ECERS-3 scores of 5.00 or higher.
- Collaborate with school district in the development of a transition plan
- Develop strategies to increase high quality programs
- Hold joint meetings with school district staff members to discuss education planning and develop strategies to increase child outcomes
- Strengthen and support collaborative partnership by sharing policies and procedures.
- Hold joint professional development trainings.
- Have mutual respect for the school district and staff members.

The School District agrees to:

- Hold joint meetings with both Head Start staff members and school district staff members to discuss education planning and develop strategies.
- Collaborate and coordinate with Head Start programs
- Have mutual respect for the Head Start program and staff members.
- Participate in the development of the MOA between Head Start and school districts
- Hold joint professional development trainings
- Jointly collaborate to develop a transition plan with Head Start program.
- Hold joint meetings with Head Start programs to discuss education planning and develop strategies to increase child outcomes.
- Provide aggregate data of children leaving kindergarten.
- Develop strategies to implement developmentally appropriate kindergarten curriculum to fidelity.

Public Information Dissemination and Access to Programs for Families Contacting the Head Start Program or any of the Preschool Programs

We must ensure that families have the necessary information to access high-quality early care and education. This is especially critical for the state's most vulnerable children, who often fall behind their peers well before entering kindergarten. Head Start agencies shall collaborate and coordinate with public and private entities, to the maximum extent practicable, to improve the availability of quality services to Head Start children and their families.

Parties agree to:

1. Develop agreements of confidentiality and parent consent which will allow for the sharing of information between Head Start and school district's preschool programs.

2. Meet biannually to review registration processes to ensure the most vulnerable families are accessing quality services and examine community assessment data.
3. Promote parents' use of family-friendly versions of the preschool and family standards in multiple languages.
4. Establish and maintain communication channels between Head Start and their counterparts in the schools, including teachers, social workers, McKinney-Vento coordinators and health staff who facilitate programs.

Head Start program agrees to:

- Enroll homeless children
- Provide services for homeless children and their families
- Enroll foster care children
- Meet biannually with the district's McKinney-Vento Coordinator
- Develop recruitment strategies to include measured recruitment outcomes.

School District agrees to:

- Have ongoing communication with Family Services, Health Coordinators and the Education staff members to ensure quality services are provided to children and their families.
- Improve coordination for family services by scheduling regular meetings with the district's McKinney -Vento Coordinator, Social Service staff and Head Start Family Service Coordinator.
- Coordinate with Head Start programs regarding dissemination of information for families needing services and how to access the services.

Enrollment Priorities for Eligible Children to be served by Programs

Head Start grantees are legally mandated to be fully enrolled with eligible children from low-income families on the first day of school. Priority shall be given to children whose families receive family support services, child abuse prevention services, protective services, foster care services, services for children with disabilities, services for homeless children, and services for families whose first language is not English.

Parties agree to:

1. Develop joint enrollment, screening, and registration activities that are family-friendly and welcoming, and will meet the needs of the community.
2. Coordinate recruitment efforts to ensure that Head Start eligible children are enrolled in Head Start program.
3. Develop strategies to ensure Head Start programs meet their full enrollment mandate by September 1.
4. Collaborate on creating appropriate recruitment strategies and allow Head Start programs the flexibility of registering children at Head Start sites.
5. Discuss strategies to assist parents in the registration process to eliminate duplication of enrollment paperwork and appointments.

6. Share policies regarding child selection, enrollment, and notification practices that ensure all eligible children will be served by the appropriate programs and to ensure there will be no competition for children.
7. Refer families not eligible for Head Start to the local school district's preschool program.
8. Establish a procedure for child recruitment and referral to ensure that Head Start programs meet their funded enrollment, including children with disabilities, by the first day of school:
 - a. Designated staff of both parties will meet to develop procedures
 - b. Draft procedures will be reviewed by both parties
 - c. Procedures will be finalized within three months of the first meeting
 - d. Procedures will be reviewed and revisions made annually
 - e. Parties will be made aware of the number of children to be served in each program for the upcoming school year
 - f. Plans of any sites and classroom changes will be identified and shared.

Head Start Program agrees to:

- Coordinate enrollment activities to ensure full enrollment of Head Start program.
- Be the responsible entity for enrolling Head Start children and share completed recruitment packets with school districts.
- Refer families not meeting the Head Start eligibility to the local district's preschool or other providers.
- Meet with School District personnel to discuss enrollment policies and registration process to eliminate duplication of enrollment paperwork.
- Standardize paperwork to include district information.
- Reserve one or more slots for children experiencing homelessness or children in foster care for 30 days.
- Develop strategies to promote regular attendance and reduce absenteeism and share the strategies with the School District.

School District agrees to:

- Give the standardized enrollment packets to Head Start personnel to eliminate the need for families to enroll twice.
- Meet with Head Start personnel to discuss enrollment policies and registration process to eliminate duplication of enrollment paperwork.
- Refer families eligible for Head Start services.
- Ensure ongoing communication with district staff regarding Head Start program's recruitment policies.
- Refer to the [Name of State] Department of Education website on recruitment and enrollment policies.
- Develop strategies to promote regular attendance and reduce absenteeism and share the strategies with the Head Start grantee.

Definition of Services Areas

Each Head Start grantee is legally mandated to serve a designated geographic area from which all recruitment, selection, and enrollment must be conducted based on program's community assessment.

Head Start grantees are serving children in multiple districts; therefore, holding meetings to develop consistency and continuity in the curricula objectives and school readiness goals for children's learning and development within the Head Start grantee must be assured.

Parties agree to:

1. Identify barriers to a coordinated delivery system and consider strategies to overcome such barriers.
 - a. Each party will assign individuals to identify current and possible future barriers.
 - b. Through discussion, jointly design specific strategies to overcome barriers.
2. Enhance efficiency of services to eligible children by reducing and/or avoiding the overlapping and duplication of services (while maintaining compliance with all Head Start regulations):
 - a. Meet to determine which services are being duplicated or overlapped and make adjustments.
 - b. Develop a listing of educational and non-educational services offered.
 - c. Develop a system for sharing services.
 - d. Complete the system for sharing services within two months of the first meeting.
 - e. Update and revise the system annually or as needed.

Staff Training, Including Opportunities for Joint Staff Training on Topics such as Academic Content Standards, Instructional Methods, Curricula, and Social and Emotional Development

Key components for the development of a highly skilled workforce include professional development and ongoing training. Joint staff training and professional development will ensure highly qualified and effective staff to assist young children and their families.

Parties agree to:

Participate in the *[Name of State] Workforce Registry*, a statewide system for tracking professional development and work experience.

Promote the sharing of professional development and training opportunities based on Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) data.

Provide joint trainings for school district and Head Start staff members on topics reflective of program assessment data, e.g. ECERS, curriculum fidelity tools, CLASS, performance-based assessment and child outcome data.

Support the establishment of professional learning communities composed of both Head Start and school district preschool teachers as a professional development avenue.

Head Start agrees to:

- Provide orientation that focuses on program goals, philosophy of the program, and program implementation.
- Assess all education staff to identify strengths, areas of needed support, and provide coaches for staff.
- Utilize a coach with adequate training, including completion of the Role of the Master Teacher training series offered by the *[Name of State]* Department of Education, and experience in adult learning and in using assessment data to drive coaching strategies aligned with program performance goals.

School District agrees to:

- Provide joint professional development trainings and invite Head Start staff to professional development that is offered to district and contracted provider preschool staff.
- Establish a professional development team to include Head Start staff members.
- Coordinate professional development trainings with Head Start programs.
- Provide curriculum and assessment training to Head Start staff members (when the Head Start agency and the district implement the same curriculum).

Program Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is the provision of targeted and customized support by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop and strengthen practices, knowledge, application, or implementation of services by recipients.

Provision of Additional Services to Meet the Needs of Working Parents, as Applicable

Many low-income working parents may need before and/or after child care services. Additional services may also be required to ensure the overall well-being of children and families.

Parties agree to:

Collaborate with County Councils, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and Department of Social Services.

Communication and Parent Outreach for Smooth Transitions to Kindergarten

Variations in prior experience to school entry and increasingly higher educational expectations at younger ages make the transition to kindergarten particularly challenging for many young children and their families. While it is important for districts and Head Start programs to prepare teachers, children, and their families for this transition, it is even more critical that districts and Head Start programs intentionally provide seamless supports for all children as they move to kindergarten.

Head Start agrees to:

- Develop a parent survey regarding kindergarten transition.
- Create a transition leadership team to include school district personnel and parents.
- Develop transition leadership plan with School District personnel.
- Host training for staff to work with families and school district personnel.
- Host transition to kindergarten activities for families and school districts

School District agrees to:

- Participate in the transition leadership team.
- Develop transition plan with Head Start staff members.

- Host a welcome to kindergarten activity in May for new children and their families.
- Ensure a smooth transition to developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) kindergarten for all new children and their families.

Provision and Use of Facilities, Transportation, and Other Program Elements

Head Start grantees and school districts share resources to avoid duplication of program elements and to use provisions efficiently.

Head Start agrees to:

- Provide a list of Head Start sites, including the number of Head Start classrooms within the district.
- Provide a contact list of Head Start personnel and their titles.
- Provide information on transportation policies and services.
- Coordinate transportation for children with disabilities.

School District agrees to:

- Coordinate transportation services.
- Provide a list of available classroom space for Head Start programs to utilize, if applicable.
- Provide information on building new in-district preschool buildings.

Other Elements Mutually Agreed to By the Parties

As time and situations change, Head Start grantees and school districts shall meet to discuss such situations and mutually agree upon ways to address them. At the time of this MOU, Head Start agencies and school districts have mutually agreed on the following elements:

Head Start program and local school district will be trained in the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children and share the responsibility of jointly ensuring enrolled preschoolers who exhibit persistent behavior or learning challenges receive the necessary support for success in kindergarten classrooms.

In this section, Head Start programs and local school districts should discuss situations, mutually agreed-on ways to address them, and add those here as appropriate.

Local school districts shall share child assessment data with Head Start programs each year from kindergarten through third grade.

- Head Start program staff will be trained in the ECERS-3.
- School Districts and Head Start programs will work collaboratively to coordinate services to avoid duplication.

Confidentiality

All Parties acknowledge confidentiality requirements that each must follow regarding informed parental consent and the sharing and release of personally identifiable information regarding children and families. Each Party to this MOU will protect the rights of young children with respect to records and reports created, maintained, and used by the public agencies. It is the intent of this agreement to ensure that parents have rights of access and rights of privacy with respect to such reports and records and that applicable State and Federal laws for excise of the rights be strictly followed. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will be followed. (See 34CFR303.460)

Dispute Resolution

The Parties will create a process to work collaboratively toward the resolution of disputes or differences and to solve problems. The process will include timelines for regular meetings to review the implementation of the MOU.

Review and Amendments

The parties will jointly review the MOU annually and more frequently when laws or regulations are amended that significantly impact the MOU or when a Party requests a formal change. Any proposed amendment or modification to the MOU shall be submitted to the other Party at least thirty days prior to formal discussion or negotiation. All Parties must concur on any amendments.

Effective Date

The MOU will become effective immediately after being signed and dated by all parties. By signing the MOU, the Parties agree to the terms. The signed MOU will be binding on all successors of the Parties to the MOU.

SIGNATURES



HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP DECLARATION

between

Howard County Office of Children and Families,
Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers

and

Howard County Public School System

Vision

The vision of the community partnership between the Howard County Office of Children and Families, Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers, and Howard County Public School System is that all students are physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually ready to thrive in kindergarten.

Mission

The mission of the community partnership between the Howard County Office of Children and Families, Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers, and Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is to encourage collaboration and communication, and together be able to provide a range of experiences and opportunities to familiarize students with the school environment and their community while developing a readiness for school.

This partnership agreement has been reviewed and all activities have been approved by HCPSS Offices of Risk Management, Elementary Curricular Programs, and School Administration.

Objectives

The Howard County Office of Children and Families will participate on the Transition to Kindergarten workgroup and collaborate with HCPSS to promote the initiatives of this agreement and other school readiness strategies to local Howard County child care programs.

The Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers, as identified by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care [Region 6 \(Howard County\)](#), may participate in any or all the activities listed below.

- Refer families that may be eligible to Howard County Public School System Pre-K (www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-programs/), and inform families of additional HCPSS resources, programs, and opportunities.
- Collaborate with the HCPSS Office of Early Childhood Programs (www.hcpss.org/enroll/childergarten) to prepare child care center students with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to participate and succeed when they begin elementary school.

- Work with child care center families to identify which elementary schools their children will be attending (<https://schoollocator.hcpss.org/SchoolLocator/>).
- Access HCPSS curriculum and instructional resources and offered professional learning opportunities, as appropriate.
- Share information about kindergarten registration and readiness opportunities with child care center families, e.g., HCPSS Road to Kindergarten, Howard County Library System's Kindergarten, Here We Come!, Howard County's Children's Discovery Fair, etc. Volunteer at county-wide school readiness events as appropriate and scheduling allows.
- Provide completed HCPSS Learning Progress Forms to the HCPSS Office of Early Childhood Programs in order to communicate information about incoming kindergarten students to applicable HCPSS teachers. The child care center will obtain parent permission prior to sharing any student information and will be available to answer questions as needed.
- Partner with the local elementary school to:
 - Become a part of the school community by subscribing to the school newsletter (<https://subscriptions.hocoschools.org/>) and keep families informed of relevant information.
 - Introduce child care center teachers to the kindergarten teachers and provide opportunities for the child care center teachers to observe a kindergarten class.
 - Invite HCPSS kindergarten staff to child care center events, as appropriate.
 - Schedule a spring tour of the school for the child care center students who will be attending kindergarten the next school year.
 - Volunteer in early childhood classrooms and attend school events as appropriate and scheduling allows.
 - Write letters and/or use technology to remotely visit and learn about kindergarten.
- Host and/or participate in Learning Parties.
- Explore opportunities with the HCPSS Academic Offices [Gifted & Talented, Career and Technology Education, Work Study, etc. (www.hcpss.org/about-us/partnerships/programs/)] to provide internship opportunities for highly motivated, qualified high school students.

Howard County Public School System may:

- Refer families that do not qualify for Pre-K to the Howard County CARE line (www.howardcountymd.gov/careline) so that they can find other high quality programs, and inform families of additional resources, programs, and opportunities within the county.
- Lead the Transition to Kindergarten Workgroup comprised of various community stakeholders including members of the child care community.
- Collaborate with Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers to help ensure that child care center students start school with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to participate and succeed in kindergarten.
- Provide access to HCPSS curriculum and instructional resources and professional learning opportunities, as appropriate.

- Offer child care center teachers the opportunity to volunteer at various county-wide events that support transition to kindergarten and school readiness, e.g., HCPSS Road to Kindergarten, Learning Parties, Howard County's Children's Discovery Fair, etc.
- Receive and make use of Learning Progress Forms sent by child care center teachers. Contact the appropriate child care center teachers as necessary to gather additional information.
- Inform elementary schools of the opportunities to partner with local child care center(s) in ways such as:
 - Being aware of the child care centers located within the school boundaries as well as child care centers outside the boundaries that send a significant population to the school.
 - Notifying child care center families of school events appropriate for kindergarten transition during the spring and summer prior to the start of school (e.g., Parent Information Sessions, Spring Picnics, Summer Playdates, Orientation, etc.).
 - Encouraging the child care center staff and kindergarten staff to meet to share ideas and information about how best to prepare the incoming kindergarten students for success at elementary school; invite child care center administration and/or teachers to observe a kindergarten class.
 - Welcoming child care center staff to volunteer in kindergarten classrooms or at events (e.g., Learning Parties).
 - Encouraging kindergarten classes to write letters and/or use technology to remotely visit a child care center to share information about typical kindergarten environment and practices.
- Issue a press release to announce the signing of a partnership between Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers and HCPSS.
- Invite Howard County Licensed Child Care Center representatives to the Howard County Public School System Annual Partnership Celebration.
- Recognize the partnership with Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers in the *Howard County Public School System Educational Partnerships Annual Report*.
- Ensure that the partnership follows all Howard County Board of Education policies and procedures.

Performance Measures

The partnership objectives above are aligned with the strategic plan of the school system, *Vision 2018: Fulfilling the Promise of Preparation* and will be evaluated using the following performance measures mutually agreed upon by the *Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers* and *Howard County Public School System*:

- Meet at least yearly to evaluate the partnership against measurable evaluation criteria and revise the agreement as warranted.
- Track each year the number of Howard County Licensed Child Care Center programs and teachers participating in kindergarten transition events.
- Improve Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores for all students, as well as certain student groups and prior care categories.

This partnership agreement emphasizes the following goals, outcomes, and strategies:

Goal 1: Students

Outcome 1.7: Schools support the social and emotional safety and well-being of all students. (1.7.7)

Goal 2: Staff

Outcome 2.1: Staff members experience a culture of trust, transparency, and collaboration. (2.1.2)

Goal 3: Families and the Community

Outcome 3.2: HCPSS is strengthened through partnerships. (3.2.1)

HCPSS welcomes the opportunity to partner with many types of businesses and organizations. A partnership, however, does not constitute promotion or endorsement by HCPSS for any partner's causes, ideas, web sites, products, or services.

The Howard County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs.

We, the following, do fully agree to the above stated partnership agreement between Howard County Licensed Child Care Centers and the Howard County Public School System on this the 15th day of June in the year 2017. The agreement shall remain in effect until such time that either party provides 10 days notice of its intent to terminate the partnership.

Memorandum of Understanding

between

Kitsap Community Resources Early Learning and Family Services

And

Bremerton School District (WA): Naval Avenue P-3 Early Learning Center/West Hills Elementary School

More than simply attaching a preschool to an elementary school, Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) and Bremerton School District (BSD) are committed to a partnership of shared space, resources, and aligned curriculum, assessment and quality instructional practices to provide a strong PreK-3 foundation for our shared families. The Naval Avenue Early Learning Center serving birth to third grade children and families and the West Hills Elementary School serving PreK-5th grade are living examples of our commitment to our children and families.

It is the intent of KCR and BSD to provide seamless education services to children and families as they transition from PreK-K through Third Grade. KCR, as the early learning provider, will offer early instruction in the Naval Avenue School and West Hills Elementary, working in full collaboration with BSD staff to ensure the following:

- KCR representation on the Early Childhood Care and Education Leadership group, Bremerton School District representation on the KCR Board;
- Use of early childhood, birth through third grade, instructional practices that take into account the latest neuroscience and how young children learn;
- Aligned curriculum including, but not limited to literacy, math, positive behavior supports, and handwriting;
- Teaching team planning including KCR and BSD staff on a regularly scheduled timeline;
- Establish patterns of engagement (child, family, and community) in school and learning;
- Develop and support social/emotional resilience skill building for all children through use of Second Step, DECA, and positive Behavior Supports in collaboration with School Psychologist;
- Provide qualified Teaching staff;
- Staff participate in monthly professional development;
- Children participate in monthly goal setting celebrations;
- Establish and maintain classroom environments that are appropriate to developmental levels of children, and are safe, secure, and conducive to learning;
- Evaluation of child progress each year ensures teachers are knowledgeable and accountable for adjusting curriculum for continuous improvement;
- Annual assessment at each grade level from Preschool through Third grade at the start of the school year and again in the Spring;
- Results celebrated and feedback given at each grade level for current year and prior year to inform adjustment to teaching practices;
- Pass the Baton model of transitions at each grade level through Teaching team information sharing meetings;

- Pre-school staff will provide Kindergarten staff with individual child *What Your Child Knows* information as part of the Pass the Baton transition process;
- Pre-K + Full Day Kindergarten + Grades 1,2, & 3 adjusted curriculum for skill retention;
- Pre-school participation in all school events including assemblies, library, music, and physical education;
- The School Principal, Kindergarten staff, and School Psychologist will regularly visit the Pre-School classroom to establish ongoing relationships with children;
- KCR staff will adhere to all established school protocols with regards to dress code and professional campus behaviors;
- KCR Family Development Specialist collaborates with School Psychologist to develop and implement family activities, trainings, and supports;
- KCR staff participate in school functions such as Open House, Curriculum Night, and Tissues & Tears (Kindergarten Entry Event).

KCR and BSD agree to continue with Memorandum of Understanding as being accurate and correct for the continuing school year unless one or both parties request changes. If there are no changes, both parties mutually agree to initial and date the existing agreement thus maintaining continuous service.

"CHILDREN FIRST, A VISION FOR ALL"

A Memorandum of Understanding Between the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Head Start Association for Developing Successful Linkages Between Head Start and Public Schools

I. Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- A. Maryland State Department of Education, an agency of the State of Maryland, hereafter referred to as "MSDE"; and
- B. Maryland Head Start Association, an organization of Head Start and Early Head Start administrators, staff, parents, and friends of Head Start programs, which are locally administered, hereafter referred to as "Head Start"; and

Hereinafter, MSDE includes the Maryland State Department of Education and the Division of Early Childhood Development. Head Start includes the members of the Maryland Head Start Association.

II. Purpose of MOU

- A. To work together effectively to improve outcomes and provide opportunities for children birth through five to experience school success
- B. To promote collaboration among the parties and their local counterparts
- C. To encourage and support the development of local and/or regional agreements between public school systems and Head Start programs.

III. Authority/Program Description

- A. The Maryland State Department of Education is an agency of the State of Maryland governed by the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland
- B. The authority for Head Start is found in Head Start Act, as amended, 42 USC 9801 et seq. Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded, comprehensive child development programs for low-income families with children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and children with disabilities.

IV. Guiding Principles

- A. Create and maintain a meaningful partnership to ensure acceleration of school readiness and eliminate the "achievement gap"
- B. Develop successful linkages within the context of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9801, et seq.), and the Bridge to Excellence as codified in Title 5, Subtitle 2 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland
- C. Plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have proven to support children's school success

- D. Plan and implement strategies that improve the health, education, and well-being of low-income children and their families
- E. Encourage and support the development of local and/or regional agreements that incorporate the guiding principles and strategies included in this MOU
- F. Respect the uniqueness of each locality's needs and resources when promoting local and/or regional agreements
- G. Promote the involvement of all other members of the early care and education community
- H. Incorporate by reference all provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

V. Joint Planning Actions

- A. Support the development and renewal of regional and/or jurisdiction-specific agreements that model this MOU
- B. Solicit information from all stakeholders for suggested ways of building knowledge and understanding of each other's programs
- C. Promote effective and efficient use of facilities and space utilization to meet prekindergarten requirements of the Bridge to Excellence in Public School Act
- D. Establish on-going planning process for mutual issues
- E. Evaluate measurable results of this MOU and children's progress according to existing data
- F. Institute a reciprocal process whereby Head Start and public school representatives would participate on early childhood planning committees
- G. Coordinate recruitment of eligible children to maximize services and avoid duplication
- H. Incorporate strategies that address the needs of children with disabilities, homeless children, and non-English speaking children
- I. Document and disseminate collaboration successes and best practices
- J. Market the MOU that articulates the vision of the partnership, "Children First, A Vision for All" to Head Start, public schools, other early care and education partners, parents, and the community.

VI. Articulation Agreement

- A. Establish effective transition procedures and practices
- B. Plan joint meetings for national and/or state program accreditation
- C. Establish a curriculum articulation process, including joint professional development, between Head Start and the prekindergarten to grade 12 system (i.e., Maryland Model for School Readiness, Voluntary State Curriculum, and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework)
- D. Align curricula, assessment, and accountability measures in preschool with kindergarten
- E. Coordinate calendars of events and professional development to reinforce collaboration

VII. **Family Involvement:** All parties to this agreement will encourage local agreements that address on-going communication between parents and teaching staff and continued and enhanced family support as children move from Head Start to public schools through strategies that include, but are not limited to:

- A. Holding joint meetings and activities for families whose children attend public prekindergarten and Head Start programs
- B. Developing a process for Head Start parents to work with school staff on School Improvement Team
- C. Assessing the extent of parental involvement in public schools of Head Start parents and provide outreach, as needed
- D. Planning joint Head Start/Public School parent events
- E. Developing articulation meetings between families, parents, counselors and school point persons to discuss transition and share information on the different programs and services available
- F. Creating shared and consistent goals for dually enrolled children and families
- G. Holding regular, interactive parent-teacher meetings that address the needs of each student who is dually enrolled or receiving services from the public schools, including children with disabilities and non-English speaking children
- H. Scheduling on-going parental meetings to document children's progress

VIII. **Joint Staff Development:** All parties to this agreement agree to encourage Head Start programs and public schools to:

- A. Include each others' staff in applicable training opportunities, including, but not limited to, the Maryland Model for School Readiness and other professional development opportunities
- B. Offer appropriate credit/credentialing for joint professional development
- C. Work with colleges to review and align early childhood coursework between MSDE, community colleges, four-year colleges, and the Division of Early Childhood Development
- D. Jointly plan training based on needs assessments
- E. Identify and disseminate successful staff development and instructional practices
- F. Identify and disseminate opportunities for shared resources

IX. **Collaboration:** Under the following circumstances, MSDE will provide resources to Head Start to support the Head Start State Collaboration Project by:

- A. Conducting, compiling, and analyzing an annual needs assessment with respect to collaboration, coordination, and alignment of services and curricula
- B. Based on the needs assessment results, developing a strategic plan to enhance the collaboration of Head Start services with public schools and other entities providing early childhood education and development services
- C. Planning and delivering an early childhood track at the Maryland Head Start Association conference
- D. Planning and conducting meetings and events to promote collaboration around the provision of comprehensive services and improvement in the quality of instruction

- E. Representing the MHSA and the Head Start State Collaboration Project at selected meetings and events
 - F. Performing agreed upon services, including meetings and facilitation, that enhance Head Start partnerships with local school systems
- X. **Implementation**: All parties to this agreement will encourage local agreements that identify a mechanism or mechanisms for on-going Head Start and public school communication, including, but not limited to, creating or using an existing steering committee with Head Start and public school representation.
- XI. **Termination for Default**: If either party fails to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement or otherwise violates any provisions of the Agreement, the Agreement may be terminated by written notice to the defaulting party. The notice shall specify the acts or omissions relied upon as cause for termination.
- XII. **Termination for Convenience**: Performance under this Agreement may be terminated in accordance with this clause in whole, or from time to time in part, whenever either party shall determine that such termination is in the best interest. It is understood that this Agreement may be terminated for the convenience of the parties or for performance deemed to be unsatisfactory.
- XIII. **Modification**: This Agreement may be modified as MSDE and Head Start mutually agree in writing. Except for the specific provision of the Agreement which is thereby modified, the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect after such modification and shall be subject to the same laws, obligations, conditions, provisions, rules and regulations, as it was prior to the modification.
- XIV. **Term of Contract**: The term of the Agreement shall be three (3) years from the date this Agreement is executed. This Agreement may be renewed as MSDE and Head Start mutually agree in writing.

XIV. **Signatures**

AGREEMENT BETWEEN
Local PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AND
Local/HEAD START

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to describe the responsibilities of each agency and to provide guidance for coordination and cooperation between local education agencies and Head Start in order to:

1. Assure that children in need of special education or special education and related services receive appropriate services for which they are eligible; and
2. Assure quality programs and reasonable and appropriate services through the joint utilization of resources.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The [Name] Public Schools are required to:

1. Locate, identify and evaluate all children birth to twenty-one residing within their boundaries who may have a disability.
2. Provide a multidisciplinary evaluation.
3. Provide special education services and related services to all eligible children, as determined by the local placement committee and as described on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
4. Assure that whenever appropriate the IEP/IFSP will include instruction for parent(s)/guardian(s) to assist in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the IEP/IFSP.
5. Assure that procedural safeguards and confidentiality of information are provided to eligible children and their parents.
6. Facilitate the transition of eligible children between their preschool program and the K-12 system.

Head Start is required to:

1. Recruit, enroll and serve eligible children. Ten percent of Head Start enrollees must be children with an identified disability. **Provide to the LEA by December 1, annually the number of children receiving services under IEPs.**
2. Refer children suspected of having a disability to the child's School District for evaluation. **[1308.4 (L)]**
3. Insure completion of health screening/assessment (medical, dental, nutritional, and developmental) not performed by the local education agency, as part of the evaluation for determining if a disability is present.
4. Collaborate with the local education agency in the multidisciplinary evaluation, IEP development, and the implementation of the portions of the IEP/IFSP identified for the Head Start Program, the IEP/IFSP annual review, and the transition process.
5. Insure that procedural safeguards, including confidentiality of records are provided for all children with disabilities and their parents.
6. Offer a support system for families of children with disabilities through training, information and social support to enable parents to advocate for their child.

AREAS OF COORDINATION AND COOPERATION [1308.4 (L)]

1. Information on children enrolled in Head Start and/or jointly enrolled children will be shared with written consent of the parent/guardian. This information would include the Head Start Diagnostic Reporting Form, evaluations, developmental screenings, IEP/IFSP, etc. in accordance with the Head Start Performance Standards 45CFR Part **[1308.4 (L)]**.
2. A copy of a Head Start Referral and Treatment Record will be sent to _____ Public Schools when referring a child for further evaluation. Upon completion of the evaluation, the school will complete and return the Head Start referral form with notification if special services are necessary.
3. _____ Public Schools may refer eligible children to the Head Start program either orally or in writing at any time throughout the year.
4. _____ Public Schools may request a Head Start representative to attend the IEP/IFSP meeting of a child being considered for Head Start enrollment to explain Head Start services. All information shared will remain confidential.
5. _____ Public Schools will notify Head Start either in writing, electronically or by phone of Placement Committee Meetings, IEP/IFSP Meetings or IEP/IFSP Review Meetings for any child receiving joint services.
6. An IEP/IFSP will be collaboratively developed for each jointly placed child identified with a disability at a staffing which includes the child's parent or legal guardian, public school staff, Head Start staff and other appropriate service providers.
7. Services for jointly placed children with disabilities including the purchase of necessary equipment may be cooperatively shared as agreed upon at joint IEP meetings.
8. Staff working with jointly placed children with disabilities will meet on a monthly basis.
9. Planning for the transition of each child with disabilities will be discussed during the IEP/IFSP review.
[1308.4 (L)]
10. _____ Public Schools staff may be used on a consultation basis for children served in Head Start inclusive of preschool psychological screening, assessments and observations. Written recommendations provided by _____ Public Schools staff would be used by the teaching staff to meet the individual needs of the child/children. All information will remain confidential.
11. The development and implementation of an annual screening process for three and four year olds utilizing _____ Public School staff and Head Start staff will be cooperatively arranged each year. **[1308.4 (L)]**
Suggestions for collaboration:
_____ Public School and the Head Start Program will coordinate screening efforts by:
 - a. Sharing staff and facilities for joint screenings.
 - b. Coordinating the instruments and procedures to be used.
 - c. Informing and including parents in the screening process.
12. _____ Public Schools and Head Start agree to share information on training and in-services to facilitate joint training whenever appropriate. **[1308.4 (L)]**
13. This agreement will be reviewed annually or as necessary. We the undersigned agree to follow this agreement for coordination and cooperation.

Superintendent of School District

Director of _____/Head Start

Date

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

_____ **School District**

And

Head Start Program

This Memorandum of Understanding is for the purpose of coordinating mutually beneficial activities of the parties involved to provide better services for children and families served. Services to be provided August 15, 2012 through May 31, 2013.

HEAD START WILL:

xxxxxxx COMMUNITY

SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL:

I. Educational Activities, Curricular Objectives, Instruction

Provide certified teachers meeting Head Start and state-funded 4-year-old preschool requirements	Provide certified teachers meeting Head Start and state-funded 4-year-old preschool requirements
Provide teacher associates to meet Head Start requirements	
Provide Area Manager to monitor classroom to ensure Head Start performance requirements are met.	Provide one-on-one aides as required
Contact District for assistance in finding certified subs if needed	Provide assistance finding substitutes who meet qualifications
Provide supervision of Head Start staff	Provide supervision of district staff
Implement Head Start Performance Standards and Creative Curriculum	Reinforce implementation of Creative Curriculum and Head Start Performance Standards
Provide preschool services for children ages 3 and 4 by September 15 th based on agreed upon schedule of hours and days to meet program requirements	Assist with calendar coordination including hours/ days and snow day cancellations
Provide developmentally appropriate equipment and supplies to meet curriculum requirements	Provide supplies as mutually agreed upon
Teacher to provide 2 home visits and 2 conferences each year for each family	Teacher to provide 2 home visits and 2 conferences each year for each family
Teachers to complete requirements for monthly nutrition activities and daily tooth brushing.	Teachers to complete requirements for monthly nutrition activities and daily tooth brushing.
Provide mental health professional to complete observation/report twice a year	Permit mental health professional to complete observation/report twice a year

II. Public Information Dissemination and Access

Recruit age eligible children	Assist with recruitment
Notify families of acceptance	
Communicate with district to determine placement of children in classrooms	Communicate with Head Start to determine placement of children in classrooms

III. Selection Priorities

Enroll up to 16 children meeting income guidelines in Head Start	Support established enrollment process
Enroll up to 24 Universal Pre-K students. Provide voluntary preschool services to children not enrolled in Head Start who are 4-years-old by September 15.	
Provide 3 year old preschool services as enrollment allows	
Class size not to exceed 20 students	Class size not to exceed 20 students

IV. Service Area

Serve families in xxxxxx County	Serves children in xxxxx Community School District
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V. Professional Development

Provide training and technical assistance on Creative Curriculum, Second Step, a Violence Prevention Curriculum, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), CLASS, and other curriculums provided by Head Start	Orient District teacher to District policies/procedures.
Provide general Head Start orientation	Invite Head Start to area wide professional development day when appropriate
Orient Head Start employees	Send staff to Head Start training as needed/appropriate

VI. Program Technical Assistance

Provide technical assistance on curriculum	
Provide technical assistance on Head Start requirements	
Enroll in GOLD data base with the state wide program	Provide technical assistance on district requirements
Provide school readiness reports up to 3 times a year as requested	Request required reports from Head Start office

VII. Working Parent services

Provide parent activities at time convenient for parents such as evening/morning	Provide nurse for health care
Parent meetings to be held in the evenings	Provide meeting space for parent meetings in the evening
Provide parent engagement activities, including at the end of the school day	Allow playground use by families after program hours
Conduct roundup to preschool activities at a variety of times	

VIII. Kindergarten Transitions

Inform parents of dates for roundup	Inform Head Start about roundup dates
Assist with transfer of records	Coordinate with Head Start on required records
Provide transition activities in classroom to prepare children	Coordinate meeting with Kindergarten teachers for transition meeting
Provide parent information in spring about child's transition	

IX. Facilities, Transportation, Other Program Elements

FOOD SERVICE

Head Start will provide breakfast and lunch during program operation.	District staff will provide meals through a separate contract. Prepare meals to meet CACFP requirements
Head Start to provide developmentally appropriate dinnerware and serving equipment.	Provide staff to deliver serving ready breakfast and lunch to classrooms
Approve menus by Registered Dietitian	Prepare agreed upon menus including substitutions
Provide child size tables and chairs	Assist to provide child size tables and chairs
Provide staff supervision as required by regulations	Provide quality social environment during meal time
Meals and serve as family style dining, staff to eat with children serving as role models	Meals and serve as family style dining, staff to eat with children serving as role models
Staff to complete CACFP and Civil Rights training	Staff to complete CACFP and Civil Rights training
Head Start to provide meal reimbursement to xxxxx Schools upon receipt of invoice for meals provided at rates established in separate agreement	Invoice Head Start for meals provided to students as per separate contract.

FACILITIES

Provide telephone service	Provide phone and internet service in classroom
Provide necessary equipment/supplies	Maintain/repair/upgrade equipment
Pay required inspection fees (Fire Marshal/Licensing)	Facilitate internet service

	Provide additional storage space
Provide smoke detector, fire extinguisher, and CO2 detector for classrooms as needed	Provide custodial services
	Provide snow removal
	Provide one classroom space consisting of 700 square feet minimum with sink in room
	Provide restrooms with at least four functioning toilets and sinks
	Provide playground area near the facilities with fence and equipment installation as appropriate and agreed upon
	Furnish all necessary utilities for the premises utilized by Head Start (including heat, light, water, sewer, etc.)

TRANSPORTATION

Provide a mini-bus that meets all state and federal requirements to transport children between the ages of 3 and 5	Provide and pay for a driver to drive the mini-bus. The driver will meet all state requirements for a school bus driver as set forth by xxxxx code, to include proof of background check completed
Provide and pay for an adult monitor to ride the school bus and meet the needs as set forth by Head Start	Will wash and clean the bus on a regular basis as part of the normal routine conducted by all XXXXX School District bus drivers
Pay for fuel for portion of route with Head Start children	Pay for fuel for the portion of route with paying preschool children
Pay for ½ the cost of oil changes to the bus. The oil change routine will take place every 3000 miles and will be completed by the transportation staff at xxxxxx Community Schools. At the time of the oil change the filter will also be changed and the bus will be greased.	Pay for ½ the cost of oil changes to the bus. The oil change routine will take place every 3000 miles and will be completed by the transportation staff at xxxxxx Community Schools. At the time of the oil change the filter will also be changed and the bus will be greased.
Pay for any major repairs to the mini-bus that may fall outside of maintenance (such as glass replacement, engine repairs, transmission repairs, tires, alignment, and body repair)	Will provide a radio for direct communication between the bus driver and the school district office
Train the bus monitor and/or driver at the xxxxx Community School District and on non-contract time for the duties the above mentioned employee may have with the school district	Will hold monthly bus evacuation drills for the students and will document those drills
Both Parties agree:	Both Parties agree:
Drop off/pick up point will be at the xxx School Building in xxxxx, at the xxxxx, and at the xxxx (if Needed)	Drop off/pick up point will be at the xxxxx School Building in xxx, at the xxxxx, and at the xxxxx (if Needed)
Head Start qualified families will have their bussing expenses covered by funds from xxxxxx Head Start	xxxxxx Community School will charge non-Head Start qualified riding families a fee per semester to ride the bus (empowerment eligible families may apply for exemption)

X. Other Elements

Require all Head Start staff to complete initial health examination that includes tuberculosis screening. Copy of forms on file at Head Start in individual's personnel file.	Require all district staff including transportation staff that works with Head Start children to complete initial health screening including tuberculosis screening. Copy of forms located at the school district. Allow Head Start to monitor compliance.
Head Start completes a criminal record check on all Head Start staff PRIOR to hire.	District provides documentation that any staff working with Head Start children has received a criminal record check PRIOR to hire. Documentation must show date criminal record check was completed. Allow Head Start to monitor compliance
Maintain adequate comprehensive insurance consisting of general liability, workers' compensation and pupil health insurance covering children, volunteers, and Head Start staff while on the premises or involved in program activities	Maintain adequate comprehensive insurance consisting of general liability, workers' compensation covering District staff and volunteers
All staff utilized in the preschool program classroom will have a record check and fingerprint check completed. Cost for payment to provide this service will be mutually agreed upon between the two entities at the time of service	All staff utilized in the preschool program classroom will have a record check and fingerprint check completed. Cost for payment to provide this service will be mutually agreed upon between the two entities at the time of service
Head Start will provide all requested data to the District for the State reports regarding the Voluntary Four Year Old Preschool. These reports shall be submitted in a timely manner as required by the various requestors.	xxxx School shall submit such records, reports, and evaluations as required by Head Start and DHHS/ACF. These reports shall be submitted in a timely manner as required by the various requestors.
Head Start to request report of non-federal share "in-kind"	xxxxx will provide report for non-federal share "in-kind" upon request for Head Start services
Discrimination in staffing and programming is prohibited. Head Start will not discriminate against any person employed in the performance in this contract, or against any applicant for employment because of race, sex, age, creed, religion, color, national origin, political affiliation, veteran's status or handicapping condition. No person shall on the grounds of race, sex, age, creed, religion, color, national origin, political affiliation, veteran's status or handicapping condition be denied benefits of or subject to discrimination in the performance in this contract.	Discrimination in staffing and programming is prohibited. XXXX School district will not discriminate against any person employed in the performance in this contract, or against any applicant for employment because of race, sex, age, creed, religion, color, national origin, political affiliation, veteran's status or handicapping condition. No person shall on the grounds of race, sex, age, creed, religion, color, national origin, political affiliation, veteran's status or handicapping condition be denied benefits of or subject to discrimination in the performance in this contract.

xxxxxx School District will reimburse Head Start \$xxxxx.00 to serve at least 18 children through the voluntary 4-year-old-preschool program. Head Start to submit invoice with documentation requested.

xxxxxx Community Schools agrees to perform all activities authorized by this agreement in accordance with the grant conditions inclusive of Head Start Performance Standards and all other DHHS/ACF/OHS directives. If xxxxx Schools is determined to be operating out of compliance, Head Start will notify xxxxx Community Schools and assist in developing an improvement plan to come into compliance within the specified period.

xxxxx Community Schools and Head Start will jointly notify one another in writing of their intent to continue their cooperative programming efforts for the next contractual period. Notification will be binding unless disruptions of funds on the part of either party would preclude their ability to meet the terms of this agreement on/or after June 30, 2012. Under such circumstances either party must provide 30 days advance notice prior to termination of this agreement.

This Agreement becomes effective August 15, 2012, with signature of both Parties involved. Duration of Agreement is contingent upon receipt of funding and upon approval of site by state Fire Marshall's office and state child care licensing personnel.

This Agreement shall be renegotiated annually.

Date

xxxxx, Superintendent
xxxxxx Community Schools

Date

xxxxxxx, Executive Director
Head Start Program

**Cooperative Special Education Services Agreement
Northside Independent School District**

and

**Family Service Association of San Antonio Head Start
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 School Year**

Pre-Referral

- * Head Start will conduct the Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ3) and Ages and Stages Social Questionnaire Social Emotional (ASQSE) on all children enrolled in the Head Start Program within 45 calendar days of their enrollment.
- * Head Start will complete a Learning Accomplishment Profile 3 (LAP3) assessment on all students enrolled in their program three times each school year and develop an Individual Child Education Plan (ICEP).
- * Head Start will consult with the Center for Health Care Services if they have concerns about a child's behavior or social development.
- * Head Start Disabilities Coordinators will observe a child in their classroom and suggest interventions if the Head Start staff have concerns about a child's development. Interventions will be provided for the child for 6-8 weeks before a referral will be made for special education testing to allow the child time to benefit from the interventions.
- * Head Start will refer students with an obvious need (medical diagnosis) or students who have received services through an Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program directly to NISD for special education testing.

Transition from ECI Program

- * Transition meetings will be held each Friday at Easter Seals no less than 90 days prior to the child's third birthday. If the family is interested in services through Head Start and the school district they will meet with both the Head Start and NISD representatives. NISD will complete the evaluation for special education services.

Referral

- * Head Start will make evaluation referrals for students living inside NISD boundaries through the Head Start Disabilities Coordinators.
- * Head Start Disabilities Coordinators will fax or mail all referrals to the NISD Child Find Office.

Head Start will provide the following information to NISD with all referrals:

- Head Start Disabilities Referral Form
- Consent for Release of Information
- ASQ3, ASQSE, LAP3 Screening Information
- Individual Child Education Plan (ICEP)
- Vision and Hearing Screenings and Physical
- Pre-Referral information and behavior plan if applicable
- Last evaluation and most current progress note from Head Start contract therapist if applicable

- * NISD Child Find Office will forward referral information to the speech therapist at the student's home campus or the NISD Preschool Assessment Team. If there is an obvious need or previous services through ECI, NISD will forward information to the campus coordinator at the student's home campus and ask the campus team to consider a temporary placement into either speech or PPCD services.

Evaluation

- * NISD will complete the evaluation within 60 calendar days of the signed consent by the parent.

Admission Review Dismissal (ARD) Meeting

- * NISD will hold the ARD meeting with 90 calendar days of the signed consent by the parent.

NISD will invite Head Start staff (disabilities coordinator, child's teacher or Head Start center director) to the ARD meeting. The invitation to the ARD meeting will be mailed to: Kim Wilson, Head Start Disabilities Coordinator
Family Service Association
702 San Pedro Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78212

NISD Services

- * NISD will provide services through either the PPCD Program or Speech Therapy Program in NISD for any Head Start student that qualifies for these services.
- * NISD will provide transportation to and from the child's home if they qualify for transportation as a related service. For a child who qualifies for PPCD Services NISD will provide transportation to and from school if the Head Start Center is within the cluster boundaries of the home school. For a child who qualifies for Speech Only Services, NISD will provide transportation to and from school if the Head Start Center is within the NISD boundaries.
- * Head Start or child's parent will provide transportation to and from the child's home school if the Head Start Center is outside of NISD boundaries or outside of the cluster boundaries of the NISD home school for students eligible for PPCD.

NISD Referral to Head Start

- * NISD will refer parents to Head Start if they request information about Head Start services. Referral for children with special needs will be made to:
Kim Wilson, Head Start Disabilities Coordinator
phone: (210) 601-2152
email: kwilson@family-service.org
fax: (210) 226-0108

Staff Development

- * Head Start and NISD can provide staff development training for each other on mutually agreed upon topics (ie., pre-referral interventions, referral process, evaluation, child development, modifications/accommodations, effective teaching strategies, etc...)

This service agreement will be in effect for the 2009-2010 school year and the 2010-2011 school year.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Head Start Grantee and PreK/Preschool for All Entity

I. PARTIES

The Parties in this MOU are the Head Start Grantee and the PreK/Preschool for All Entity.

II. PURPOSES

The purposes of the Head Start – PreK/Preschool for All MOU are:

- ☐ To define the coordination and collaboration roles and responsibilities of the Parties and enhance linkages and relationships to achieve a coordinated service system
- ☐ To improve availability and quality of services for children ages three through five and their families by ensuring that all children in the service area have access to quality care and education and that the Parties are planning and coordinating this access
- ☐ To support children’s optimal development and school readiness and success
- ☐ To address the unique strengths and needs of the local population
- ☐ To reduce duplication and enhance efficiency of services
- ☐ To collaborate in the areas of transportation, facilities, and other resources, as appropriate, and ensure information exchange regarding educational and non-educational services

III. AUTHORITY

- A. Head Start’s responsibility for coordination and collaboration with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start grantee is mandated in the Head Start Act: Public Law 110-134 “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.”
- B. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), including PreK/Preschool for All, is authorized by Section 1C-2 of the Illinois School Code. PreK/Preschool for All’s general responsibility for coordination with other programs in the same service area is covered under several sections of Title 23, Part 235 of the Illinois Administrative Code [Subtitle A, Subchapter f; 235.20(c)(7), 235.50(a)(2)(B), and 235.70(b)(2)]. Specific rule about collaborating with Head Start is in Sections 235.120(b)(3)(B) and 235.140(a).

IV. PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS AND SERVICE AREA

- A. Head Start. Head Start is a comprehensive child development program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and serves families with young children. Services include the areas of education, social service, health and family involvement. The Head Start Grantee serves _____ children within the geographic boundaries of _____.

- B. PreK-Preschool for All. State PreK-Preschool for All is a preschool education program funded by the ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant Program and serves children ages three and four and is designed to improve school readiness through education and parent education services. The PreK-Preschool for All Entity serves ____ children in the service area.
- C. The service area defined by this MOU is the Head Start Grantee's service area delineated in IV.A. of this MOU.

V. JOINT ROLES IN SYSTEM COLLABORATION, ALIGNMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Parties agree to review and develop a plan of activities for the coordination, collaboration, alignment, and implementation of each of the following ten areas mandated by the Head Start Act of 2007.

- A. Educational activities, curricular objectives, and instruction
 - 1. Research based curriculum coordination aligned with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and the Illinois Early Learning Standards.
 - 2. Ongoing communication between the Parties for continuity of curricular objectives and shared expectations for children's learning and development as the children transition to school.
- B. Public information dissemination and access to programs for families contacting the Head Start program or any of the preschool programs
 - 1. Community/public information dissemination and resource development to support and improve school readiness.
 - 2. Ongoing communication channels between Head Start and their counterparts in the schools, including teachers, social workers, McKinney-Vento coordinators and health staff that facilitate program coordination.
- C. Selection priorities for eligible children to be served by programs
 - 1. Child selection, enrollment, and notification practices that ensure all eligible children will be served by the appropriate program and there will be no competition for children.
 - 2. Program participation of underserved populations of eligible children.
 - 3. Identifying limited English proficient children and informing their parents of instructional services to help children acquire English proficiency.
 - 4. Coordination and collaboration with other programs, as applicable, such as Early Reading First, Even Start, Title I Preschool, Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education, libraries, etc.
- D. Definition of service area
 - 1. Child recruitment and referral practices that ensure all children will be served by the appropriate program in the service area and there will be no competition for children.
 - 2. Collaboration to reduce duplication and enhance service efficiency in the service area.
 - 3. Coordinated service delivery and strategies to overcome collaboration barriers.
- E. Staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula, transition, and social and emotional development.
- F. Joint program technical assistance and/or shared technical assistance resources, where feasible.
- G. Provision of services to meet the needs of working parents, as applicable: coordinating activities to

make full day and year resources available to children who need it and collaborating with child care entities in the service area.

- H. Communication and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten
 - 1. Joint support of children's transition to elementary school, including appropriate records transfers, outreach to parents, and specific activities to address limited English proficient children and their families' development.
- I. Provision and use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements
 - 1. Sharing facilities, as feasible and appropriate.
 - 2. Sharing transportation, as feasible and appropriate.
 - 3. Joint parent activities, education and involvement, as feasible and appropriate.
 - 4. Exchange of information on children's service provision, as feasible and appropriate.
- J. Other elements mutually agreed to by the Parties.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

All Parties acknowledge confidentiality requirements that each must follow regarding informed parental consent and the sharing and release of personally identifiable information regarding children and families. Each Party to this MOU will protect the rights of young children with respect to records and reports created, maintained, and used by the public agencies. It is the intent of this agreement to ensure that parents have rights of access and rights of privacy with respect to such reports and records and that applicable State and Federal laws for exercise of these rights be strictly followed. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will be followed. (See 34CFR 303.460.)

VII. RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES

The Parties will create a process to resolve disputes or differences and to solve problems, working first to resolve disputes between them. The process will include timelines for regular meetings to review the MOU, plan collaborative activities, update each other on the plan achievement, and resolve issues. Each Party will identify a liaison to be responsible for MOU communication and plan implementation.

VIII. REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

The Parties will jointly review the MOU annually and more frequently when: laws or regulations are amended that significantly impact the MOU or when a Party requests a formal change. Any proposed amendment or modification to the MOU shall be submitted to the other Party at least thirty days prior to formal discussion or negotiation. All Parties must concur on any amendments.

X. EFFECTIVE DATE

The MOU will become effective immediately after being signed and dated by all Parties. By signing the MOU, the Parties agree to the terms. The signed MOU will be binding on all successors of the Parties to the MOU.

XII. SIGNATURES

The Parties believe that Head Start and PreK-Preschool for All can create and maintain a meaningful partnership to promote school readiness so that low income children are served in a coordinated, high quality system. The Parties agree to plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have proven to support children's school success. The Parties agree to coordinate recruitment and enrollment so that each child and family is served in the best setting and programs cooperate to maximize community resources.

The Head Start Grantee

_____	_____
Head Start Director	Date

_____	_____
Head Start Grantee Authorized Representative	Date

PreK/Preschool for All Provider

_____	_____
Authorized Agency Representative	Date

_____	_____
Superintendent of Schools (if applicable)	Date

APPENDIX H: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are local education agencies (LEAs) required by law to enter into a formal agreement with Head Start?

Yes. Congress added a new provision to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, to strengthen the coordination between early childhood and the K-12 systems. By requiring written agreements between school districts/charter schools and early childhood education programs, including Head Start categorically, the law works to promote collaboration to support young children as they transition into kindergarten and elementary school.

Are LEAs required by law to enter into a formal agreement with other early childhood programs?

Yes, but only if it is feasible. Feasibility has not been defined by ESSA, and LEAs may make the determination at their own discretion to work with local early childhood education programs to draft an MOA/MOU. For instance, any relationship between an LEA and an early childhood education program that includes the transfer of funding for services, such as publicly funded prekindergarten, warrants an MOA/MOU. LEAs may also enter into a formal agreement if there is a compelling public interest, such as improving school readiness skills or transition services for high-need students (e.g., children with disabilities or children experiencing homelessness).

Is the legal requirement impacting all Title 1 elementary schools?

Yes. ESEA requires each LEA that receives Title I funds to “develop agreements” with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other early childhood education entities. The law states that LEAs, by receiving Title 1 funds, are subject to the provision impacting all Title 1 elementary schools. However, LEAs may decide to cover all elementary schools in their districts regardless of Title 1 status.

What is the purpose of the Toolkit?

This toolkit provides information and resources for State Educational Agencies (SEAs), LEAs, Head Start, and other early care and education programs on:

- ESSA’s statutory requirements for LEAs receiving Title I funds regarding coordination with early childhood programs;
- Other federal policies, most importantly the 2007 Head Start Act, that include similar requirements for Head Start programs;
- The alignment between the coordination requirements of ESSA and Head Start;
- Specific actions and activities that SEAs can take to support local coordination;
- Specific steps that LEAs can take to develop coordination approaches that comply with ESSA regulations and support children, families, and elementary teachers;
- Sample guidance for SEAs to provide LEAs to help them use best practices when meeting the coordination requirements;
- Guidance on how to write a strong, actionable memorandum of understanding (MOU) between LEAs and Head Start programs that complies with both federal laws and promotes coordination; and
- The challenges and barriers to coordination and the resources available to overcome them.

What should be covered in the formal agreement?

The specific activities outlined in the legislation include:

- Receiving and transferring children’s records, enrollment, parent communication;
- Establishing channels of communication between school staff and Head Start staff;
- Conducting parent meetings with Head Start teachers and kindergarten or elementary school teachers;
- Organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of Head Start staff, school staff, and early childhood education staff, as appropriate; and
- Linking LEA educational services with Head Start agency services.

How does the ESSA requirement differ from the MOU provisions in the Head Start Act of 2007?

With the inclusion of the coordination requirement in ESSA, early childhood programs like Head Start and schools now have similar coordination goals. More detailed comparison between both statutory requirements are listed on Table 1 in the document. Both the Head Start Act and ESSA include many of the same coordination elements, but some of the components of the Head Start Act MOU requirement are not specifically included in the required ESSA agreement.

What are the MOU elements in the coordination requirement through the Head Start Act?

These agreements can include:

1. Sharing information such assessment results, health records, IEPs, or other information to help teachers meet individual student needs.
2. Locating Head Start classrooms in elementary schools to better leverage resources.
3. Planning community-wide transition activities, such as summits that bring together elementary school and Head Start teachers, parents, and community partners.
4. Involving families in their child’s learning, such as hosting family field trips to the local schools to acclimate incoming children and their caregivers to their new environment.
5. Communicating assessment results to help drive program improvement.
6. Organizing joint professional development opportunities so elementary teachers can learn about developmentally appropriate practices and early childhood educators can better understand standards and expectations for children entering elementary school.
7. Aligning curriculum and instruction to support the sequential progression of children’s learning.
8. Partnering on infrastructure resources, such as facilities and transportation.

What approach should LEAs take in case MOUs between Head Start and the LEA are already in place?

LEAs and Head Start may continue their coordination under the existing MOU and incorporate the specific elements required by ESSA into an updated MOU.

What is the SEA’s role in the coordination effort?

ESSA specifically defines the role of the SEA as managing the implementation and performance of the approved consolidated state ESSA plan. SEAs can play an important role in supporting local coordination by issuing state guidance on local coordination and modeling strong coordination and collaboration at the state level. The guide includes a series of steps that SEAs can take that not only comply with the ESSA requirements but address the law’s intent of promoting strong coordination and linkages at the local level.

What is the LEA’s role in the coordination effort?

LEAs have the primary responsibility for meeting the ESSA coordination requirements, and district superintendents and local school boards will need to establish LEA policies considering any state guidance that is provided.

APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY

ECE	Early childhood education
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
LEA	Local educational agency
SEA	State educational agency

APPENDIX J: BEST PRACTICES ON THE TRANSITION INTO KINDERGARTEN

1. **Form a collaborative team.** Helping children and their families make the transition to kindergarten involves a careful planning process and consideration of an array of transition practices appropriate to the needs of the families, school, and community. A team coordinator should be identified to facilitate the process and arrange for regular team meetings. The team should include, but not be limited to, preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers, family workers, principals, parents, and other community representatives.⁵⁴
2. **Develop a relationship between families and schools.** Increased family involvement may lead to children demonstrating better social skills and higher academic performance beyond the kindergarten classroom.⁵⁵ Find ways to [involve families](#) as volunteers, advocates, and decision-makers in school-related activities and throughout the transition process.
3. **Set clear expectations and communication.** Paint a clear picture of the transition plan and the expected experience for children and their families. Effective forms of communication include sending a letter home with children, hosting an open house, and sending home a transition information packet including a detailed timeline and calendar of events leading up to the transition.⁵⁶
4. **Recognize that each community is different.** What works well for one local educational agency (LEA) or early childhood education program might not work for another.⁵⁷ There is not a “one-size fits all” program applicable to all schools and all families. Design a transition strategy that works well for your students, families, teachers, and community.
5. **Use existing tools and resources to ensure a smooth transition for all parties.** By adapting existing transition team [templates](#) and [checklists](#), LEAs and partners can create a transition plan unique to their needs. [These](#) guiding principles and suggested practices may help direct your plan.
6. **Design transitions for success.** In preparation for kindergarten, pre-K teachers should consider designing a schedule that minimizes transitions and maximizes the time children spend engaged in developmentally appropriate activities. Schedules in which

54 Kraft-Sayre, M.E. & Pianta, R. (2000). [Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten: Linking Children, Families, & Schools](#). National Center for Early Development & Learning, Kindergarten Transition Studies, University of Virginia.

55 Horowitz, Michelle. (2017). [Looking Before They Leap: How ESSA Can Help Students Transition](#). National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

56 Pianta, R. & Cox, M. (2002). [Fact Sheet: Transition to Kindergarten – Early Childhood Research and Policy Briefs](#). National Center for Early Development & Learning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Volume 2, #2.

57 Kraft-Sayre, M.E. & Pianta, R. (2000). [Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten](#).

children engage in planned activities or projects for significant periods of time, spend little time in transitions, or seldom spend time waiting with nothing to do decrease the likelihood of challenging behavior.⁵⁸

7. **Prepare for the challenges that come with transitions.** Keep in mind the [challenges](#) for children, teachers, and families during the transition process. Children’s challenging behavior during transitions may be related to how program staff structure, schedule, and implement transitions.⁵⁹
8. **Plan joint professional development opportunities.** Sending and receiving schools and programs should work collaboratively to implement a smooth transition. Elementary teachers and early education staff should work together to conduct teacher swaps, share curriculum and assessment information, and plan a field trip for the pre-K students and families to visit the kindergarten they will be attending.⁶⁰ Research shows continuity between pre-K and kindergarten combined with family involvement is critical to effective transitions throughout a child’s education.⁶¹
9. **Encourage open and frequent discussion about the transition with the child.** Teachers and families can implement various strategies as conversation starters such as the development of personalized social stories⁶² or reading books about transitioning into kindergarten.⁶³ With open dialogue at school and the reinforcement of this information at home, children can feel comfortable, prepared, and excited on their first day of kindergarten.

58 Hemmeter, M.L., Ostrosky, M., Artman, K., and Kinder, K. (2008). [Planning Transitions to Prevent Challenging Behavior](#). National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

59 Ibid.

60 [Enhancing School to School Connections](#). (2012). Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

61 LoCasale-Crouch, J., Mashburn, A., Downer, J., Pianta, R. (2008). [Pre-kindergarten teachers’ use of transition practices and children’s adjustment to kindergarten](#). Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, University of Virginia. Early Childhood Research Quarterly 23.

62 Briody, J., & McGarry, K. (2009). [Using Social Stories to Ease Children’s Transitions](#). Beyond the Journal, Young Children on the Web.

63 [We Are Going to Kindergarten! Books about Transitioning to Kindergarten](#). (2014). Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning.



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