ERSEA
Policies and Procedures-LCHS/EHS

ERSEA-1.....ERSEA Definitions
ERSEA-2.....Eligibility-Age/Income Verification
ERSEA-3.....Eligibility-Over income
ERSEA-4.....Eligibility-Homeless/McKinney Vento Act
ERSEA-5.....Eligibility-Recruitment
ERSEA-6.....Selection-Priority Selection Criteria
ERSEA-7.....Selection: Application Process
ERSEA-8.....Selection-Acceptance Notifications
ERSEA-9.....Selection-Returning Children
ERSEA-10.....Enrollment
ERSEA-12.....Enrollment-Enrollment Fees
ERSEA-13.....Enrollment-EHS Multiple Birth Enrollment
ERSEA-14.....Enrollment-EHS Home-Based/First Home Visit
ERSEA-15.....Attendance
ERSEA-16.....Attendance-Attendance Analysis
ERSEA-17.....Attendance-Absentee Follow-Up
ERSEA-18.....Attendance-Tardy Policy
ERSEA-19.....Late Pick-Up/Drop-Off Policy
Lauderdale County Head Start
Early Head Start
Standard Operating Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations:</th>
<th>1305.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: ERSEA-1</td>
<td>ERSEA Definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Forms:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision Date:</td>
<td>10/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Council Approval Date:</td>
<td>1/29/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose: 1305.2**

In accordance with 45 CFR 1305.2, Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start staff recognizes that the following terms are defined by the Office of Head Start as they relate to ERSEA (Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance) policies and procedures for placement of children for program services.

**Procedures:**

1. The following terms are defined in Head Start Performance Standards as they relate to ERSEA:

   (a) **Children with disabilities** means children with mental retardation, hearing impairments including deafness, speech or language impairment, visual impairments including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments or specific learning disabilities who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services. The term "children with disabilities" for children aged 3 to 5, inclusive, may, at a State's discretion, include children experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State, and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas; physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services. (Children with disabilities **MUST** have an IEP or IFSP to be counted in the number of disability children served by the program).

   (b) **Enrollment** means the official acceptance of a family by a Head Start program and the completion of all procedures necessary for a child and family to begin receiving services.

   (c) **Enrollment opportunities** mean vacancies that exist at the beginning of the enrollment year, or during the program year because of children who leave the program that must be filled for a program to achieve and maintain its funded enrollment (filled within 30 days).

   (d) **Enrollment year** means the period of time, not to exceed twelve months, during which a Head Start program provides center or home-based services to a group of children and their families.

   (e) **Family** means all persons living in the same household who are:
1. Supported by the income of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child enrolling in or participating in the program.
2. Related to the parent(s) or guardian(s) by blood, marriage, or adoption.

(f) **Funded enrollment** means the number of children which the Head Start grantee is to serve, as indicated on the grant award. (The LCHS Head Start funded enrollment is 201 children. LCEHS is funded to serve 80 infants, toddlers and pregnant women.

(g) **Head Start eligible** means a child that meets the requirements for age and family income as established in program and federal guidelines that meet the requirements of section 645(a)(2) of the Head Start Act. Up to 10% of the children enrolled may be from families that exceed the low-income guidelines.

(h) **Head Start program** means a Head Start grantee or its delegate agency(ies).

(i) **Income** means gross cash income and includes earned income, military income (including pay and allowances), veteran's benefits, Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, and public assistance benefits. Additional examples of gross incomes are listed in the definition of "income" which appears in U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60-185.

(j) **Income guidelines** means the official poverty line specified in section 652 of the Head Start Act.

(k) **Low income family** means a family whose total annual income before taxes is equal to, or less than, the income guidelines. For the purpose of eligibility, a child from a family that is receiving public assistance or a child in foster care is eligible even when the family income exceeds the income guidelines.

(l) **Migrant family** means, for purposes of Head Start eligibility, a family with children under the age of compulsory school attendance, who changes their residence by moving from one geographic location to another, either intrastate or interstate, within the preceding two years for the purpose of engaging in agricultural work that involves the production and harvesting of tree and field crops and whose family income comes primarily from this activity.

(m) **Recruitment area** means that geographic locality within which a Head Start program seeks to enroll Head Start children and families. The recruitment area can be the same as the service area or it can be a smaller area within the service area.

(n) **Responsible HHS official** means the official of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services having authority to make Head Start grant awards, or his/her designee.

(o) **Selection** means the systematic process used to review all applications for head start services and to identify those children and families that are to be enrolled in the program.

(p) **Service area** means the geographic area identified in an approved grant application within which a grantee may provide Head start services. (The Lauderdale County Head Start Service Area includes the following area: Lauderdale County.

(q) **Vacancy** means an unfilled enrollment opportunity for a child and family in the Head Start program. (An enrollment opportunity that has gone 31+ days unfilled.)
Purpose: 1305.3

Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start accepts children according to Federal age/income eligibility criteria.

Procedures:

1. The Child Plus application process will be used to document family information. Enrollment of child/family from wait lists follows Federal and Agency enrollment requirements.
2. Priority is given to three year and four year old children from the neediest families in the Head Start (HS) portion of the program. Priority is given to the neediest families in the Early Head Start (EHS) portion of the program.
3. Enrollment policies are reviewed and updated annually to refocus enrollment according to community needs and federal requirements.
4. The Community Assessment is used to determine the appropriate enrollment of children to best reflect the demographics of the community.
5. The agency monitors all of the above activities.
6. In the HS portion of the program, each child enrolled must be at least three by the local school system date for kindergarten eligibility-September 2).
7. Up to ten percent of the children may be from over-income families who meet the selection criteria and who could benefit from Head Start services. An additional 35 percent of families can be within 101-130 percent.
8. As an application is received according to the following procedures
   1. The Family Service Assistant processes the initial application and processes the initial application file. A signed statement regarding documents reviewed by staff will be in each child's application file.
   2. Verify attachments and keep with the application:
      1. Verify the size of the family.
2. Families who receive TANF benefits, Supplemental Security Income, are enrolling a foster child, or who are currently homeless, will be categorically eligible.

3. Income verification for the last twelve (12) months or prior calendar year. Income will be established using current poverty guidelines, individual income tax form 1040, public assistance information, W-2 forms, pay stubs, written statement from employers, or documentation showing current status of recipients of public assistance. If the family asserts that there is no income in the home, a Verification of Support/ “0” Income Affidavit will be completed. Notarization of the Affidavit will be required.

4. Birth date will be verified by birth certificate, medical card, immunization record or hospital verification.

5. Immunization status is verified by the Alabama Certificate of Immunization.

6. Information from LEA provider or EI services will be used to verify disability information.

9. Application information will be entered into the Child Plus database by the Family Services Manager. In addition, a file folder for each child’s application will be set up.

10. A waiting list report will be generated from the Child Plus database, listing children's names and the priority points assigned to each child.

11. When an enrollment slot becomes available, the Family Services Manager will review the Child Plus waiting list to determine which child is next on the waiting list by priority points. The Family Service Manager will then transfer the child's application file into the appropriate Family Services Assistant caseload. The Family Services Assistant will contact the family and complete the remaining paperwork to verify if there is any medical or dietary needs the child has before entering the program.

12. Once the child begins an is physically present in the classroom, the Family Services Assistant will complete a Change of Status Form to reflect the child's first day of enrollment. A copy of the form will be given to the Family Services Manager for tracking and for changing the child’s status in the Child Plus database. A second copy of the form will be given to the Education Manager.

13. Application processing staff will receive annual training to ensure that those employees are fully aware of the consequences established by the grantee for employees who knowingly sign a verification form that contains false information.

Eligibility Policy Clarifications:

Age-Eligibility-Enrolling Early Three-Year-Old Children

Exceptions will be made for children with a diagnosed disability, who turn three years of age after the program begins and/or of the school cut-off date of September 2nd. In the event all age and income-eligible children are exhausted and the 10% over-income criteria is met, the program will accept early threes based on the Office of Head Start Policy Clarification for accepting early threes.

In the event all age and income-eligible children are exhausted and the 10% over-income criteria is met, Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start may choose to enroll children who turn three years old after September 2nd. This option will be used to prevent the program from becoming under-enrolled.
The Head Start Program commits to providing services to these children for longer than 2 years (i.e. the remainder of the current program year and the next two years) as the child will not be kindergarten eligible until he/she has reached their fifth birthday on or before September 2nd.

**Kindergarten Eligible Children and Head Start**

An additional year in the Head Start program may be an appropriate placement for a kindergarten eligible child with a disability, if this decision is supported by the parent and the IEP team. However, this will be an infrequent event, designed to meet the individual needs of a child and consistent with the recommendations of the IEP team, including the parent/guardian. The LCHS Disability Manager will evaluate the situation to assure that it represents a sincere effort to individualize for a specific child and does not encourage routinely delaying kindergarten enrollment for Head Start children with disabilities. A clear rationale will be offered for the placement in terms of benefits to the child's development. The Disabilities Manager and LEA staff will present to the parents a clear choice of viable options, i.e., a description of how the kindergarten placement would be structured in comparison to an additional Head Start year. The LCHS program will inform parents of the following:

1. Their right to revisit their decision for Head Start placement during the next school year.
2. Their right to reopen the IEP at any time, and their opportunity for reconsideration at regular intervals.

The LCHS/EHS program will continuously involve the LEA in creating a carefully individualized placement for the child. LCHS/EHS will give careful attention to each individual situation that involves a kindergarten eligible child with disabilities with the understanding that giving one child the opportunity to remain in Head Start an extra year removes the opportunity for another child in the community to receive service.
Purpose: 645(a)(1)(8)(iii)(II)

Over income children will be placed on the waiting list following any income-eligible children, and considered only if no income-eligible children are already on the waiting list. Over income families that fall within 101% - 130% of the poverty guideline will be prioritized ahead of families who fall within 131%-250% of the poverty guideline.

Procedures:

1. Before enrolling children according to the above stated guidelines, LCHS/EHS will demonstrate that they have met the needs of the low-income population and annually report to the Office of Head Start.

2. LCHS/EHS will demonstrate that the needs of the low-income population have been met by on-going reporting of recruitment efforts. Family Services Assistants will complete recruitment reports on an ongoing basis. Reports will be submitted to the Family Services Manager.

3. The LCHS/EHS program bases its recruitment efforts on the findings of the Community Assessment, and on the Census Poverty Statistics and Kids Count Data.

4. The Family Services Manager in consultation with the Program Director and the management team will decide if the needs of the low-income population have been met before serving up to 35% of the program's enrollment with children whose family incomes are between 100-130% above the poverty level.

5. The use of 35% of the slots for over income children whose family incomes are in the 100-130% above the poverty level range will be a last resort of the program to avoid being under enrolled. The LCHS/EHS program will make every effort to serve as many low-income families as possible.
6. In addition, children whose family income is above 130% of poverty may be accepted as a part of the 10% over-income.

7. Families with priority issues such as homelessness and children with diagnosed disabilities, whose income falls above 100%, will be given top priority despite their income, with the low-income families with children with disabilities being given priority over the 100-130% of families with children with diagnosed disabilities.
Purpose: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program will provide homeless families with enrollment opportunities, even when a family does not have the documentation usually required for enrollment, such as proof of guardianship, a birth certificate, immunization, or other health records, and proof of residence.

Procedures:

1. A child applying to the program that is homeless, in accordance with the definition of homeless provided in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, will receive top enrollment priority. They will be enrolled immediately, at the first available vacancy, regardless of program enrollment requirements. A plan must be developed with each individual family to secure all enrollment requirements within specified timelines agreed upon by both program staff and the enrolling child's family.

2. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homelessness as:
   The term "homeless children and youth" -means individuals who lack a fixed regular, and adequate night time residence...; and includes:
   a. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason and have no income that contributes to the benefit of that family; are living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters;; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
   b. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
   c. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing
d. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (j).

2. Homeless verification can be handled in such a way that it does not violate privacy or jeopardize housing arrangements. It is up to the local liaison, enrollment staff, and/or other school personnel to be sensitive and discreet. In summary, the program's attempt to verify a student's eligibility for McKinney-Vento services must be governed by respect, sensitivity, and reasonable limits. When in doubt, the Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start program will always enroll the student and should seek support from local or state homeless resources.

3. The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start program;
   a. will not threaten or harass parents or students, violate their privacy, or jeopardize their housing
   b. will not contact landlords or housing agencies about a student or family. Such contacts may violate the Family Educational Rights and privacy Act (FERPA) and the McKinney Vento Act and may jeopardize already tenuous housing situations. In addition, these contacts generally do not provide useful information.
   c. will not conduct invasive surveillance of families, such as following them, observing them from outside their residences, or talking to neighbors about their living situation. The McKinney-Vento Act requires programs to eliminate barriers to enrollment and attendance; acts that may threaten or intimidate create barriers that can frighten parents and students away from the program. LCHS/EHS staff trained on issues of homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Act can conduct respectful home visits when necessary.
   d. will not pose barriers to enrollment
   e. will not require documents like eviction notices, utility bills, occupancy permits, or notarized letters from host families. The McKinney-Vento Act prohibits programs from requiring documents for enrollment.
   f. will not force caregivers to obtain legal custody or guardianship to enroll youth. The McKinney-Vento Act requires programs to have procedures to enroll unaccompanied youth immediately; legal custody or guardianship will not be prerequisites.
   g. will not force people into shelters or onto the streets as a prerequisite for McKinney-Vento services.

**Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Procedures for Identifying and Serving Homeless Families**

1. If a family is referred from Salvation Army, DHR, Homeless Liaison Coordinator for Florence City Schools, etc., they are categorically eligible immediately according to the priority points eligibility grid and any vacant enrollment slots will be filled with these children first. No further referrals to these community agencies will be necessary in order to prevent duplication of services. Mental Health referrals, etc. may still be utilized to serve these families.

2. Any other families applying for LCHS/EHS program services that have not been referred from a community agency that has already been identified as homeless will be processed according to the following procedures:
   a. At intake when the application for enrollment is being completed, and the family identifies themselves as homeless in the intake process, or completes a McKinney-
Vento form in a way that indicates the family could be homeless, the Family Services manager will be notified so that the family situation can be reviewed in consultation with the Family services manager.

b. Families that are doubled up with another family will be considered homeless UNLESS the family is working or receiving income to support the household, or for the mutual benefit of that family.

c. Young parents who continue to live at home and have not ever lived elsewhere as a rent-paying tenant are not considered homeless.

d. If the family is potentially identified as qualifying for homeless status, LCHS/EHS will then need to accept them as homeless. Before they are enrolled in the program the assigned Family Services Assistant must make a home visit to determine the family's living situation.

e. If the Family Services Assistant determines that the family is homeless, a referral must be completed and turned in to the Family Services Manager for signature. The Family Services Manager will forward the completed form to the Florence City Schools homeless Liaison Coordinator. A copy of the form will also be provided to the Family Services Assistant who is assigned to the family.

f. If the Family Services Assistant determines that the family situation no longer requires follow-up by the Homeless Liaison Coordinator, the Family Services Manager will be notified of that determination, and a second home visit may be arranged if deemed necessary to further determine a family's homeless status.

g. If a family is determined ineligible to receive homeless status, the child's eligibility points will be adjusted accordingly and they will be reassigned to the waitlist if their remaining priority points do not allow them immediate placement in the program compared to other waitlisted children's points.

h. Once a family is accepted as Homeless, the family may be served by the Florence City Schools homeless Coordinator for one year despite any changes in the family's housing status. LCHS/EHS will carefully evaluate every child on an individual basis to ensure that the neediest of the needy children benefit from homeless services.
Lauderdale County Head Start
Early Head Start

Standard Operating Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations:</th>
<th>1305.5; 1308.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: ERSEA-5</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Forms:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision Date:</td>
<td>10/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Council Approval Date:</td>
<td>1/29/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose: 1305.5; 1308.5**

Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start actively recruits eligible children and families within the Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start service area. LCHS/EHS will develop a recruitment plan each year to systematically identify families whose children may be eligible for Head Start services, inform them of services, and encourage them to apply for enrollment into the program.

**Procedure**

1. The LCHS/EHS Family Services Manager will develop the annual recruitment plan, outlining specific tasks, responsibilities and duties.
2. The recruitment action plan is reviewed annually by the management team and the LCHS/EHS Policy Council.
3. Recruitment activities will encompass the entire service area of Lauderdale County and will include:
   a. press releases
   b. surveys
   c. door-to-door canvassing
   d. contracting with other agencies who may provide referrals
   e. distribution of flyers
   f. distribution of posters
   g. personal contacts
   h. setting up tables of information
   i. community involvement
4. Head Start parents are requested to inform relatives and friends with eligible children about program recruitment.
5. Applications will be made available at a variety of locations to ensure that interested persons have ready access and agencies can readily refer clients to the program.

6. Announcements are posted in community and local service buildings, businesses, churches, and local newspapers. Community and public service announcements (PSA) are arranged with radio and television stations.

7. Recruitment information will be available in Spanish. Translators will translate materials as needed and provide assistance to families during the recruitment process.

8. The recruitment effort includes recruiting children who have severe disabilities, including children who have been previously identified as having disabilities. Ten percent of enrollment opportunities will be made available to children with disabilities.

9. The recruitment effort includes recruiting expectant mothers for Early Head Start.

10. Head Start/Early Head Start staff will participate in community events to promote and provide information about the program.

11. Recruitment for Lauderdale County Head Start and Early Head Start children and families will take place as needed during the program year to maintain funded enrollment. The initial recruitment and planning process for the upcoming program year is January-April.

12. All staff is responsible for recruiting eligible children and families in continued efforts to promote the program. Staff will recruit in target areas based on the Community Assessment and local community agency information.

13. All recruitment documentation will be kept on file in the Family Services Office. A detailed list of where recruitment was done, information left at sites, and the date and person completing the recruitment effort will be maintained by the Family Services Manager.

14. Families living outside of Lauderdale County are not eligible for program services.
Purpose: 1305.4, 1305.6, 1305.7.

Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start will establish and annually review the program selection criteria. The selection criteria considers all applicants based on the needs of the family. The needs are based on the Community Assessment. These criteria will consider the age of the child, and the extent to which the family meets the criteria established. The children with the higher needs will be accepted for enrollment. Ten percent of enrollment opportunities each year will be made available to children with disabilities.

Procedures:

1. The program staff member completing the Child Plus Application for each family, must indicate the applicant’s program of choice on the application documents. Families can only receive points for criteria which is documented and verified.

2. Income Status-
Families applying for Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start will receive points based on the family percentage below or above the National Poverty Guidelines.

3. Age Status-
The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start program prioritizes points by giving the most points to four-year-old children and deceasing points for three-year-old children. Lauderdale County Early Head Start prioritizes points by giving the most points to teen pregnant mothers.

Other factors-
According to the Community Assessment, other factors that are considered for applying applicants are as follows: Child’s insurance type, lack of insurance, WIC or Food Stamp participation, Parent/guardian education or employment status, actively deployed military service men or women, Public Assistance, Homeless status, or other high-risk situations. Multiple siblings applying for services or currently receiving services from LCHS/EHS.
**Disability Status**

Children with a diagnosed disability and an IEP or IFSP will receive priority over a child who has a suspected disability. Once a child is accepted, if a child has a diagnosed disability or the child's parent has suspected that their child has a disability the family will be referred to the Disabilities Manager. The Disabilities Manager will document the child's disability status in Child Plus, and open a disability file for the child. All documentation in the child's file will be kept in a locked cabinet per program policy.
Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations: 1305.5; 1305.6; 1305.7(c)

Title: ERSEA-7
Selection-Application Process

Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance

Purpose: 1305.5; 1305.6; 1305.7(c)

The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start program will ensure that the application process is completed according to established policies and procedures.

Procedures:

1. During registration, Head Start staff members will complete application forms by interviewing the parents. Documentation of income, TANF, SSI, foster child status, child's date of birth, child's disability, and child's immunization records will be filed with the application.

2. An application will be processed when documentations are complete, and filed with the application.

3. Application information will be entered in the Child Plus system by the Family Services Manager.

4. Priority lists of eligible children with completed applications will be ranked by need. Child Plus system will be used to generate waiting list. Children in greatest need will be based on points with the larger number of points indicating greater need.

5. At least 10% of the enrollment slots will be made available for children with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

6. Enrollment slots will be filled up to 100% according to the ranking based on need on the priority list.

7. Parents will be notified of enrollment opportunities.
8. As vacancies occur during the year, enrollment slots will be filled from the priority list within 30 days of the withdrawal date.

9. The Family Service staff will fill a vacancy immediately using the priority waiting list.

10. Family Services staff will review the application of the child or pregnant woman next on the waiting list. After the supporting documentation is checked, the selected family is contacted. The date the EHS family begins home base services, or leaves a child in the center is the enrollment date to be entered on the application and in Child Plus.

11. Applications are accepted year around, but a concentrated effort takes place between February and June.
Lauderdale County Head Start
Early Head Start
Standard Operating Procedures

Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations: 1305.6, 1308.5

Title: ERSEA-8
Selection-Acceptance Notifications
Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance
Relevant Forms:
Revision Date: 1/18/13
Policy Council Approval Date: 1/29/13

Purpose: 1305.6, 1308.5
Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start will ensure that the children and families with the greatest need are accepted for enrollment.

Procedure:
1. The Family Services Manager is responsible for coordinating and forwarding acceptance letters to selected families and children.

2. Families will be contacted by letter when a child is accepted for program services for a new program year. Letters will be mailed in the spring/summer months prior to the new program year when a child has been selected to participate.

3. After the child has been accepted, the Family Service Assistant will contact children's parent/guardian with enrollment information and further registration appointments to complete required paperwork. A translator will be asked to help assist with non-English speaking families completing the registration/acceptance process.

4. As vacancies occur during the program year, the children on the waitlist ranked according to the selection criteria points (priority grid) will be selected to ensure that the most eligible child enters the program. The family may be contacted by phone by the assigned Family Services Assistant. If there is no response by phone, the family may be contacted by mail.

5. All accepted children must sit in the classroom within a ten day timeframe after the family has been contacted. If additional time is needed, staff must contact the Program Director for approval.
6. All vacant enrollment slots must be filled within 30 day timeframe.

7. New applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the program year.
Purpose: 1305.7

If a child has been found income eligible and has participated in Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start, he or she remains income eligible through the enrollment year and the immediate succeeding program year.

Procedures:

1. Children enrolled in Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start through the end of the program year are eligible to return the succeeding program year. Staff must ask all parents of enrolled children if their child will be returning for the upcoming school year. This information will be documented on the Request for Re-enrollment Form. If a parent does not complete the intent to re-enroll form, the child will not be automatically eligible to return, but must re-apply for program services and be placed on the waitlist.

2. A child who has been enrolled in the Early Head start program must follow Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head start transition procedures. (See ERSEA- ).

3. Children (age eligible) that enrolled and later withdrew/terminated from the program must complete an Application Update. Staff must re-verify the families' income and record eligibility on the Income eligibility form in the child's file. Application and data entry procedures will be followed after this point.

4. Families of children (age eligible) that remained on the wait list who are interested in participation in the next program year will need to complete a new/updated application to be considered for selection.

5. The following information should be completed for the new program year if the child is a returning student: Child Plus information, and eligibility documentation, disability information (IEP or IFSP), all new health forms, medicine form, release forms and Family Services information.
Purpose: 1305.4, 1305.5, 1305.7

The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program must meet and maintain funded enrollment during the program year. Children are enrolled into LCHS/EHS from waiting lists which rank children according to points assigned from the established selection criteria.

Procedures:

1. Children enrolled in Lauderdale County Head Start will be eligible to remain in the program without re-establishing income eligibility or points if the child is not age-eligible for kindergarten.

   1. For the HS portion of the program, beginning in May of the current program year, Family Services Assistants will identify re-enrollees and their possible requests for placement in a preferred classroom sites for the following program year.
   2. In EHS, the transition process to the appropriate placement will begin six months prior to child's third birthday (see EHS Transition policy). Income eligibility will be determined for all EHS children transitioning into Head Start.
   3. After the request for re-enrollment has been processed, children may be accepted to the appropriate classroom from the wait list according to the following time lines.
      1. June to August-
         1. Contact families.
         2. Confirm classroom preference and interest in program.
         3. Discuss any possible health concerns.
         4. Discuss any possible special needs for the child.
         5. Schedule registration appointment.
         6. Complete registration process.
2. Beginning August 20, enroll to 100 percent of eligible families. **NEW ENROLLEES: as above** Contact families. Confirm classroom preference and interest in program. Schedule registration appointment. Complete registration process.
   1. **RETURNING CHILDREN:** Contact re-enrollees to verify continued enrollment. Update any pertinent information.

3. After program start-up, vacant enrollment slots will be filled as soon as possible, not to exceed 30 days.

4. The Family Services Manager will determine the child who is next on the waiting list, and the appropriate Family Service Assistant will contact the family by phone to see if they would like to accept the vacant slot.

1. In cases where several attempts to reach a family have not been successful, a letter requesting contact within seven business days will be sent. If there is no contact with family following the deadline, enrollment staff will contact the next family on the wait list.

5. **Transfers:**
   1. Families who withdraw from the program and reapply will not be considered transfers.
   2. Children transitioning from EHS to HS are not considered transfers.

6. **Withdrawn status:**
   1. If there are attendance concerns, the Family Service Assistants and classroom staff will attempt to solve it. If the attendance problem is not resolved the Program director will meet with the family to work toward a solution. If placement is terminated, a letter from the Program Director will be sent to the family. (See Attendance [4] policy)
   2. Once a child has withdrawn from the program, whether its by parental request or another reason, the Family Service Assistant will complete a change of status form. Copies of this form will be submitted to the Family Services Manager, The Education Manager and the CNP Manager. The child’s file will be placed in the program files. Documentation will be entered into Child Plus.
   3. When families withdraw from the program for two or more months and return requesting to be enrolled again they must go through the eligibility process again.

7. The first day a child sits in his/her classroom is considered to be the child's enrollment date.

8. Once the program year begins, the child must be seated in the classroom within 10 school days. If the child does not attend school within the 10 day timeframe, and no contact can be made with the family, the child is considered abandoned and will be replaced by another child on the waitlist.
Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations: 1305.9

Title: ERSEA-11 Enrollment-Fees

Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance

Relevant Forms:

Revision Date: 10/13/12

Policy Council Approval Date: 1/29/13

Purpose: 1305.9

In accordance with 45 CFR 1305.9, the Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program does not prescribe any fee schedule or otherwise provide for the charging of any fees for participation in program services.

Procedures:

1. Under no circumstances will the Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program require any fees as a basis for enrollment or participation.

2. The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program provides rest mats and cots for all children and formula as well as diapers for children who need them.

3. All program services and classroom supplies for children are provided to children at no cost to families.
Purpose: 1305.7

Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start will ensure a continuation of Early Head Start services by enrolling a new infant when it is born.

Procedures:

1. Pregnant mothers will receive services through the birth of the infant under the mother's name and the primary client.

2. After the baby is born, the application will roll over into the child's name and mother's name will be removed as the primary client.

3. An updated application will be made with infant's information, but proof of income will not be needed.

4. The child's application will need a birth certificate, and immunization record, and physical.

5. If a slot is available, Early Head Start will continue serving the family. Information and activities for the new child will be included.
Purpose: 1304.41 (c)(2)

The Lauderdale County Early Head Start program will work with families to ensure the most appropriate placement and services for infants and toddlers.

Procedures:

1. If enrolled pregnant mother delivers multiple babies, LCEHS will attempt to enroll all infants.

2. If multiple openings do not occur, the Early Head Start manager (classroom staff or EHS Home Visitor) will work with the family for alternative childcare.

3. The LCEHS program will work with the family on enrolling multiple infants two additional weeks after the six weeks period assigned to single-birth mothers. If openings have not occurred, staff will work with family for alternative childcare.

4. The mother's enrollment will be terminated after the two additional weeks.

5. All alternative childcare documentation assisting family must be recorded on a Family Services form.
Purpose: 1305.2 (b)

To ensure that Home-Base Services begin and all enrollment procedures are complete.

Procedures:

1. The Home Visitor will contact the family within two (2) days of receiving the processed application for the family.

2. The Home Visitor will schedule an appointment with the family within five (5) days of the initial contact with the family.

3. The Home Visitor will plan a regular ninety (90) minute home visit at time of enrollment.

4. The Home Visitor will review the Family Partnership with the family at the first home visit to discuss the purpose of the Partnership and allow the family time to think about setting goals that will empower the family. The goals will be discussed and set no later than the third (3rd) home visit.

5. After completion of the review of the Partnership goals, the rest of the home visit will consist of the introduction of home visitor curriculum with children and family.

6. The Home Visitor will complete the Home Visitor Form and note the day of the initial ninety (90) day visit as the official enrollment date for the family and child.
Lauderdale County Head Start
Early Head Start
Standard Operating Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations:</th>
<th>1305.8(a)-(c) and 1306.32(b)(5).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: ERSEA-15 Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Forms:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision Date:</td>
<td>10/13/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Council Approval Date:</td>
<td>1/29/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose: 1305.8(a)-(c) and 1306.32(b)(5)**

All families are encouraged to maintain regular attendance in Head Start and Early Head Start activities. Head Start and Early Head Start staff will support families in identifying barriers to regular attendance and will initiate supports as appropriate. If families are not able or willing to participate, another child will be given the opportunity to attend the program.

**Procedures:**

1. The Education Manager is responsible for investigating and documenting the causes of absenteeism if the average daily attendance in a center-based classroom falls below 85%.

2. The classroom staff is responsible for ensuring that the Daily Sign In/Out forms are completed accurately and completely.

3. The classroom staff and EHS Home Visitors are responsible for entering information from the Daily Sign In/Out forms in the Child Plus attendance system.

4. The classroom staff, Family Services Assistants, and EHS Home Visitors are responsible for follow up and family support on attendance issues and for documenting these activities.

4. Parents are encouraged to call or send a note to account for each day that their child cannot attend class and to explain the reasons for the absence. Attendance will be recorded daily in the classroom and entered into Child Plus each day.
Lauderdale County Head Start
Early Head Start
Standard Operating Procedures

Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations: 1305.8(a)-(c) and 1306.32(b)(5).

Title: ERSEA-16 Attendance-Analysis of the Cause of Absenteeism

Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance

Relevant Forms: Attendance Analysis Form

Revision Date: 10/13/12

Policy Council Approval Date: 1/29/13

Purpose: 1305.8(a)-(c) and 1306.32(b)(5).

If the monthly average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis must include a study of the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days.

Procedures:

1. The Education Manager will monitor the Average Daily Attendance for each classroom. The EHS Manager will monitor Early Head Start Home Base Attendance.

2. The Education Manager will run the Average Daily Attendance Report using Child Plus. A copy of the report will be provided to classroom staff, and the Program Director.

3. If the Average Daily Attendance falls below 85%, the Education Manager will attach a copy of the Attendance Analysis form to the report provided to classroom staff. The staff will complete the Attendance Analysis Form, documenting patterns of absences for each child, and strategies to increase the attendance for the children and families being served. The classroom staff will submit the completed form to the Education Manager for tracking. The Education Manager will initial and date the form and monitor overall and individual patterns of absence.

4. If there are patterns evident that may be cause for the Family Service Assistant to follow-up with the family, the Education Manager or classroom staff will notify the Family Services Assistant assigned to that family.

5. The Education Manager will submit a copy of the Daily Average Attendance Report and a summary of the report findings to the Policy Council each month for their review.
Lauderdale County Head Start
Early Head Start
Standard Operating Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations:</th>
<th>1305.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: ERSEA-17</td>
<td>Attendance-Absentee Follow-Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Forms:</td>
<td>Parent Contact Form; Family Needs Referral Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision Date:</td>
<td>1/28/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Council Approval Date:</td>
<td>1/29/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose; 1305.8

The Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program keeps track of absenteeism in order to ensure maximum benefits to children.

**Center Attendance Policy**- In order for parents and children to gain the greatest benefit from program participation, it is necessary for children to attend regularly and for school to be a part of a child's normal routine. Ten days of unexcused absences per semester may result in the child being dropped from the program.

**Home Base Attendance Policy**- In order for parents and children to benefit from the Early Head Start Home Base Program, it is necessary that parents and children are available for home visits. Two weeks of unexcused absences from home visits may result in the child being dropped from the program.

**Procedures:**

1. When a child in center-base care is absent three (3) consecutive days without a report from the parent the following steps are taken:
   a. The classroom teacher will contact the child's family by phone. The classroom teacher will document the parent contact on the Parent Contact Form. If the contact was unsuccessful, the teacher will document the attempt on the contact form. A copy of the form will be kept in the child's file, and a copy of the form will be provided to the Family Service Assistant assigned to the child's family.
   b. If the classroom teacher makes contact with the family and the family indicates a need such as lack of transportation, need for housing or some other form of family crisis, the classroom
teacher will complete a Family Service Referral Form and submit it to the Family Services Assistant assigned to the child's family. The Family Services Assistant will follow-up with assistance to the family according to the need so that the child can return to school.

c. If the classroom teacher is unable to reach the family, the teacher will note the attempted contacts on the Parent Contact Form and forward the form to the Family Services Assistant assigned to the family. The FSA will attempt to contact the family by phone, or conduct a home visit to determine the cause for the child's absenteeism.

d. If the FSA is unable to locate the family and there are 10 days of unexcused absences, the child may be withdrawn from the program. The FSA will report all findings to the Family Services Manager. The Family Services Manager will send a certified letter to the child's family informing them of the program's attendance policy and notifying the family of the possible withdrawal. If absenteeism continues after receipt of the certified letter, a meeting with the Program Director will be required.

e. If there is no response from the family, the child's slot is considered an enrollment vacancy.

f. Each student with chronic absences, less than 85% attendance, will receive communication by phone or mail notifying the family of the benefits of regular attendance and encourage the family to bring the child every day. The staff will document all communication efforts in the child's comprehensive file.

g. If the child's attendance does not improve, and there is not illness or documented reason for absence, the Program Director may (with input from the management staff) place the child back on the waitlist and fill the child's classroom slot with the next eligible child.

Home-Base Program Options

1. Children in the home-base program option should complete 32 of 48 possible visits.

2. Medical or social service visits should not replace home visits.

3. If a family is absent two consecutive visits, the Home Visitor will investigate by going to the home, contacting family members and making phone calls, and reporting the missed home visits to the EHS Manager. The EHS Manager will contact the family by phone or by mail to inform the family of the attendance policies before withdrawing the child from the program.
Purpose: 1305.8

To ensure that children receive the maximum benefit of learning opportunities provided by the Head Start and Early Head Start center-based program option.

Procedures:

**ABSENCE POLICY**

**Excused Absences:**
- Illness (enrolled child/parent/guardian)
- Quarantine (enrolled child or household member)
- Dental, Medical, Health or Therapy Appointment (enrolled child/parent/guardian)
- Family Emergency (death of any family member, funeral of family member, car accident of parent/guardian, court appearance of parent/guardian)
- Court-ordered visitation with absent parent(s) (Court order required)
- Dangerous weather conditions (i.e. power lines down, flash floods, fires, high winds) that prevent family from getting to center
- Transportation emergency (Limit to six times per year with Director’s signature)

**Best Interest/Excused (Maximum of 10 days per Calendar year):**
- Vacation
- Out of Town
- With Parent or Relative
- School Program/Sibling Field Trip
- Religious Activities
• Illness of Sibling

Unexcused:
• After ten absences per semester that a parent does not identify a reason with no supporting documentation or Director signature on excuse.

Non-Contracted Days:
• Center closed
• Scheduled School Breaks/Vacation
• Child Custody Agreements where child is with non-custodial parent as court ordered

Cause for Termination:
• Failure to abide by Program Policies and Rules
• Absence of over 10 per semester with no excuse and no contact from parent with staff
Purpose:
One of the objectives of the Lauderdale County Head Start/Early Head Start Program is to provide an environment that is safe and conducive to the development of each child’s social and emotional growth. There are specific rules and procedures regarding the late drop off/pick up of children in the program.

Procedures:

The Late Drop-Off and Pick-up Policies are:

1. A parent (or other designated adult over 18 years of age who is on the approved list) is expected to drop off and pick up their children promptly at the beginning and end of class. Individuals who have not already been placed on the approved Emergency Contact List with permission to pick up by the parent/guardian WILL NOT be allowed to pick up a child. Phone calls/conversations requesting that unapproved individuals be allowed to pick children up are not acceptable and will not result in a child being allowed to leave with an unapproved individual.

2. DROP OFF is 7:50 am-8:30 am. No children are allowed to enter the classroom after 9:30 am without a valid medical excuse or permission from the Director/Assistant Director due to an emergency situation. Parents who arrive late MUST eat breakfast with their child in the cafeteria & have check in sheet signed by cafeteria manager prior to the child entering the classroom (if the child’s class has already had breakfast).

3. PICK UP TIME is 1:50 pm to 2:00 pm. OSR Classrooms pick up time is 2:30 pm. When a child is picked up late without prior notice or due to negligence, a late pick up notice will be issued and a parent conference will be scheduled with the Family Service Worker & Family Service Manager &/or Early Head Start Manager. This conference will include a review of the Late Pick-up Policy.
and an update of the family’s emergency form.

4. After 3 Late Pick-up notices have been given a parent conference will be scheduled with the Director and a plan of action will be developed. This plan will include the child being dropped from the program after the 5th Late Pick-up notice with the parent being counseled and given the opportunity to reapply by being placed on the wait list.

5. In the event a child is not picked up by 30 minutes after the end of the day, all attempts of contact have been made to reach the parent/guardian or other emergency information contacts then an “Emergency Situation” status will be determined and Director or Assistant Director will take steps to ensure the safety of the child. These steps may include contact with Child Protective Services and/or the local police. The incident will be documented and the Director will meet with the parent/guardian.

6. Every effort will be made by site and grantee staff to assure the fair and expedient implementation of this policy.