

Matthew G. Bevin
Governor



Hal Heiner
Secretary
Education and
Workforce Development Cabinet

Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

300 Sower Boulevard • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: (502) 564-3141 • www.education.ky.gov

May 1, 2017

Dear Head Start Directors and Preschool Coordinators:

As we prepare for a successful school year in 2017-2018, we want to send a reminder about the importance of collaboration between the Head Start Program and the state-funded Preschool Program. This close relationship assures all children who are eligible for the state-funded Preschool Program receive services.

Both Head Start and state-funded Preschool are required to actively recruit children and families for enrollment. Head Start is required to be fully enrolled (meaning no vacancies) by the start of their program year. The Head Start Full Utilization Agreement provides a process to assist with full enrollment for the local Head Start program, ensuring federal dollars are used first. Once Head Start is fully enrolled, they can maintain a waiting list and enroll children as space becomes available. *The state-funded Preschool Program cannot have a waiting list and any child found to be eligible for the state-funded Preschool Program either by income or disability must be offered services.*

This difference between the two programs is important to understand so children eligible for the state-funded preschool program are not on a waiting list. School districts and Head Start need to have continuous conversations to assure there are no preschool eligible three- and four-year-old children with disabilities or four-year-old children who are income eligible for state-funded preschool on the waiting list. *A child on a Head Start wait list who is also eligible for state-funded preschool can be enrolled in the state-funded preschool program. The only exception is if a parent of a child eligible for the state-funded Preschool Program chooses to be on a Head Start waiting list instead of enrolling in the local district program. This parent decision should be documented by programs at the local level.*

Additionally, if there are children who may be suspected of having a disability on a Head Start waiting list, they must be referred for screening to the school district and if appropriate, receive an evaluation for eligibility for special education services. Communication is very important and listed below are recommended practices to assist with the referral process:

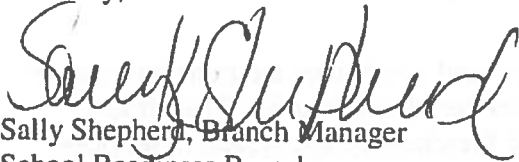
- State-funded Preschool and Head Start might incorporate Child Find information including school district contact information in the letters sent by Head Start to parents informing them that their children are on a waiting list.

Waiting List
May 1, 2017
Page 2

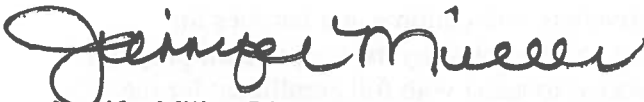
- State-funded Preschool and Head Start might distribute Child Find information at Head Start registration sites so parents who may not express concerns about their child's development during the course of Head Start registration will be able to contact the public schools to make a referral.
- Head Start programs may choose to add a question on their applications asking if parents have concerns about their child's development. Naturally, follow up would be in order if the parent expresses concerns.

We appreciate your attention to this issue so all children eligible for preschool services are enrolled.

Sincerely,



Sally Shepherd, Branch Manager
School Readiness Branch



Jennifer Miller, Director
Head Start State Collaboration Office