

Montrose County School District
RE-IJ Early Childhood Centers
Policies & Procedures Manual



Table of Contents

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA)	6
Eligibility.....	6
Age Eligibility.....	6
Income Eligibility.....	6
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligibility	7
Determination.....	8
Recruitment	8
Selection.....	9
Enrollment.....	9
Wait List.....	9
Under-Enrollment Plan	10
Admissions.....	10
Additional Admissions Requirements for Children with Disabilities	10
Child Placement	11
Re-Enrollment	11
Attendance	12
Fees	13
Withdrawing from Montrose County ECC	13
Voluntary Withdrawal of Children	13
Involuntary Withdrawal of Children	14
Suspension & Expulsion	15
Collaboration with Families.....	16
Parent Orientation	16
Supporting the Development of Parenting Skills	16
Parent Meetings.....	17
Family Assessment	17
Crisis Intervention/Emergency Assistance	18
Family Partnership Agreement.....	18
Accessing Community Resources and Services	19
Community Resource Directory	19
Advocating for Families	19
Involving Families in Curriculum Planning	20
Family Services Home Visits	20
Parental Rights	20

Complaints / Grievances.....	21
Health & Safety	22
Bathroom Set Up & Maintenance	22
Accidents & Injuries.....	22
Handling Bodily Fluids / Blood Borne Pathogen Control	22
Standard Safety Practices	22
Emergency Preparedness Plan	23
Family Involvement in Health, Nutrition & Mental Health Education	23
Child Health Requirements	24
Family Involvement in Health Assessment	24
Developmental / Behavioral Screening	25
Child Health History Form	25
Nutrition Assessment	26
Insurance Information.....	26
School Physical Exam Form	26
Blood Lead Screening	27
Hemoglobin / Hematocrit Screening	27
Mental Health Assessment	27
Growth Assessment / Height & Weight check.....	27
Vision Exam	28
Vision Screening	28
Hearing Screening	29
Speech & Language Screening	29
Immunizations.....	30
Dental Exam	31
Health Provider Information.....	31
Record Keeping & Follow Up.....	31
Individualized Health Plan	32
Meals & Nutrition	33
Family Assistance with Nutrition	33
Food Allergies, Dietary Restrictions & Meal Substitutions	33
Meal Service.....	33
Maintaining Food Temperature	34
Transportation of Food.....	34
Sanitation.....	34
Mental Health Consultant	35

Health Advisory Committee	35
Family Services Monthly Report	36
Community Partnerships.....	36
Community Advocacy	37
Disability Services.....	37
When the LEA Develops the IEP	37
When Montrose County ECC Develops the IEP	38
Interagency Agreement.....	40
Eligibility of Child with Emotional/Behavior Disorders	40
Eligibility of Child with Hearing Impairment, Including Deafness	41
Eligibility of Child with Health Impairment.....	41
Program Governance	41
Governing Body	42
Composition.....	42
Responsibilities.....	42
Provision of Information	44
Policy Council	44
Composition.....	44
Alternates.....	45
Limitations of Membership	45
Subcommittees	45
Responsibilities.....	46
Objectives.....	46
Meetings.....	47
Special / Emergency Meetings.....	47
Voting.....	47
Termination of Membership.....	48
Internal Dispute Resolution	48
Provision of Information	50
Parent Driven Action Committee (PDAC)	50
Structure	50
Responsibilities.....	50
Program Design & Management.....	51
Monitoring Objectives & Activities	51
Reporting Systems	52
Program Planning.....	54

Parent Participation.....	54
Community Assessment	54
Program Evaluation / Self-Assessment	55
Utilizing Community Assessment & Self-Assessment Data	56
Financial Requirements.....	57
Communications.....	57
With Families.....	57
With Governing Bodies and Policy Groups	58
Amongst Staff.....	58
Human Resources.....	59
Organizational Structure	59
Ethical Hiring.....	59
General Staff Qualifications.....	59
Director Qualifications	60
Director Qualifications Letter.....	61
Fiscal Officer Qualifications.....	62
Additional Staff Qualifications	62
Content Area Specialists Qualifications.....	62
Health Professional Qualifications	63
Teacher Qualifications	63
Teaching Assistant Qualifications	64
Head Start Education Coordinators	64
Coach Qualifications	64
Home Visitor Qualifications	64
Family Services Staff Qualifications	65
Training Certificate Requirements	65
Program Staffing Patterns	65
Emergency Staffing Procedure	65
References.....	66

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA)

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) tasks are some of the most important work performed by Head Start programs. ERSEA governs how programs determine eligibility, enroll children, and track attendance. Montrose County ECC strives to enroll 100% of our funded enrollment at all times. We do so by actively recruiting families, by maintaining an active Wait List and by monitoring attendance.

Montrose County ECC utilizes the following procedures:

Eligibility

Program eligibility is based on age of children, family income, special needs and information from the annual Community Assessment/update. Parents and/or legal guardians (families) and staff review & update our selection process and criteria annually to make sure enrollment opportunities continue to be based on community needs.

Montrose County ECC has a formal process for establishing selection criteria and for selecting children and families that considers all eligible applicants for Head Start services.

Age Eligibility

To be eligible for Head Start services, a child must be at least three years old by September 15th. Children with diagnosed disabilities may be enrolled the semester of their third birthday at any point of the calendar year.

We utilize a child's birth certificate to verify his or her age for enrollment purposes. If a parent cannot produce a birth certificate, other documentation will be accepted. Other forms of age documentation that will be accepted are:

- Baptismal Record
- Hospital Certificate

Families that are considered Homeless per the McKinney Vento Act will be allowed to continue the registration process despite not having key documents such as birth certificates. The family will be given sufficient time to acquire such documents and will have the services of a Family Advocate to help with the process.

Income Eligibility

Head Start enrollment must adhere to the following income guidelines:

- 90% of enrolled children must be from families whose income does not exceed 130% of the low-income guidelines.
- Of the 90% mentioned above, a minimum of 65% of enrolled children must be from families whose income does not exceed 100% of the low-income guidelines. The remaining 25% can be children from families whose income falls within the 101%-130% range of the low-income guidelines.
- A maximum of 10% of enrolled children may be from over-income families who meet the criteria and who could benefit from Head Start services. Over-income children are only enrolled in the absence of enough under income children to fill the program slots.

Upon receipt of an application, Montrose County ECC will implement the following procedure to determine if a child is income eligible:

- An income eligible child is:
 - Any child whose family has an annual income, before taxes, that is equal to, or less than, the poverty guidelines for its size, or
 - Any child whose family is eligible for public assistance, or
 - Any child who is homeless, or
 - Any child in foster care
- We utilize any of the following documents to verify family income eligibility:
 - Individual Income Tax Form 1040 W-2 forms
 - Pay stubs
 - Pay envelopes
 - Written statements from employers
 - Foster care reimbursement
 - Documentation showing current status as recipients of public assistance
- In the event that a family cannot produce such documents, Montrose County ECC will make reasonable efforts to determine eligibility including:
 - Conducting either an in-person or a telephone interview with the family
 - Collecting documents required for third party verification that includes the family's written consent to contact each third party, the third parties' names, titles, and affiliations, and information from third parties regarding the family's eligibility.
- Montrose County ECC staff will:
 - Conduct an in-person interview with each family
 - Verify all information
 - Make a determination

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligibility

At least 10% of the total number of enrollment opportunities during an enrollment year are made available to children with disabilities who are eligible for services under IDEA. Children eligible for services under IDEA will be prioritized for the available slots.

All Montrose County ECC staff who engage in recruitment and enrollment efforts will be advised on the provisions of 45 CFR Part 84, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Program and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance, and of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 U.S.C. 12101).

We access resources and a plan for placement options, such as dual placement, use of resource staff and training, so that a child with a disability for whom Montrose County ECC is an appropriate placement according to the child's IEP is not denied enrollment because of:

- Staff attitudes and/or comprehension
- Inaccessibility of facilities
- Lack of familiarity with the disabling condition
- Need for special equipment or personalized special services

No child shall be denied enrollment solely on the basis of a disability or its severity.

Children with disabilities may be considered for either the Head Start or School District Children with Disabilities Program dependent upon individual and family needs. All children with disabilities will be served in one of these two programs. Children will be placed in the Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program or the School District Children with Disabilities Program based on eligibility.

Only those children with disabilities whose family income has been submitted will be prioritized for placement in the Head Start program.

Determination

Upon completion of the determination process, Montrose County ECC will create an eligibility determination record for enrolled participants, including the following documents:

- Copies of all documents used to verify income
- Documentation of all efforts to determine eligibility
- A completed and signed "Eligibility Verification" sheet
- An "Eligibility Priority Criteria" sheet

These documents will be stored throughout the child's enrollment at Montrose County ECC, and for at least one year after the child stops receiving services or is no longer enrolled.

Recruitment

In order to reach those most in need of Head Start services, Montrose County ECC maintains ongoing outreach to the community and implements the following recruitment process that is designed to identify underserved populations and to actively inform all families with Head Start eligible children within our service area of the availability of services and encourage them to apply for admission to the program:

- We contact:
 - Social services and schools for referrals and addresses of eligible families
 - Health and disability services providers & early intervention programs for referrals of children with disabilities
 - Cabinet of Human Resources (TANF)
- Families are contacted by mail with announcements of recruitment information
- We solicit applications from as many families within the recruitment area as possible
 - All families with Head Start eligible children are encouraged to apply
 - We make special efforts to recruit and serve children with disabilities
- Parents are asked to call for appointments to pre-register children
- We ask currently enrolled families to inform relatives and friends with eligible children about our program
- We select and establish pre-registration sites, ensure there is adequate staff at each site to accept applications and assist parents as needed
- We send notices to newspapers, radio and television stations of recruitment schedule, locations, etc.
- We post public notices in places such as post offices, doctor and dentist offices, social agencies, grocery stores and health departments

- We notify eligible families of currently enrolled children that their children can enroll for another year in Montrose County ECC Head Start
- We make door to door contacts seeking children who may be eligible for Head Start
- We obtain a number of applications greater than the number of enrollment opportunities anticipated in order to select those with the greatest need for Head Start services.

Selection

The Montrose County ECC ERSEA Coordinator will complete an Eligibility Priority Criteria Checklist (Eligibility Checklist) for each child applying for admission, utilizing ChildPlus software as needed, to prioritize children for enrollment, ensuring that services are offered first to those children with the greatest need. The Eligibility Checklist is used to assign points based on eligibility requirements. Each child will receive a total score and children will be selected for the Head Start and Colorado Preschool Program using the point system. The child with the most points, and therefore the greatest needs, will be placed first. The child with the next highest number of points will be selected for the next opening, and so on. Based on the number of points received, children are identified as accepted or are put on our [Wait List](#).

The Eligibility Checklist is reviewed annually by the Leadership Team, Policy Council and the Colorado Preschool Program-Education District Advisory Council to assure that criteria specific to the needs of the program and community are addressed.

Enrollment

Once a child is accepted into Montrose County ECC Head Start, we implement the following procedure:

- The child is moved to the Accepted List in ChildPlus
- We send the family a letter of acceptance
- We determine which classroom each child will attend
- We send an email to the Teaching & Family Services Staff providing an alphabetical listing of children assigned to each classroom, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents
- The preliminary list is edited and printed as needed to complete enrollment of children
- Once all enrollment slots have been designated in ChildPlus, staff will then move the children from the Accepted List to officially enrolled
- The Master list, which is the list of children officially enrolled in each classroom, is distributed to teaching, family services and administrative staff
- A report is created, containing the names of active and inactive children

Wait List

At the beginning of each enrollment year, Montrose County ECC creates a Wait List, which is maintained throughout the year. This Wait List ranks children according to the selection criteria to ensure that eligible children who were not initially enrolled are offered slots, in order of need, as vacancies occur.

Families whose children are placed on the Wait List will be notified by letter stating that the child has been placed on the Wait List and that they will be notified if an enrollment opportunity becomes available.

Each enrollment slot is filled as soon as a vacancy occurs and within a maximum of 30 days, although we may choose not to fill vacancies when 60 days or fewer remain in the enrollment year.

Under-Enrollment Plan

In the event that we are under-enrolled, we will develop a plan and timetable for reducing or eliminating under-enrollment, taking into consideration:

- The quality and extent of our outreach, recruitment, and communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment
- Changing demographics, mobility of populations, and the identification of new underserved low-income populations
- Facilities-related issues that may impact enrollment
- The ability to provide full-working-day programs
- The availability and use by families of other early childhood education and development options in our community
- Management procedures that may impact enrollment

Admissions

Admission procedures must be completed prior to the child's attendance at Montrose County ECC and must include:

- A pre-admission interview with the child's family to determine whether the services offered by the center will meet the needs of the child and the family
- The family's signature, indicating that they have read and agree to follow Montrose County ECC's policies and procedures as stated in the Parent Handbook. Staff must explain all policies and procedures prior to requesting the family's signature.
- Completion of all required registration information

Additional Admissions Requirements for Children with Disabilities

When admitting a child with disabilities, including special health care needs requiring intervention and/or medication, the following procedure must be followed:

- Montrose County ECC must receive a health care plan authorized by the child's health care provider and family, defining the interventions needed to care for the child. This plan must be in place for all children who have an identified health or developmental condition or concern including, but not limited to: seizures, asthma, diabetes, severe allergies, heart or respiratory conditions, and/or physical disabilities. The plan must:
 - Include all information needed to care for the child
 - Be signed by the health care provider
 - Include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - Medication schedule
 - Nutrition and feeding instructions
 - Medical equipment or adaptive devices, including instructions
 - Medical emergency instructions
 - Toileting and personal hygiene instructions
 - Behavioral interventions
 - Medical procedure/intervention orders

- If the child does not have an existing health care plan, one must be provided to Montrose County ECC within 30 days of the child's enrollment
- All staff working with a child with a health care plan must be informed, trained and delegated responsibility for carrying out the health care plan
- Supervision of the plan and interventions must be documented
- The admission of children who have special health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays, which includes children with social emotional and behavioral needs, must be in alignment with the training and ability of staff and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Services offered must show that a reasonable effort is made to accommodate the child's needs and to integrate the child with other children.
- Montrose County ECC will inform our Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC), prior to the first day of care, of the enrollment of a child with special health care needs, if known, so staff receive training, delegation and supervision as indicated by the child's individualized health care plan.

A child's individual health care plan must be updated at least every twelve months from the date of the initial plan and as changes occur.

Child Placement

Once enrolled, each child is assigned to a specific class, with a specific teacher/teaching team. Children remain with that same teacher/teaching team, and in the same classroom, throughout the day with the exception of participation in specials and special events.

Classrooms are made up of a mix of children who are considered both at-risk, not at-risk, and children with disabilities. Children are not intentionally segregated by funding source or because of disabilities.

Re-Enrollment

Montrose County ECC automatically re-enrolls eligible children at the end of each school year with the following considerations:

- If a three-year-old child enrolls in the Head Start program, he or she is allowed to remain at Montrose County ECC until kindergarten is available for the child
- If a child has been found income eligible and is enrolled in Montrose County ECC, he or she remains income eligible through that enrollment year and the immediately succeeding year. It is not necessary to re-verify income before enrolling the child for the 2nd year. However, if a parent reports to Montrose County ECC that their income has changed between program years, it will be at our discretion to decide whether the increase or decrease warrants re-verification.
- If a child withdrew before the year ending, he or she is not considered a returning child.
- If a child withdraws or is terminated from Montrose County ECC and then wants to return, his or her family's income must be re-verified if it has been more than 12 months since the last income verification.
- If a child is withdrawn from the program at the request of the parent, that child will be placed on the Ineligible/Terminated List on ChildPlus and will not be considered as part of a program's Wait List. If the parent contacts the program at a later date for enrollment consideration of the same child, the child will be placed back on the Wait List at that time.

- A child who is withdrawn from the program forfeits any rights to automatic re-enrollment during the current or succeeding year. The child will only be re-enrolled if determined to be the most in need at the time of potential re-enrollment.

Attendance

Montrose County ECC works to encourage regular attendance and to assist families whose children are frequently absent in the following manner:

- We actively encourage regular attendance
- We withdraw children who are chronically absent without a medical reason or valid cause from our program. Valid reasons for absenteeism are:
 - Child is hospitalized
 - Child is unable to attend due to serious illness or injury
 - Child has a contagious disease
 - Death in child's family
 - Illness of parent
 - Temporary family situation
 - Child must receive medical treatment or therapy at the time when class is held
- After two weeks of excused medical absences (eight class days) the parent must provide a statement from their health care provider excusing the absence and indicating the anticipated return date to school. Continued, extended health absences will be evaluated to determine if it is in the best interests of the child to return to school.
- Teaching staff will designate the reasons why children are absent in the daily attendance record of ChildPlus
- The secretary will call the family for all unexcused absences, on the day of the unexcused absence.
- Attendance will be monitored daily by the secretary and weekly by the assigned Family Services Staff, using ChildPlus report #2310 or #2330 for consecutive absences.
- After four consecutive days of a child's absence, or after a pattern of irregular attendance has been determined, parents are contacted by the appropriate staff. A phone contact is made by the Family Advocate to determine how or if the program can assist in resolving problems which may be causing the child's absence. Contacts with the family emphasizes the benefits of regular attendance, while at the same time remaining sensitive to any special circumstances influencing attendance patterns.
- Montrose County ECC initiates appropriate family support procedures for all children with four or more consecutive unexcused absences.
- After two weeks of unexcused absences (eight class days) the child will be placed on an inactive list. The parent has may either:
 - Remove the child from the program, at which time another child will be enrolled from the Wait List; or
 - Have the child continue in the program, with regular attendance
- Vacations of no longer than eight consecutive days will be accepted with prior notification by the parent to the Family and Community Partnership Coordinator or Colorado Preschool Program Coordinator. Exceptions for custodial court ordered visitations will be evaluated as needed. Circumstances may necessitate approval of the Director.

- The secretary will input the reported data into the school district data base, Infinite Campus.
- If our daily attendance rate falls below 85%, the causes of absenteeism will be analyzed carefully using ChildPlus report # 2301 & #2330. Appropriate actions will be determined and implemented to improve the attendance whenever possible.

Children with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) will not be withdrawn due to attendance concerns. However, Montrose County ECC children with a disability may be removed from the Head Start program and placed in the School District Children with Disabilities Program due to two consecutive weeks of unexcused absences. The special education staff will work with the family to provide services that best meet the needs of the child and family. This may include a review of days and hours of attendance and services.

All contacts with the child's family, as well as special family support activities provided by program staff, are documented in ChildPlus.

In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child in either the same or a different program option, the child may be withdrawn from the program. The child's slot is then considered an enrollment vacancy.

The Attendance Policy is included in our Parent Handbook, and is discussed with each family during orientation.

Fees

Montrose County ECC does not charge any fees for participation in the Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program or Children with Disabilities programs.

If the family of a child determined to be eligible for participation in the program volunteers to pay part or all of the cost of the child's participation Head Start, the program may accept the voluntary payments and record the payments as program income.

A tuition spot will be offered for those families that do not qualify for our free programs.

Withdrawing from Montrose County ECC Voluntary Withdrawal of Children

If a family decides to voluntarily withdraw their child from the Head Start program, every attempt is made by Montrose County ECC staff to determine the cause. All feasible attempts are made to maintain a child's enrollment in the program.

Staff will work with the parent to eliminate or reduce any problems identified relating to the potential withdrawal of the child and will encourage the parent to allow the child to remain in the program. The only exception is when a child is to be withdrawn due to medical reasons and remaining in the program would be detrimental to the child's health. Staff will try to persuade the family to postpone a final decision regarding withdrawing the child until all attempts to solve any problems are exhausted.

Staff will make the initial contact and will summarize the content of the meeting on a Family Contact Form.

The family service staff immediately makes a home visit to determine if the family will allow the child to remain in Head Start. A resolution of any conflict or problems concerning the family or child is then suggested by the Family Service Worker. A presentation about the benefits a child derives from remaining in Head Start is made at this time. Documentation of this conference is made by the FSW on the Family Contact Form and then placed in the Family Visits section of ChildPlus.

The Family Service Worker informs the child's teacher of the conference and whether the family has been persuaded to allow the child to remain in Head Start. A careful review of the family's concerns or reasons for considering withdrawal is discussed between the FSW and the teacher. Documentation of the FSW/teacher conference summarizing the problem is completed in ChildPlus.

If the family still insists on withdrawing the child from the program, the teacher and family advocate proceed with the withdrawal procedures. Documentation of withdrawal is recorded and entered into ChildPlus.

Final approval of the withdrawal is made by the Montrose County ECC Director after ensuring everything possible has been done to prevent the child from withdrawing.

Involuntary Withdrawal of Children

In certain situations, it may be necessary for a child to be involuntarily withdrawn from the Head Start program. Factors warranting involuntary withdrawal are:

- Irregular Attendance: If a child is consistently absent without a medical reason or a valid cause, he or she may be withdrawn from the program.
- Inappropriate Placement or Progression
 - If a child is disruptive to the point of affecting the atmosphere of the classroom
 - If a child is being detrimental or poses a threat to himself/herself and/or other children
- Extreme Health Problems
 - If a child has a communicable disease such as tuberculosis
 - If being in the program daily is professionally declared medically harmful to the child
- Failure to provide documentation of immunization or refusal to begin and maintain immunization schedule.

Prior to an Involuntary Withdrawal:

- A home visit (if the family will allow) is made by the teacher and/or family service staff to determine any problems
- Every effort is made to explore all variables
- Documentation has been presented
- Alternative resources with other agencies have been discussed

Once all other options have been explored and it is determined that a child must be involuntarily withdrawn, the following steps will be taken:

- Parents will receive an official notice of withdrawal from the Montrose County ECC Director which includes:
 - Reason for withdrawal
 - Date and signature of the Montrose County ECC Director
- Parents will have five (5) business days after receiving the official notice of withdrawal to appeal the decision

Suspension & Expulsion

Montrose County ECC takes all possible steps to prevent suspending and/or expelling children from our program.

A temporary suspension may be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

Before determining that a temporary suspension is necessary, Montrose County ECC will engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources, such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources, as needed, to determine if any other reasonable option is available.

If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, we will help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:

- Continuing to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant
- Continuing to utilize appropriate community resources
- Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed
- Providing services that include home visits; *and*
- Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate

We will not expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of the child's behavior. When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, we will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, while facilitating the child's safe participation in our program. Such steps must include, at a minimum:

- Engaging a mental health consultant
- Considering the appropriateness of providing services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. 705(9)(b)14 of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability
- Consulting with the parents and the child's teacher

If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or an IEP, we will consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services.

If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, we will collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.

If, after exploring all possible steps and documenting all steps taken, we, in consultation with the family, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determine that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, and that our program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, we will work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

Collaboration with Families

Montrose County ECC believes strongly in collaboration with families. As the most significant adults in a child's life, parents/guardians are our partners and will be provided multiple opportunities to learn about and participate in educational and developmental activities for their children in the classroom, home and community in order to support their progression toward school readiness.

Parent Orientation

Prior to a child's starting at Montrose County ECC, the parents will participate in an Orientation session. There are two Orientations provided in August and also as children are accepted throughout the year. Orientation will include information regarding:

- Parents' ability to participate in the program
- Activities and services available to families
- Opportunities available to families as individual or as groups
- Program philosophy, goals and objectives
- Parent involvement opportunities and activities
- Verification of immunizations & physicals
- Scheduling a Home Visit with the child's teacher
- Meeting with Family Advocates & Family Services Team
- Parent & Volunteer Handbooks
- Community Resource Directory
- Completion of lunch applications

Supporting the Development of Parenting Skills

Parents are involved in experiences and activities which lead to enhancing development of skills, self-confidence, and independence in fostering an environment in which their children can develop to their full potential. We do so in a number of ways including encouraging parents to:

- Participate in policy and advisory groups during Orientation, at parent meetings and during home visits
- Share information with us and to conduct sessions for staff, children and other parents on topics for which they have special skills and talent. Staff assist in providing the support and materials needed for these activities.
- Facilitate parent meetings
- Contact community agencies
- Volunteer or observe in the classroom

Parent Meetings

Parents receive adequate notice and support services to facilitate their attendance at meetings/trainings.

The following content is regularly covered during monthly parent meetings:

- Staff members review material from the initial Parent Orientation, including information about Head Start components and opportunities for parent involvement
- Training about health, mental health, dental and nutritional educational components

Family Assessment

In an effort to begin collaborative partnership building with parents concerning their long-term goals, it is imperative to address the family in relationship to their immediate concerns. Therefore, the family assessment will be initiated during the enrollment process.

The Family Advocate will ensure that the family assessment is completed at Parent Orientation in August, and that the additional family assessments are completed at Parent Teacher Conferences in October and March. The information provided will assist the Family Advocate in determining how best to maximize and maintain family strengths while focusing on needs and/or concerns.

While the Family Assessment form is a questionnaire that will serve as a conversational guide to engage families in discussion about what they perceive as their needs. In areas where the family has identified immediate needs such as housing, food and crisis, the Family Advocate will make appropriate referrals and provide resource information and materials within 30 days of assessment completion.

Families with the greatest need (top 25%) identified on Family Assessments will be contacted first to schedule a family conference with the assigned Family Advocate. To the extent possible, Family Conferences and goal setting will be developed with the family in a home setting. However, in no case will home visits be a condition of the child's enrollment in Head Start.

Following the home visit/contact, the Family Advocate will check with family to see whether the referral was used, to review the timeliness and responsiveness of the agency to which the family was referred, and to determine if resources and/or referrals met the family's needs. If not, additional referrals will be given or advocacy efforts will be initiated with relevant agencies.

The Family Advocate will document as follows:

- Complete the Family Assessment form to be stored in a family portfolio and filed in the students file at the end of the year
- Document visits and additional contacts in ChildPlus
- Note any referrals and resources given to the family in ChildPlus
- Document any follow up that needs to be done and when it is completed
- Referrals and follow up will be documented on the Family Assessment/Family Partnership Agreement and maintained confidentially in the family file
- A copy of the Family Services Referral Report, CP#4120, for their assigned caseloads, will be submitted by the Family Advocate to the PFCEC by the 5th working day of each month.

Crisis Intervention/Emergency Assistance

Needs identified and prioritized through the Family Assessment process will be addressed with follow-up services. Emergency assistance and crisis intervention services will be made available to families in need. The focus on services will be to address the most immediate needs of the family.

Services to address emergency food, shelter, clothing and transportation needs may be accessed directly through the ECC, or when appropriate, referrals will be made to other agencies. Family services staff will be familiar with a number of providers in an effort to ensure that families receive appropriate counseling and services in regard to substance, abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and criminal justice. Family service staff will have the community resource directory, in conjunction with other resource guides that reflect services for their assigned geographical area, their county and surrounding areas, available to them.

Montrose County ECC will provide families with necessary support services in order to access crisis intervention or emergency assistance.

Family Partnership Agreement

Family Advocates will visit families within 60 calendar days of enrollment to:

- Review the Family Assessment form and update as needed
- Establish a Family Partnership Agreement
 - Document goals and steps to reach those goals
 - Problem-solve to remove barriers to reaching goals and make appropriate referrals as needed
 - Discuss opportunities available through Montrose County ECC to help achieve the goals
 - If the family is already working with another agency and has established goals or pre-existing plans, goals will be the same as those previously identified. Efforts to exchange information regarding pre-existing plans should be made.
- Discuss parent opportunities including:
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Literacy/career development options
 - Childcare support/subsidy
 - Community advocacy opportunities
 - Follow up in medical and dental needs
- Update child/family information

Family partnership agreements will be reviewed and updated at subsequent visits. Progress will be documented in the update section of the agreement form and in ChildPlus.

Contents of the family partnership agreement will be shared in Family Service Meetings, on reports to Policy Council and with other staff as appropriate.

Family Partnership Agreements can be altered, changed or replaced at the family's request.

Accessing Community Resources and Services

Staff will work collaboratively with parents in the identification and use of community resources and services to meet family needs and interests.

Parents are provided information on available community resources for emergency or crisis assistance, opportunities for continuing education and employment training, and programs/agencies which provide counseling and/or information on mental health issues, substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and other issues which place families at risk. We will inform custodial parents in single-parent families about the availability of child support services for purposes of establishing paternity and acquiring child support, and will refer eligible parents to the child support offices of state and local governments.

During home visits or other opportunities that arise, the Family Advocate will give referrals based on needs the family has identified in the Family Agreement/Partnership Agreement process.

Families will receive notice and information on additional opportunities for education, community collaboration, resource/ referral throughout the program year. These could be flyers sent home in backpacks, information posted on parent bulletin boards or referenced during parent meetings and trainings, during home visits or conferences and in newsletters.

The Family Advocate follows up with each family to complete an exit survey to determine whether the quality and timeliness of the services received through referrals met the family's expectations and needs.

Community Resource Directory

Each family receives a Community Resource Directory during Orientation, listing resources and services available in their community/county. The Community Resource Directory will be updated bi-annually with name, address, services and contact person listed for each resource. Families will receive notice and information regarding new community resources and services as they become available throughout the year.

Training on use of the Community Resource Directory is done during parent orientation, with family advocates and during family meetings.

Advocating for Families

Montrose County ECC will assist families in obtaining and receiving needed services. Staff will advocate for the family when necessary and while training them to become an advocate for their child and for themselves.

Upon enrollment, family service staff is assigned to begin advocacy efforts when necessary. If a family brings to the attention of the staff that they are having difficulty in communicating with an agency, staff will act as a spokesperson for the family, with consent from the family. After the family has contacted an agency, the Family Advocate will follow-up to see that services were obtained.

If a family fails to receive services or benefits to which they are entitled, the Family Advocate, in collaboration with other relevant staff, will assist in identifying the problems in an effort to obtain services for the family.

Family and agency contacts are documented and maintained in the child / family file, or entered in ChildPlus.

Involving Families in Curriculum Planning

Parents are given opportunities to be involved in curriculum planning through participation in:

- Education & Family Home Visits
- Parent/Family-Teacher Conferences
- Parent/Family meetings
- Curriculum development advisory committees
- Volunteering in the classroom
- Completing surveys
- Direct communication with the teaching staff surrounding concerns, observations and general input

Family Services Home Visits

The Family Advocate will schedule a minimum of one (1) home visit/conference with each family during the program year in regards to the Family Assessment and Partnership Agreement. Additional home visits/contacts will be scheduled with the family as needed throughout the year concerning attendance, referrals, direct services of our program.

To the extent possible, assessment, goal setting and service plans will be developed with the family in the home setting. In cases where the family requests that visits be conducted outside the home, or in cases where there is a safety issue for staff, the home visit may take place at the classroom site or another safe location.

Home visits may be scheduled in conjunction with the teacher's education home visits when possible.

All family contacts and home visits will be documented in the child/family file and entered into the ChildPlus data base.

Parental Rights

Families of enrolled Montrose County ECC Head Start children have the right to:

- Inspect their child's records
 - If the family requests to inspect their child's records, we will make the child records available within a reasonable time, but no more than 45 days after receipt of request. We will ensure the parent only inspects information that pertains to the parent's child.
 - We will not destroy a child record with an outstanding request to inspect and review the record
- Request that Montrose County ECC amend their child's record if the family believes it is inaccurate, misleading or violates the child's privacy.
 - We will consider the family's request and, if the request is denied, render a written decision to the family within a reasonable time that informs the family of the right to a hearing.
- Request a hearing to challenge information in the child record

- We will schedule a hearing within a reasonable time, notify the family, in advance, about the hearing, and ensure the person who conducts the hearing does not have a direct interest in its outcome.
- We will ensure the hearing affords the family a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues.
- If we determine from evidence presented at the hearing that the information in the child records is inaccurate, misleading or violates the child's privacy, we will either amend or remove the information and notify the family in writing.
- If we determine from evidence presented at the hearing that information in the child records is accurate, does not mislead or otherwise does not violate the child's privacy, we will inform the family of the right to place a statement in the child's record that either comments on the contested information or that states why the family disagrees with the program's decision, or both.
- Request copies of child records. We will provide a family, free of charge, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties, unless the disclosure was for a court that ordered neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information furnished in response be disclosed.
- Inspect any written agreements with third parties related to their child.

Complaints / Grievances

A grievance procedure will be posted in all classrooms, informing families of their right to voice their concerns about the program at any given time.

When a family has a complaint that cannot be resolved at the center level, Montrose County ECC staff will instruct the family to complete a Community/Parent Complaint form. This form must be available on the Parent Board in each classroom. Montrose County ECC staff will then forward the form to their Site Supervisor or supervisory staff member.

The supervisor may contact the family in an attempt to resolve the problem. If a solution is not reached, the supervisor will forward the complaint and all documentation on to the Director. The Director will contact all parties involved, including the relevant Montrose County ECC staff and responsible supervisors for clarification on the situation. The Director will also contact the parent/guardian making the complaint to gather all relevant information.

After reviewing the information, the Director may contact the family by telephone to offer a solution to the situation. If the family does not agree with the proposed action, the family must then request in writing, within ten (10) days, for the Director to arrange a hearing before the Policy Council Grievance Committee. The Director will then notify the Executive Director about the situation.

The Director will schedule a hearing for the family with the PC Grievance Committee at a time and location acceptable to all parties within thirty (30) days after the written request from the family.

The action recommended by the Grievance Committee as a result of the hearing will be reported to the Executive Committee and the Executive Director of the agency.

Health & Safety

Bathroom Set Up & Maintenance

Bathrooms will be kept clean and sanitized throughout the day and accommodations will be made for each child's individual toileting and hand washing needs in the following manner:

- All surfaces in bathroom will be cleaned and sanitized daily
- Bathrooms will be supplied with paper towels, toilet tissue, and liquid soap within reach of the children
- Toilets will be adapted for independent use by the children
- A non-slip plastic stool to step up to the toilet and/or sink and a toilet seat adapter may be used as needed

Montrose County ECC provides bathrooms/toilets for use by the children within or immediately adjacent to the classroom whenever possible. All bathrooms have a sink with running warm water. Water heater/pipes are regulated to ensure that water temperature does not exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Bathroom fixtures and accessories, including toilets, sinks, mirrors, soap & paper dispensers, are child-sized and appropriate to the age and height of children whenever possible.

A designated area will be established specifically for diapering.

- The diapering area is to be as far away from the food area as possible and not easily visible to the other children.
- The diapering surface must be flat, safe and a comfortable height for adults.
- Diapering surfaces will be kept clean, waterproof and free of cracks, tape and crevices.

Accidents & Injuries

Handling Bodily Fluids / Blood Borne Pathogen Control

Montrose County ECC implements the following practices/controls to eliminate or minimize exposure to blood borne pathogens:

- Training in the prevention of cross contamination of blood borne pathogens will be provided annually to staff that may have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- We maintain documentation of the annual training on blood borne pathogen control and our blood borne pathogen control plan is available to all personnel for review.
- We follow the policy for blood borne pathogen control located at the Health Services Manager's work station.

Standard Safety Practices

Montrose County ECC implements the following standard safety practices:

- We have separate plans of action for rapid response to medical and dental emergencies that may occur in the classroom, on field trips or on a Montrose County ECC bus.
- All staff working with children have a current First Aid and C.P.R. card.

- Telephone numbers and locations of hospitals, the fire department, the police department, emergency response systems and the Poison Control Center are posted near the telephone.
- A diagrammed, illustrated evacuation plan is posted near the exits in each classroom.
- Methods for contacting the parent in the event of an emergency involving their child are established.
- All electrical outlets accessible to children have protective caps in place when outlets are not in use.
- Items of potential danger to children (toxic materials, flammable liquids, etc.) are kept in the original container, stored in an area not used by children, and are stored separately from food and food service equipment.
- An emergency light source is available at all times.
- Areas and equipment that staff feel are unsafe must be immediately reported to the Director.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Montrose County ECC has an emergency/disaster preparedness plan in the event of fire, earthquake, severe storm or other natural disaster. This plan includes evacuation routes, safe meeting places, head count procedures, safety spots in the classroom or building and procedures for assisting children with disabilities.

Family Involvement in Health, Nutrition & Mental Health Education

Montrose County ECC ensures that our medical and dental health education program:

- Assists families in understanding how to enroll and participate in a system of ongoing family health care
- Encourages families to become active partners in their children's medical and dental health care process and to accompany their child to medical and dental examinations appointments
- Provides families with the opportunity to learn the principals of medical and dental health, emergency first-aid, occupational and environmental hazards and safety practices for use in the classroom and in the home, including health and developmental consequences of tobacco products use and exposure to lead
- Provides families with the opportunity to learn information on general health topics as well as specific information to meet the health needs of individual children to the extent possible.

Montrose County ECC ensures that our nutrition education program includes:

- Nutrition education for families about the selection and preparation of foods to meet the needs of their child as well as the family's food budget needs
- Family discussions with program staff about the nutritional status of their child
- The importance of physical activity and healthy eating, and the negative health consequences of sugar-sweetened beverages

Montrose County ECC ensures that our mental health education program provides families with:

- A variety of opportunities to identify and discuss issues related to their child's mental health and social and emotional well-being,
- A variety of opportunities to share observations, concerns about the child's mental health, typical and atypical behavior and development
- Strategies for how to appropriately respond to their child and promote their child's social and emotional development
- Individual opportunities for families to discuss mental health issues related to their child and family with program staff, and
- Opportunities to be actively involved in planning and implementing any mental health interventions for their child

Child Health Requirements

The health status of all children enrolled in Montrose County ECC Head Start will be assessed in accordance with the following procedures:

Family Involvement in Health Assessment

At the time of intake/enrollment, parents will be informed of Montrose County ECC's health requirements. Requirements are consistent with the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule, CIIIS, the Center of Disease Control, and any additional recommendations from the local Health Advisory Committee that are based on prevalent community health problems. Diagnostic and treatment procedures are explained to families and every effort is made to ensure parents fully understand the findings as well as the importance of their child receiving ongoing care.

Parents will be provided accurate information concerning child services and must provide written consent for all screenings, exams, referrals and follow-up provided and/or arranged by Montrose County ECC using the Program Consent Release Form. Since several health and developmental procedures are completed annually, parent permission for health/developmental services is obtained upon initial enrollment, and yearly thereafter upon application for re-enrollment.

Children may not receive health/developmental procedures without advanced parent authorization. If a parent or legal guardian refused to give authorization for health services, Montrose County ECC maintains written documentation of the refusal on the Head Start Parent Refusal Documentation form. If parent does not sign this form, they may write a statement indicating what service they do not want and sign and date the letter. When a parent refuses a service that Head Start provides, and which is a requirement of the program, the parent will be requested to provide documentation indicating that the service has been obtained for their child elsewhere.

Montrose County ECC staff will consult with parents immediately, within 10 days, when health or developmental problems are suspected or identified. Our Health Tech and Family Advocate will maintain contact with families concerning their child's health.

Family Advocates and other staff members assist and collaborate with parents to help them participate in parent trainings and ongoing family health care, and encourage parents to be

active partners in their children's health including dental, nutritional, mental, educational, safety and environmental needs.

Staff will assist families in finding providers, arranging transportation and scheduling required appointments if needed.

Developmental / Behavioral Screening

All children will be screened in the areas of cognition, language, motor, social emotional and behavior skills within 10 calendar days of enrollment.

The program will provide for developmental, sensory, and behavioral screenings for all children within 45 calendar days of the child beginning school.

All screening dates, results, referrals and follow ups will be entered into the child's individual folder, as well as in ChildPlus.

- Prior to screening, parents must be informed of the type and purpose of screening and must give written permission to screen. If a parent refuses some or all of a screening(s), it must be noted on consent form.
- Screening will be scheduled in August during the first Educational Home Visit for all children accepted into Head Start. Children who enroll later in the school year will be screened within 10 calendar days of the child beginning school.
- Screening may be conducted for potential enrollees during Spring/ Summer months in collaboration with the LEA'S child find efforts. Montrose County ECC will make every effort to identify and include all eligible children in each service area.
- Age, linguistically and culturally appropriate standardized screening instruments will be used, and an interpreter will be provided if needed.

After screening is completed, a determination will be made for rescreening or further assessment/evaluation based on screening scores, observations, parent input, and guidance from the Education Coordinator.

- Any child determined to have a result of Below Average, Fail or CNT on the initial screening will be rescreened within 30 calendar days. If child is still scored Below Average, Fail, or CNT, Montrose County ECC staff will follow program referral procedures.
- If a child fails a developmental screening but already has an IEP, it is not required to rescreen as the child is already receiving services.

Montrose County ECC programs will not use screenings or assessments to exclude children from enrollment or participation in the program.

Child Health History Form

The family will complete, sign and date the Health History form during the enrollment process. A copy of this will be kept in the child's health folder.

The Health History form includes family consent for emergency treatment to ensure treatment is provided for a child should an emergency situation arise while he/she is attending Montrose County ECC classes or participating in a Montrose County ECC activity. The Health History form also collects information concerning the child's health and developmental history, special

needs and dietary habits, and is used to help determine if the child is at risk for certain diseases or illness.

Families must turn in a completed Preventive Health Questionnaire, including Tuberculosis “T.B.” Risk Assessment / Screening.

- If any question on the T.B. Risk Assessment form is answered “yes” (other than the child has had a negative Skin Test), the family will be contacted and a referral will be made to the local health department/ family physician for follow-up at the school’s discretion.
- The FSW/Home Visitor will assist the family, as needed, in obtaining and/or arranging follow-up services.

Nutrition Assessment

Families and staff will complete a nutrition assessment questionnaire together, during the intake / enrollment process to identify and address each child's nutritional needs.

A nutrition follow-up will be made in the event that:

- a child’s appetite, eating habits, eating skills and/or energy level are observed to be poor by either the parent or staff
- a physician/health provider has indicated a nutrition problem, food allergy, or other special dietary need on the child's physical exam record

Nutrition recommendations are initiated by the Nutrition Services Manager/RD after a referral has been received, and are discussed with the family to jointly decide upon and develop a plan of action for referral, follow-up, etc. The child/family will be referred for a complete nutrition assessment by a Doctor/RD team if needed. The Family Service Worker will work to support the efforts of the family in meeting the nutrition recommendations.

When required by the Nutrition Services Manager, the FSW/Home Visitor will schedule appointments with the family for common nutrition recommendations. Families will be given the Nutrition Services Manager's name and work telephone number so that the family can call to make a direct contact if preferred.

Nutrition assessment data, recommendations and any follow-up documentation will be filed in the child's individual health folder and entered into the COPA data base under health notes.

Insurance Information

Staff will interview the parent/guardian to determine if the child is covered by medical insurance. If not, staff will provide the family with information about how to obtain health insurance using available resources such as Medicaid or CHIP.

School Physical Exam Form

- This form must be completed at an annual physical exam that occurs within one year prior to or 90 days after, the child’s enrollment in the center.
- The completed form must be turned in within the child’s first 90 days of enrollment.
- Physical exams must be completed annually

Blood Lead Screening

All children enrolled in Medicaid, regardless of whether coverage is funded through title XIX or XXI, are required to receive blood lead screening tests at ages 12 months and 24 months. In addition, any child between 24 and 72 months with no record of a previous blood lead screening test must receive one.

Hemoglobin / Hematocrit Screening

EPSDT recommends that an HCT/HGB screening for iron deficiency be done by age 9 to 12 months. If a child has not yet been screened, the screening must be completed within 90 days of a child's enrollment.

Mental Health Assessment

At enrollment, or during Orientation, parents will be informed of the Mental Health Consultant's role and services available through the program.

All attempts will be made to schedule the Mental Health Services Manager to visit during Orientation for Parent Committee meetings.

Family observations and information regarding their child's behavior and mental wellness will be solicited through:

- Parent Information/Observation forms completed during screening or at the time of enrollment
- Completion of the child's health history
- Discussions during home visits and conferences
- Family Questionnaire
- Parent Questionnaire

Growth Assessment / Height & Weight check

In order to assess patterns of growth, each child will be measured and weighed at least two times during the program year. Each child will be initially weighed and measured within 45 days of entry into the program, and then each fall and spring during his or her enrollment. These measurements will be taken using the following procedures:

- When weighing a child, make sure the scale is on a hard surface, not a rug
- Have child step on scale and stand still
- Record exactly what the scale shows as the child's weight
- To record a child's height, attach a height ruler to the wall with the bottom of the ruler at the same level as the floor on which the child stands
- For reliable results, measure the child on a hard surface rather than carpet
- Have the child look at an object directly at their eye level
- Place a flat ruler or other rigid, straight object on top of the child's head and slide the end of the object straight across the child's head until it touches the ruler on the wall, noting the child's height
- Record height in inches, rounding up to the nearest quarter inch

Each child's height and weight measurement will be entered on the Growth Assessment page in ChildPlus and CareDox. This will calculate the child's Body Mass Index "BMI" and stature for-age for children age 2-20 years.

- Children who fall above the 95th percentile or below the 5th percentile for BMI will receive follow up.
- Children with stature-for-age below the 5th percentile will receive follow-up.

Parents are informed of the results at Parent Teacher Conferences.

Vision Exam

Every child will receive a vision examination within 45 calendar days of their initial enrollment into the program, completed on a "SNELL" chart, signed by the Health Tech.

Vision Screening

All children enrolled in Montrose County ECC must receive a vision screening within 45 days of enrollment, in accordance with CDE, using the Sight Line Flipchart Screening.

The Sight Line Flipchart is a critical line test of recognition visual acuity, which means each eye is screened separately using the line a child should pass according to the child's age. Results are recorded as pass, fail or refer.

4 Sight Line flipchart procedure:

- When using the flipchart for screening children ages 3 years, use 20/50 cards
- When using the flipchart for screening children ages 4 years, use 20/40 cards
- When using the flipchart for screening children ages 5 years, use 20/32 cards

- Select a screening location that is at least 10 feet in length, quiet, free of distractions and evenly lit
- Measure 10 feet (3 meters) between the chart and the child's eyes with the chord included in the kit
- If placing a mark on the floor to maintain the 10-foot screening distance, ensure the child stands with the arch of his or her foot on the mark
- If using a chair, measure to the back of the chair seat and ensure the child is seated with his or her back against the back of the chair
- Begin by familiarizing the child with the screening task
- Hold the flipchart 16 inches (40 centimeters) from the child's face
- With the child's eyes uncovered, ask the child to name symbols (pictures) on the 20/100 card
- Accept whatever the name the child calls each symbol
- Occlude the child's left eye, using a set of the specially constructed occlude glasses included in the kit
- Turn the flip book to the Right Eye Card that matches the child's age
- At 10 feet, and with the child's left eye occluded, present the flipbook at the child's eye level
- Ensure the flipbook cards have no glare from nearby windows or other lighting sources
- Hold the flipbook perpendicular to the floor. Do not tilt the flipbook up or down.

- Ask the child to identify (verbally naming or matching) the symbols on the provided Right Eye Card that matches the child's age. Alternatively, the four small individual cards with one symbol on each card can be placed on the floor in front of the child; the child can match the flipbook symbols by stepping on the cards.
- Switch occlude glasses so that the left eye is occluded
- Turn the flipbook to the Left Eye Card that matches the child's age
- Repeat the process for the left eye
- Record the results as pass, fail or refer

Pass = the child can correctly identify 3-5 of the symbols with each eye individually.

Fail = the child can only identify 0-2 symbols with either eye or both eyes. If a child fails, rescreen him or her either on the same day or within 30 calendar days of initial screening date.

Refer = the child has a score of "fail" or "CNT" (cannot test) on rescreen. Follow up with an eye care professional.

Hearing Screening

All enrolled children will receive an audiometric (hearing) screening within 45 calendar days of the child's first day of attendance and annually thereafter. Children will be screened at 20 decibels at frequencies of 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz. However, it will be at the discretion of the screener as to whether other frequencies are checked.

LEA speech/language pathologists will administer the hearing tests whenever possible. Other persons performing hearing screening may include school nurses or designated program staff who are trained in the use of the equipment and interpretation of the child's responses.

A Hearing Screening Results form will be filled out by the screener, after each screening. Frequencies and decibel levels screened will be recorded. Any discrepancy as to the noise level during screening, the child's failure to respond, or observing that the child appears congested, etc., will also be recorded.

Children failing to respond at the recommended level (20 decibels) at any frequency (1000, 2000, 4000 Hz) in either ear will be considered having failed the screening.

Children who cannot be conditioned to respond, refuse to respond or give inconsistent responses will be considered "CNT" (cannot test).

Any child determined to be a FAIL or CNT on the initial screening will be rescreened within 30 days. If the screening was done during summer months by staff, the 2nd attempt will take place within 30 days of enrollment. In the event that the child fails the 2nd screening as well, the child will be rescreened immediately by another Health Tech, then by the school's audiologist. The audiologist will retest on site, then the child will be referred to the District ENT for further assessment.

Speech & Language Screening

All children will receive a speech and language screening within 45 days of the child's first day of school, in order to identify any delays. Adults who speak the child's primary language will be involved in the screening and evaluation to ensure accuracy in differentiating between language confusion and developmental acquisition.

Whenever possible, speech and language screening will be conducted by a licensed pathologist / therapist using a standardized screening instrument.

This screening will be implemented within the context of the following information:

- Child's history
- Parent concerns
- Staff observation

A child will be referred for further evaluation if the screening results or any of the above-mentioned factors are of concern.

Immunizations

All children entering Montrose County ECC are required to meet the minimum standards for immunizations in accordance with Colorado's Childhood Immunization Schedule, unless they have a documented medical or religious exemption. Prior to attendance, children must have a minimum dose of the following vaccines:

- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP)
- Hemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- Inactivated Polio
- Hepatitis B (Hep B)
- PCV13(Pneumococcal)

Each child's immunization record must be signed, have at least the month and dose of vaccine received, or note a religious or medical exemption.

If a new enrollee does not have at least one of each of the mandatory immunizations, or a religious or medical exemption, staff will inform the parent of what vaccination/s the child needs and remind the parent that the child must have the immunizations before attending school, with the exception of the McKinney Veto Act. The Health Tech will assist the family in getting the required immunizations, if needed.

Children must continue to be immunized in accordance with the mandated schedule. The Health Tech will remind the parent of needed immunizations thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the immunization certificate and that the child could be excluded from the program if an up-to-date certificate is not received within two weeks after expiration.

If the parent fails to submit an up-to-date immunization certificate within two weeks of expiration, the Health Tech will notify the parent that the child could be excluded from the classroom if a valid immunization certificate is not received for the child. Staff will assist the parent in obtaining their child's immunizations, if needed.

A child may remain in class with a non-valid immunization certificate if a physician/health care provider refuses to immunize because of the child's illness or physical condition. In such cases, a signed statement and Medical Exemption Certificate from the physician must be obtained and a copy filed in the child's individual health record.

Dental Exam

Program staff will support families in completing the dental exam within 90 calendar days of the child's entry into the program.

The family will be asked to complete a Dental Release form which is used to permit the Family Service Staff to contact the child's dentist.

Re-examination will be done 1 year from the initial exam date. More frequent exams must be conducted if:

- There are parental concerns and/or
- The child is complaining of pain, swelling, or other problems, and/or
- The dentist recommends more frequent visits

Health Provider Information

Staff will interview the parent/guardian to determine if the child has an ongoing source of medical and /or dental care. Answers will be documented in the Health section of ChildPlus.

If a child has medical and/or dental care, staff will ask the family to provide written consent enabling Montrose County ECC staff to establish contact with the providers.

If the child does not have access to ongoing medical and/or dental care, staff will:

- Work with the family to identify any barriers to accessing health care
- Create a plan to assist the parent / guardian in obtaining medical and/or dental care
- Assist the parent / guardian in selecting a health care provider and making any appointments necessary

Record Keeping & Follow Up

All records and results relating to a child's health as described above will be stored in the child's individual health record as well as in ChildPlus. Family contact sheets, health tracking forms, ChildPlus and CareDox will be used for the purpose of documentation and tracking child health services.

The Health Tech and Montrose County ECC staff will enter all health information into ChildPlus and CareDox. Staff will update information as it is received. Copies of the information will be kept in the child's individual health folder.

Through the use of ChildPlus and CareDox, the continuing progress and status of services to each child is monitored. Reports are analyzed for information in self-assessment activities, outcomes and in the development of action plans.

The child's individual health folder will include:

- Completed Child Health History in ChildPlus and CareDox
- Consent for emergency medical/dental services on Health History form
- Health history, developmental history, and dental health history
- Medical Home – ChildPlus, CareDox Health History & Medical record
- Medical/dental coverage information in Health History & Medical Record and CareDox
- Physical exam report in ChildPlus and CareDox medical record

- Immunization certificate in ChildPlus and Cardox
- Nutrition assessment in ChildPlus
- Height/weight and BMI, with copies of stature for age 2-20, and BMI for age 2-20 in ChildPlus and Cardox
- Consent for screening/medical services on consent form
- Consent for dental release of information exam/ treatment, in child's file
- Consent for dental exam and treatment child's file or Report of Dental Exam form
- Dental treatment record child's file or Medical Record
- Blood Lead Screening and Preventive Health Questionnaire that includes the written lead assessment in ChildPlus or child's file
- Release of information if applicable
- Hearing screening result sheet in ChildPlus, Caretox or child's file
- Vision examination / screening in ChildPlus, Caretox, or child's file
- Parent notification of screening results in child's file
- Documentation of follow-up services/treatment in child's file
- Individual Health plan (if applicable) in child's file
- Any other information related to health in child's file

Individualized Health Plan

Montrose County ECC will develop and implement an individual health plan for children who:

- Have a chronic condition requiring adaptations in daily activities
- Need medication regularly
- Require a specialized emergency plan

We notify our Health Services Manager of children enrolling in the program who need an individualized health plan. The Health Services Manager, in collaboration with the child's family, classroom staff, medical professionals and other relevant management staff (e.g., disabilities, nutrition and education), will develop a written health care plan to serve as a guide to meeting the child's health needs.

The family will be asked to sign a release of information allowing the program to obtain relevant medical information and recommendations from the child's physician/medical provider to develop the plan.

The child's Individual Health Plan will, at a minimum, provide guidance on:

- What accommodations are needed in daily programming including meals, playing, resting/sleeping and toileting
- When and how to give medication and who is to give it
- When and how to perform required medical procedures and who may perform them
- What procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency

The Health Services Manager, with assistance from other management staff, arrange and/or provide training needed for staff to effectively implement and follow the health plan.

Plans will be monitored regularly and updated as needed.

Meals & Nutrition

Family Assistance with Nutrition

Montrose County ECC will provide parent education opportunities that can offer parents new skills and information about nutrition and food preparation skills. We do so through:

- Training
- Take home activities
- Educational materials
- Workshops
- Coordination with local agencies

Food Allergies, Dietary Restrictions & Meal Substitutions

Through an interview with the family, staff will document all diagnosed and suspected food allergies and/or dietary restrictions/needs on Health History of COPA. Together, they will come up with a plan to accommodate and ensure the safety of children who have food allergies and other dietary restrictions or special needs. Variations must be nutritionally sound and approved by the Dietitian.

If the dietary restriction is due to a diagnosed allergy, disability or medical condition, specific documentation and information regarding the allergy/condition must be obtained from the child's physician/ health care provider. Any food substitutions recommended must be noted in the documentation. It is mandatory to have a doctor's statement in place to be able to accommodate a child's dietary needs due to allergies or medical conditions. Information from the parent will be honored for two weeks from the child's enrollment date. If a doctor's statement is not obtained in this period of time, the child will no longer have his/her meals modified.

A completed Medical Referral Form for Modified Meals (Model City) or School Food Service Food Modification Form (all other programs) will be used for documentation. If additional instructions are required, the child's physician/health care provider will complete an individual health plan.

If the dietary restriction is due to religious needs, a written statement describing required patterns to accommodate the religious needs of a child must be provided by the parents.

A report of the children who have specific food allergies or other dietary restrictions will be generated by the office prior to the first day of school and distributed to classroom staff and food service personnel. Team Managers will access the report from COPA. Additions to the report will be made immediately when new children enroll during the year.

Staff will consult with the Nutrition Services Manager regarding concerns and to ensure that needed follow-up occurs. The Nutrition and Health Services Manager monitors allergy/dietary restriction plans.

Meal Service

Children eat in the cafeteria.

Maintaining Food Temperature

Prepared food that is cold is held at 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and prepared hot foods are held at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above. Frozen foods are kept frozen and stored at a temperature of zero degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Thermometers:

- Each refrigerator, cooler and freezer must have a working thermometer.
- Thermometers are placed in areas that can be seen when door is open.
- In the kitchen, a refrigerator with separate refrigeration and freezer units has a thermometer in each compartment.
- Temperatures will be monitored daily.
- Thermometers required for immersion into food or cooking are of metal stem type construction, numerically scaled, and accurate to plus or minus 3 degrees Fahrenheit.
- In the classroom, if refrigerator is used to store children's food, medications etc., Montrose County ECC staff will monitor temperatures of appliances daily.

Transportation of Food

Food prepared off site is transported to the classroom using insulated containers that keep hot and cold foods at safe temperatures.

During transportation, food and food utensils are transported in covered containers, completely wrapped or packaged so as to protect them from contamination.

Sanitation

Sinks are cleaned prior to washing dishes.

A three-compartment sink is used for cleaning and sanitation of equipment and utensils.

Equipment and utensils are thoroughly washed in a hot detergent solution in the first compartment, rinsed in the second compartment and sanitized in the third compartment. If a three-compartment sink is not available, a large pan is used as a substitute for the third compartment.

Sanitation occurs by immersion of equipment and utensils for at least 1 minute in a clean solution containing at least 50 parts per million of available chlorine as a hypochlorite, and having a temperature of 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Approximately 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 gallon of water is used for sanitizing purposes

All dishes are air-dried. After they are air-dried, they are sorted in such a manner as to prevent contamination (i.e., stored in an inverted position; spoons, knives and forks are stored in a position that would permit the user to easily pick them up by the handle).

Garbage and refuse are kept in durable containers that are leak proof and do not absorb liquids. Plastic bags are used to line the containers. There will be a sufficient number of containers to hold all the garbage and refuse that accumulates.

After being emptied, each container is thoroughly cleaned on the inside and outside in a way that does not contaminate food, equipment, utensils or food preparation areas. The garbage and refuse on the premises are stored in a place inaccessible to insects and rodents.

Mental Health Consultant

Montrose County ECC secures the services of mental health professionals on a schedule of sufficient frequency to enable the timely and effective identification of, and intervention in, family and staff concerns about a child's mental health and provision of mental health services to our program's children, families and staff.

Our contract provides for availability of the mental health professional for consultation, assessment, training and planning of mental health services. Our Mental Health Consultant will provide support with:

- Designing and implementing program practices responsive to the identified behavioral and mental health concerns of a child or a group of children
- Promoting each child's mental wellness by providing group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues
- Implementing strategies to identify and support children with mental health and social and emotional concerns
- Improving classroom management and teacher practices through strategies that include
 - Using classroom observations and consultations to address teacher and individual child needs and
 - Creating physical and cultural environments that promote positive mental health and social and emotional functioning
- Prevalent child mental health concerns, including internalizing problems, such as appearing withdrawn, and externalizing problems such as challenging behaviors
- Providing recommendations for children with atypical behavior or development
- Making recommendations for utilization of other community mental health resources, as needed
- Helping both families and staff to understand mental health and to access mental health interventions, if needed
- Implementation of the policies to limit suspension and prohibit expulsion

Our Mental Health Services Manager will work closely with the Mental Health Consultant(s) in scheduling and provision of services and will provide the Director with consultation dates via e-mail, fax, letter, phone and calendar invites.

The Mental Health Consultant(s) contract and the Mental Health Services written plan will be reviewed and updated annually, with input by the Health Advisory Committee, and presented to the Policy Council for approval.

Health Advisory Committee

Montrose County ECC has Health Service Advisory Committees (HAC) for the purpose of planning, implementing and evaluating the health services provided to children and families. This HAC:

- Meets at least twice yearly
- Assists the program in meeting Head Start Performance Standards as well as state and local regulations
- Problem solves to correct deficiencies and improve services

- Assists in planning the health services program and developing policies and procedures
- Assists in our self-assessment/evaluation of health services
- Identifies health needs of the community and of the families Montrose County ECC serves
- Assists in identifying all medical, dental, mental health, nutritional and disability services/resources within the area and how to make use of them
- Assists in staff and parent training
- Acts as child health advocates

Membership of the Health Advisory Committee is comprised of parents of currently enrolled children, health service professionals, health services staff, elected Policy Council members and other interested and appropriate individuals / agencies. Members are encouraged to have regularly designated alternate members. Alternate members are welcome to attend meetings at any time. Members who are unable to attend meetings due to the nature of their profession, are asked to give advice by phone or written correspondence.

The Health Services Manager is responsible for training parent participants, arranging meeting places and times, for ensuring proper sign-in sheets and for reporting to the Policy Council/Committee any and all Health Advisory Committee recommendations.

Family Services Monthly Report

A monthly Family Services Report, which documents volunteer hours, parent involvement activities, fatherhood involvement and community participation will be completed by the Family Advocate for each assigned classroom. This monthly report will include the following ChildPlus reports:

- #4120 Family Service Referrals
- #4130 Family Service Actions
- #4140 Home Visits
- #4240 Family Outcomes Analysis

The report will be completed in cooperation with other direct services staff. Once completed, the report will be submitted to the Family Service Manager, no later than the fifth working day of the month. The Family Service Manager will compile and analyze the information for areas of concern. Family services statistical information will be reported to the Program Director and Policy Council each month.

Community Partnerships

Montrose County ECC takes an active role in community planning to encourage strong communication and cooperation. By sharing of information among agencies, we work to improve the delivery of services to children and families in accordance with the agencies confidentiality policies. We work to establish or enhance collaborative relationships within the Montrose County ECC service area. The partnerships include, but are not limited to:

- Health care providers
- Mental health agencies/providers
- Nutrition service providers

- Individuals and agencies that provide services to children with disabilities and their families
- Family preservation and support services
- Child protection services and other agencies working for the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Local schools and other educational institutions for children and families
- Providers of child care services
- Other organizations or businesses that may provide support and/or resources to families

We encourage volunteers from the children's families as well as in the community. Community leaders are invited to visit/observe the classrooms.

To enable the effective participation of children with disabilities and their families, Montrose County ECC makes specific efforts to develop interagency agreements with Local Education Agencies (LEA's) and other agencies within our service area.

Community Advocacy

Staff support and encourage Montrose County ECC parent involvement in community advocacy efforts and opportunities.

We support and encourage parents to influence the character and goals of their community in order to help make community services more responsive to their interests and needs.

We provide parents with comprehensive information about community resources and advocacy opportunities throughout the program year.

Through various workshops and other program activities, parents are encouraged to feel good about themselves and less intimidated to work with agencies in their community. They are encouraged to take an active role on advisory committees for their schools and other agencies.

Montrose County ECC provides parents regular opportunities to work together, and with other community members, on activities that they have helped to develop and in which they have expressed an interest (PDAC) Parent Driven Activities Committee.

Disability Services When the LEA Develops the IEP

Montrose County implements instructional objectives for the attainment of a child's specific annual goals in the following manner:

1. Montrose County ECC screens enrolled children prior to, or within forty-five (45) days of, a child's enrollment date.
2. Screenings, observations, implementation of interventions and/or other information are used to determine when to refer a child for further evaluation and as a possible candidate for special education services.
3. Once a determination is made that a referral is needed, the referral is made to the LEA for evaluation. If the child has a known disability at the time of enrollment, we notify the LEA immediately.

4. A Montrose County ECC representative is included in the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) membership.
5. The ARC determines the content of an evaluation.
6. Parent permission for evaluation is obtained.
7. Child is evaluated to identify disabilities with potential adverse effects on educational performance and which establish a need for special education.
8. Evaluation must meet state requirements.
9. Existing Head Start data and/or other current data are used rather than repeated.
10. Head Start is part of the evaluation team.
11. ARC determines eligibility based on the evaluation and state eligibility criteria. If a child is not eligible, the ARC gives the parent notice of refused services and identifies alternative remedial actions, with due process rights.
12. If deemed eligible, an IEP is developed for the special education and related services needed.
13. The IEP addresses only special services, which are those services over and above what every other child receives.
14. The IEP addresses what services will be provided by the school district and by Montrose County ECC.
15. The school district has the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) responsibility and due process.
16. Child is included on district's IDEA count.
17. Child must be identified and served under an IEP by December 1 to be included in the count.
18. IDEA Count is for supplemental federal funds.
19. IDEA and Head Start funds are not duplicated. (The child may be counted as funded under both).
20. The child is not counted in the State preschool (KERA) count.

When Montrose County ECC Develops the IEP

Every child who has been evaluated and found to have a disability requiring of special services, must have an IEP before special education and related services are provided. This ensures that comprehensive information is used to develop the child's program.

When Montrose County ECC Head Start provides the evaluation, a multi-disciplinary evaluation team makes the determination whether the child meets the Head Start eligibility criteria. The team assures that the evaluation findings and recommendations, as well as information from the developmental assessment, observations and parent reports, are considered in making the determination whether the child meets Head Start eligibility criteria.

If Montrose County ECC develops the IEP, the IEP takes into account the child's unique needs, strengths, developmental potential and the family strengths and circumstances as well as the child's disabilities. The IEP includes:

- A statement of the child's present level of functioning in the areas of communication status, academic performance, health, vision, hearing and motor abilities, social-emotional, self-help, and cognitive levels of development
- A statement identifying needs in areas requiring specific programming

- A statement of annual goals, including short term objectives for meeting goals
- A statement of the specific special education services to be provided to the child and related services necessary for the child to participate in a Head Start program. This includes services provided by Montrose County ECC and services provided by other agencies and non-Head Start professionals.
- The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of services
- A statement of objectives related to the child's disability, when they are essential to the child's progress

When Montrose County ECC develops the IEP, the team includes:

- The Head Start Disability Services Manager or a representative who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education services
- The child's Teacher or Home Visitor
- One or both of the child's parents or guardians
- At least one of the professional members of the multidisciplinary team which evaluated the child
- The LEA representative is invited in writing if Montrose County ECC is initiating the request for a meeting.
- Montrose County ECC may, at the discretion of Montrose County ECC staff, also invite other individuals at the request of the parents, and other individuals, including other Montrose County ECC staff, particularly those involved due to the nature of the child's disability.

A meeting is held within thirty calendar days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services, at a time convenient for the parents and staff to develop the IEP. Services are to begin as soon as possible after the development of the IEP.

Montrose County ECC makes vigorous efforts to involve parents in the IEP process. We:

- Notify parents in writing and, if necessary, also verbally or by other appropriate means, of the purpose, persons requested to attend, time and location of the IEP meeting far enough in advance so that there is opportunity for them to participate
- Make every effort to assure that the parents understand the purpose and proceedings and that they are encouraged to provide information about their child and their desires for the child's program
- Provide, interpreters, if needed, and offer the parents a copy of the IEP, in the parents' language of understanding, after it has been signed
- Hold the meeting, without the parents only if neither parent can attend, after repeated attempts to establish a date or facilitate their participation, through records of contacts, (i.e., phone calls, letters, home visits or visits to parent's place of work), along with the responses or results
- Arrange an opportunity to meet the parents to review the results of the meeting and secure their input and signature

Montrose County ECC initiates the implementation of the IEP as soon as possible after the IEP meeting by modifying the child's program in accordance with the IEP and arranging for the provision or related services.

If a child enters the Montrose County ECC program with an IEP completed within two (2) months prior to entry, services are to begin within the first (2) weeks of program attendance.

Interagency Agreement

Montrose County ECC participates in the coordination of services to eligible preschool children through state and federal (Head Start) funds. The agreement is based on the planned growth criteria set by the Colorado Board of Education in conjunction with Head Start in January 1994, regarding local school district requirements for full utilization of Head Start in Colorado. Montrose County ECC works to develop interagency agreements with the LEA's and other agencies within the Big Sandy Head Start service area. If no agreements can be reached, we document our efforts and inform the Regional Office.

We coordinate in the following ways:

- Participation in the public agency's Child Find plan under Part B of IDEA
- Joint training of staff and parents
- Procedures for referral for evaluations, IEP meetings and placement decisions
- Transition
- Resource sharing
- Providing the number of children with IEPs who are receiving services to the LEA Child Count report by December 1st annually
- Cooperation in assessing the community's needs for preschool services
- Maximize the use of Head Start funds to provide services to as many three- and four-year-old children as possible
- Coordinate the recruitment of preschool children for publicly funded preschool programs
- Coordinate the location of preschool sites in the community in order to minimize the transportation of young children and to facilitate parent involvement in the preschool program
- Coordinate services to children with disabilities
- Update the agreements annually

Eligibility of Child with Emotional/Behavior Disorders

Children with emotional or behavioral functioning disorders are eligible for special education services. An emotional/behavior disorder is a condition in which a child's behavior or emotional responses are different from those generally accepted age-appropriate norms of children with the same ethnic and culture background, resulting in significant impairment in social relationships, self-care, educational progress and/or classroom behavior. A child who exhibits one or more of the following characteristics with such frequency, intensity, or duration as to require intervention is classified as having an emotional/behavior disorder:

- Seriously delayed social development including an inability to build or maintain satisfactory age-appropriate interpersonal relationships with peers or adults
- Inappropriate behavior (e.g., dangerously aggressive toward others, self-destructive, severely withdrawn, non-communicative)

- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, or evidence of excessive anxiety or fears (e.g., frequent crying episodes, constant need for assurance)
- Has a professional diagnosis of serious emotional disturbance
- Meets criteria for emotional-behavioral disability as defined by the state
- The eligibility decision is based on multiple sources of data, including assessment of the child's behavior or emotional functioning in multiple settings

The evaluation process includes a review of the child's regular physical examination to eliminate the possible of misdiagnosis due to an underlying physical condition.

Eligibility of Child with Hearing Impairment, Including Deafness

Children with hearing impairments are eligible for special education services. A child is classified as deaf if a hearing impairment exists which is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, and learning is affected. A child is classified as hearing impaired who has a permanent or fluctuating hearing impairment which adversely affects learning or:

- Meets the legal criteria for hearing impairment established by the state of Colorado or
- Experiences recurrent temporary or fluctuating hearing loss caused by otitis media, allergies, or eardrum perforations and other outer or middle ear anomalies over a period of three months or more

Problems associated with temporary or fluctuating hearing loss can include impaired listening skills, delayed language development and articulation problems.

Children meeting these criteria must be referred for medical care, have their hearing checked frequently, and receive speech, language or hearing services as indicated by the IEP.

Eligibility of Child with Health Impairment

Children with health impairments are eligible for special education services. A child is classified as health impaired who has limited strength, vitality or alertness due to a chronic or acute health problem which adversely affects educational performance.

Criteria include the existence of a health impairment caused by chronic or acute health problems such as cancer, cystic fibrosis, heart conditions, tuberculosis, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Program Governance

As a Head Start program, Montrose County ECC has a formal structure of shared governance. This structure consists of a Governing Body, the Policy Council and the Parent Committee. All of these are established annually and as early in the year as possible.

We provide an initial orientation and ongoing training and assistance to the governing body members and the Policy Council Members to enable them to carry out their program governance

responsibilities effectively. We do so through the provision of written reports, presentations and training sessions.

Governing Body

Composition

The Governing Body, also known as the School Board (“the Board”), has legal and fiscal responsibility for Montrose County ECC, and is composed of the following members:

- At least one member with a background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting
- At least one member with a background and expertise in early childhood education and development
- At least one member shall be a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the Board
- If no one of with the above-mentioned background and skills is available to serve as a member of the Board, the Board shall use a consultant, or another individual with relevant expertise, with the qualifications described in that clause, who shall work directly with the Board
- Additional members shall:
 - Reflect the community to be served and include parents of children who are currently, or were formerly, enrolled in Head Start programs
 - Be selected for their expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs
- Exceptions shall be made when members oversee a public entity and are selected to their positions with the public entity by public election or political appointment

Members of the Board shall:

- Not have a financial conflict of interest with Montrose County ECC
- Not receive compensation for serving on the Board or for providing services to Montrose County ECC
- Not be employed by, nor shall members of their immediate family be employed by, Montrose County ECC
- Operate as an entity independent of staff employed by Montrose County ECC
- Exceptions shall be made if an individual holds a position as a result of public election or political appointment, and such position carries with it a concurrent appointment to serve as a member of a Head Start agency governing body, and such individual has any conflict of interest described above. In such cases:
 - The individual will not be prohibited from serving on the Board and Montrose County ECC will report such conflict to the Secretary
 - If the position held as a result of public election or political appointment provides compensation, such individual shall not be prohibited from receiving such compensation

Responsibilities

The Board will have the following responsibilities:

- Legal and fiscal responsibility for administering and overseeing relevant programs, including the safeguarding of federal funds
- Adopt practices that assure active, independent and informed governance of Montrose County ECC
- Fully participate in the development, planning and evaluation of Montrose County ECC programs
- Ensure compliance with federal laws (including regulations) and applicable state, tribal, and local laws (including regulations)
- Other activities, including:
 - Establishing procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection and enrollment of children
 - Reviewing all applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding
 - Establishing procedures and guidelines for accessing and collecting information
 - Reviewing and approving all major policies of Montrose County ECC, including:
 - The annual self-assessment and financial audit
 - Montrose County ECC's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal provisions in our grant application, including implementation of corrective actions
 - Personnel policies regarding the hiring, evaluation, termination and compensation of Montrose County ECC employees
 - Developing procedures for how members of the Policy Council are selected
 - Approving financial management, accounting and reporting policies and ensuring compliance with laws and regulations related to financial statements, including:
 - Approval of all major financial expenditures
 - Annual approval of the operating budget
 - Selection (except when a financial auditor is assigned by the state under state law or is assigned under local law) of independent financial auditors who shall report all critical accounting policies and practices to the Board
 - Monitoring of Montrose County ECC's actions to correct any audit findings and of other action necessary to comply with applicable laws (including regulations) governing financial statement and accounting practices
 - Reviewing results from monitoring conducted under section 641A(c), including appropriate follow up activities
 - Approving personnel policies and procedures, including policies and procedures regarding the hiring, evaluation, compensation, and termination of the Executive Director, Head Start Director, Director of Human Resources, Chief Fiscal Officer and any other person in an equivalent position with the agency
 - Establishing, adopting and periodically updating written standards of conduct that establish standards and formal procedures for disclosing, addressing and resolving:
 - Any conflict of interest, and any appearance of a conflict of interest, by members of the Board, officers and employees of Montrose County ECC and consultants and agents who provide services or furnish goods to Montrose County ECC
 - Complaints, including investigations, when appropriate

- To the extent practicable and appropriate, at the discretion of the Board, establishing advisory committees to oversee key responsibilities related to program governance and improvement of Montrose County ECC

Provision of Information

Montrose County ECC staff shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information about program planning, policies, and Montrose County ECC operations, for use by the Board and the Policy Council, including:

- Monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures
- Monthly program information summaries
- Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency
- Monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture
- The financial audit
- The annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment
- The communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment of Montrose County ECC, including any applicable updates
- Communication and guidance from the Secretary
- The program information reports

Policy Council

The Policy Council is responsible for the direction of Montrose County ECC, including program design and operation, and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives, taking into account the annual communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment and self-assessment.

Composition

The Policy Council is elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in Montrose County ECC Head Start, and shall meet the following requirements:

- Families of children who are currently enrolled in Montrose County ECC Head Start shall constitute at least 51% of the members of the Policy Council
- Members at large of the community served by Montrose County ECC, who may include parents of children who were formerly enrolled in Montrose County ECC. All community representatives will be elected by the full Policy Council before they can be seated.

New Policy Council members will be seated in the month of October. All Policy Council members must stand for election or re-election annually. The Policy Council is not dissolved until successor Council members are elected and seated.

Members of the Policy Council shall:

- Not have a financial conflict of interest with Montrose County ECC
- Not receive compensation for serving on the Policy Council or for providing services to Montrose County ECC

Montrose County ECC enables low-income members to participate fully in their group responsibilities by providing, if necessary, reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred by the members in the following manner:

- Travel expenses will be reimbursed at the same rate as which Montrose County ECC employees are reimbursed for program travel (i.e., \$.34 per mile)
- Baby-sitting services will be reimbursed at the average rate for child care services:
 - \$10.00 per hour per child – for up to five hours service
 - \$15.00 per hour per child – for five or more hours of service
- Meal/food costs are provided by Montrose County ECC

Alternates

Policy Council members shall secure the services of an alternate representative if they are unable to attend a meeting themselves. A Policy Council member who is unable to attend a meeting or secure the services of an alternate member must notify the staff. All privileges are granted to alternate members when the member is not present for that meeting. Alternates shall notify the Secretary of who they are replacing for that meeting. Members shall have a roster of all members and alternates on the Policy Council. Alternate representatives may not be elected as an officer of the Policy Council.

Limitations of Membership

No representative shall serve as a member of the Policy Council for more than five (5) years.

After five consecutive or intermittent years of Policy Council membership, a person is no longer a voting member of the Policy Council. Representatives identified as having served five years on the Policy Council will be recognized for their service and removed from the membership roster.

Subcommittees

The Policy Council establishes subcommittees to perform specific duties. Subcommittees will make recommendations to the full Policy Council to consider items for approval or disapproval. A minimum of four Standing Committees are established in the month of September. These are to include:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is comprised of the officers of the Policy Council and may conduct business for the Policy Council between regular meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet with staff to obtain information as needed for reports.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall review and discuss Montrose County ECC personnel policies and make recommendations to the full membership prior to the Policy Council approving said policies and procedures. This committee shall also screen, interview and recommend persons to be hired to fill vacancies in the Head Start program. They shall oversee personnel actions in regard to firing of Head Start employees.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall discuss matters of the budget, timelines and the planning of financial issues of the program and make recommendations to the full Policy Council.

Additional committees are:

- Parent Driven Action Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- Self-Assessment Committee

Members of these committees shall be comprised of Policy Council members, alternates, and volunteers as approved by the Council. Staff will provide support, training and technical assistance to standing committees.

Ad Hoc Committees are formed for the purpose of accomplishing a specific task and disbanded once their purpose is achieved.

Responsibilities

The Policy Council will approve and submit decisions about each of the following activities to the Board:

- Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that Montrose County ECC is responsive to community and parent needs
- Program recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities
- Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding, prior to submission of applications
- Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in policy council activities
- Bylaws for the operation of the Policy Council
- Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff, including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff
- Procedures for how members of the Policy Council will be elected

Personnel policies are reviewed annually with the Policy Council. The Policy Council must approve all Montrose County ECC personnel policies and procedures for Head Start. The Personnel Committee may review personnel policies and procedures and make recommendations to the full Council for approval or disapproval. The Director will monitor Policy Council activity to determine compliance with this requirement

Objectives

At a minimum, the Policy Council is expected to, in cooperation with the Montrose County ECC Board and key management staff:

- Assist in the development of, and give approval to, all Head Start funding applications and amendments to funding applications prior to their submission
- Participate in planning and formulating long and short-range goals
- Establish criteria defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities
- Actively participate in the program's annual self-assessment process
- Approve/disapprove personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies, including standards of conduct
- Participate in establishing criteria for the selection of Montrose County ECC staff

- Approve/disapprove the hiring and/or firing of the Montrose County ECC Director and other staff who work primarily for the Head Start program

In addition, the Policy Council must perform the following functions directly:

- Serve as a link to the Board, public and private organizations and the community served
- Assist Parent Committees in communicating with parents to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities and to encourage their participation in the program
- Assist Parent Committees in planning, coordinating and organizing program activities for parents
- Ensure that funds set aside from program budgets are used to support parent activities
- Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents and community organizations
- Establish and maintain procedures for hearing and resolving community complaints about the Head Start program

Meetings

Policy Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month throughout the calendar year, or as determined by the membership at the last scheduled meeting. Policy Council meetings will be conducted as usual if a quorum, or 51% of Council membership, is present within thirty minutes after the scheduled meeting time. If no quorum is present after thirty minutes, the meeting shall proceed as an informal discussion. No official session shall occur without a quorum. This quorum will apply to all regular Policy Council meetings and any special called meetings.

Policy Council members decide on the location of the next meeting by majority vote if more than one site is requested.

Announcements of the time and place of regular meetings shall be sent to all members, in writing, at least five working days prior to each meeting.

Special / Emergency Meetings

Special/Emergency meetings may be called:

- By the Policy Council Chairperson if, and only if, business requires such action
- If 51% of the Policy Council members petition, in writing, to call a meeting. In such cases, the Chairperson is obligated to schedule a meeting within three days of the receipt of the petition.

When Special/emergency meetings are called, the Administrative Secretary will notify Council members of the need for the meeting and work with the Executive Committee to produce an agenda for the meeting.

Voting

Each member of the Policy Council shall have one vote, with the exception of the Chairperson who shall cast the deciding vote only in the case of a tie vote of the body at large.

During the transition period when the out-going and in-coming Policy Council members are together, both will vote on each agenda item, including election of officers.

Parent alternates are encouraged to attend all Policy Council meetings and will vote only in the absence of the regular member.

Votes are taken after motions are made, seconded and discussed. The Chairperson calls for the vote asking for an indication of approval, disapproval, or abstaining from the vote. Manner of voting procedure is determined by the Council (voice, show of hands or secret ballot).

The Policy Council Secretary tabulates the vote and the Chairperson announces whether the motion was approved or disapproved. These decisions are included in the minutes.

Termination of Membership

Membership in the Policy Council may be voluntarily terminated at any time by written notice to the Council. The resigning member must write, sign and date a letter of resignation and submit it to the Policy Council. Alternate members will be requested to attend Policy Council meetings until a new member is elected.

Failure to perform duties or attend meetings can result in involuntary termination of membership. Any member who misses three consecutive meetings of the Policy Council without submitting an excuse or securing the attendance of an alternate may be terminated by the Policy Council/Committee with a 2/3 majority vote. The Council must submit written notification of termination to the member.

Members may be terminated by means of written notice and by a 2/3 vote from the Policy Council at any time for:

- Failure to uphold the standards of Head Star;
- Displays of inappropriate behaviors while representing the Policy Council
- Gross misconduct
- Acting on behalf of the Policy Council without their prior approval
- Blatant disrespect of Head Start philosophies, goals or objectives
- Neglect of duties

Any member being considered for termination will be sent notification in writing after the second unexcused absence. A member being considered for termination may ask for a hearing to present justification to the Policy Council. If the terminated member is dissatisfied with the decision, he/she may request an impartial hearing.

In the event of a termination or resignation of a community representative, the agency represented may be asked to provide a replacement. The Policy Council must vote to approve or disapprove any potential replacement. Such election shall take place within one month of resignation or termination of the member.

Internal Dispute Resolution

After informal discussion, if the Board believes that the Policy Council will not approve its decision and Montrose County ECC wants to formalize the approval process, it should notify the Policy Council in writing. The notice will contain a statement of the reasons in support of the proposed decision or action.

Within ten (10) days after the receipt of the notice, the Policy Council will hold a special meeting for consideration of the proposed decision or action.

Immediately after the special meeting, the Policy Council shall notify Montrose County ECC in writing of its approval or disapproval of the proposed decision or action. If it is a notice of disapproval, it will contain a statement of reason.

In the event of disapproval, and if Montrose County ECC desires further consideration of the matter, it shall initiate a meeting between itself and the Policy Council for the purpose of attempting to resolve their differences.

If after these efforts, Montrose County ECC and the Policy Council are unable to reach an agreement, Montrose County ECC will invoke arbitration procedures. The arbitration panel will consist of three members:

- A member will be designated by the Policy Council
- A member will be designated by the Board
- A member will act as chairperson of the arbitration panel and shall be selected by the Montrose County ECC. This member must be acceptable to both parties.

The arbiters shall be members of the community and not be associated with the Head Start program. None of the arbiters shall be relatives of any of the parties and shall serve without compensation.

When Montrose County decides to submit the impasse to arbitration, it shall notify the Policy Council and the Board in writing that the impasse is to be resolved by binding arbitration.

The notice shall include:

- A statement of the issue on which the groups are at impasse
- A request of both parties to submit (within seven (7) days) the names and addresses of their selection member to serve on the arbitration panel.

Failure by the Policy Council or Board to designate an arbiter within seven (7) days of the receipt of the Notice of Arbitration shall be a default, and shall be considered to be approval of the proposed decision or action.

The arbitration panel shall schedule the hearing within twenty (20) calendar days. The hearing shall be conducted at a place acceptable to the panel members. The agency shall notify all members of the panel as to time and place and shall assume any expenses incurred by the arbitration and shall provide clerical and other support as needed.

The proceedings of the arbitration panel shall follow Parliamentary Procedures and consist of;

- Oral presentation from both parties
- Response by both parties, including questions
- Additional presentation and written materials as deemed necessary. This may or may not include witnesses.

It is the responsibility of the Agency to provide the panel with needed materials such as budget, regulations, or other materials of that nature.

Both parties are obligated to act in good conduct before and during the proceedings. Neither party may communicate with the arbitrations once the panel has been selected unless all parties are present.

Arbitration does not preclude the parties from compromising their differences as long as no decision has been issued by the panel.

On conclusion of the hearing, the panel shall issue the decision in writing within fifteen (15) days after the panel meeting. The final decision shall be binding on all parties and there shall be no appeal.

Provision of Information

A system for regular distribution of information to members of the Policy Council is provided.

Information provided to Policy Council members includes:

- Timetables for planning, development and submission of proposals
- Head Start policies, guidelines and communications from ACF
- Monthly financial reports and statements of funds expended
- Work plans, grant applications and personnel policies
- Appropriate staff distribute information and materials to Policy Council members in a timely manner.

The Program Operations Manager and the FACE Manager take primary responsibility as support staff to the Policy Council.

Distribution of information may include written reports, minutes of meetings, official correspondence and oral presentations at meeting or training sessions.

Notification of date and time and location of the next regular Policy Council meetings will be emailed to all members at least five working days prior to the meeting. The written notification will include:

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Agenda for upcoming meeting items to be approved by the Council

Parent Driven Action Committee (PDAC)

Structure

The PDAC is comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled in Montrose County ECC and must be established as early in the program year as possible.

Responsibilities

The PDAC is responsible for:

- Advising staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families
- Having a process for communication with the policy council
- Participate in the recruitment and screening of employees, within the guidelines established Policy Council

Program Design & Management

Monitoring Objectives & Activities

Montrose County ECC has ongoing monitoring to ensure that we implement federal regulations and that appropriate services are being provided to children and families. Our monitoring system is used to determine whether:

- Program objectives are being met
- Component work plans are being followed
- Head Start Performance Standards and other regulations are being met
- Budgets are being managed
- Staff are performing assignments
- Enrollment slots are filled
- Attendance is regular
- Centers/classrooms are well equipped, organized and safe
- Parent involvement is occurring
- Services are being provided and/or arranged to meet child/family needs

We utilize the following monitoring procedures:

- Desk top monitoring: includes reviewing manual and computer data/reports
- On-site observations: includes visits to offices and classroom to visually observe and monitor
- Staff and parent interviews: includes talking with staff and parents concerning program operations
- The Director will monitor administrative activities
- Fiscal staff will monitor fiscal operations including budget, audits and non-federal share

Monitoring reports will be shared with Directors and management staff so that their follow-up can be done in a timely manner. Findings will be shared during bi-weekly Leadership meetings.

We will develop and implement our own "Monitoring Structure" format to guide all monitoring activities. The Monitoring Structure will:

- Designate responsibilities to the appropriate staff according to job title and field of expertise
- Determine methods to be used
- Establish timelines for all necessary monitoring activities

The Director and managers keep individual monitoring logs to verify that the Monitoring Structure is being followed. The Director will be responsible for checking these logs on a regular basis in order to assure the appropriate monitoring is occurring based on the timeline of the Monitoring Structure.

Our Administrator:

- Monitors child record data entry

- Ensures that all children funded by CPP and preschool special education have an active assessment portfolio
- Ensures child record details, especially funding sources and demographics, are accurate and complete
- Spot checks at least once several weeks after fall enrollment period and again during winter to account for children who enrolled late
- Ensures preschool and kindergarten portfolios are entered in the correct license
- Updates GOLD color bands as needed
- Monitors documentation quality and quantity:
 - Generates documentation status reports during each checkpoint period to make sure teachers are uploading documentation online. By the end of each period, there must be at least one piece of documentation for each assessment objective for each child, meaning the teacher has some evidence to support his or her rating.
 - Spot checks documentation for quality. Documentation should be brief, factual, objective, relevant to the tagged objective and meaningful enough to support a reliable rating.
- Monitors assessment rating completion:
 - Ensures complete, finalized data for all children at the end of each checkpoint period. It is recommended to generate assessment rating completion reports a few times during the checkpoint window to ensure staff are on track for completing ratings so they are not rushed at the end of the assessment period. Note: children who enroll late, fewer than six weeks/30 days before the end of the period, should not be rated until the following period.
 - Spot checks correspondence between documentation and ratings as an ongoing reliability check. This can provide more information than the documentation tally alone.
 - Monitors use of Not Yet verses Observed in [GOLD® Appendix](#). This rating cannot be used during the IEP/service entry and exit periods for preschoolers with disabilities.

Reporting Systems

Montrose County ECC utilizes the ChildPlus data tracking system and Infinite Visions financial management software in order to:

- Generate monthly reports that compare monthly and yearly expenditures to budgets, and itemize line-item expenditures. Financial information from the general ledger is transferred to the appropriate line item of the Financial Status Report (SF269) annually for each grant year. The report is submitted to the ACF Regional Office within 90 calendar days after the end of the grant year.
- Monitor program operations
- Generate official reports for federal, state and local authorities, as required by applicable law
- Generate a report to be made available to the public, at least once in each fiscal year, that discloses the following information from the most recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent:

- The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source
- An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year
- The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment) and the percentage of eligible children served
- The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit
- The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams
- Information about parent involvement activities
- The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten
- Any other information required by the Secretary
- Generate semi-annual status reports for the Board and the Policy Council

These reports enable us to control program quality, maintain program accountability and advise governing bodies, policy groups and staff of program progress. All information is used to assess needs, plan service delivery activities and training, track the provision of services, and monitor progress and compliance with Head Start Performance Standards and federal and state regulations.

Staff utilize the data tracked in ChildPlus in different ways based upon their designated responsibilities:

- The FACE reviews and/or generates reports on enrollment, eligibility, daily attendance, waiting lists, terminations/transfers, family assessments/partnership, referrals, parent involvement and volunteer services
- The Education Service Manager(s) reviews and/or generates reports of developmental screening and child assessment, child outcomes, sensory/behavior screenings, educational home visits, parent/teacher conferences, teacher accreditation and training
- The Nutrition Services Coordinator reviews and/or generates child's growth and nutritional assessment data
- The Disability Services Coordinator reviews and/or generates reports on child referral/evaluation, eligibility/disability status, special education & related services
- The Mental Health Coordinator reviews and/or generates reports on mental health referrals and services

Montrose County ECC uses the data we collect to support and increase the integration of services as follows:

- Attendance data is used by family and nutrition services staff to monitor compliance with the 85% average daily attendance requirement, identify family support needs and compare with meal counts for CACFP reimbursement.
- Health services data is used in all component areas to address individual child & family needs and to monitor compliance with federal, state and local regulations and with licensing requirements.
- Family services and parent involvement data is used in all component areas, in program planning, identifying and obtaining needed services outside the program, and in the provision of information and training for parents.

- Developmental/sensory/behavioral screenings and child assessment data is used by education, disability, health and family services to develop IEPs for children and to involve and train parents.
- Volunteer services data is used by family services, health and Leadership staff to ensure volunteer training and health requirements are met and to determine in-kind donations for the 20% funding match.

Montrose County submits an annual report to the Secretary indicating the number and percentage of Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Head Start Education Coordinators with Child Development Associate credentials or associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degrees.

Program Planning

Montrose County ECC has a systematic, ongoing process of program planning for continuous improvement for achieving program goals that ensures child safety and the delivery of effective, high-quality services. This system includes consultation with the Board, Policy Council, program staff, parents and children, and community organizations that serve Head Start or other low-income children and families in our service area. We provide training for staff, parents, the Board, Policy Council and community partners so that they can all be active participants in this process.

Program planning shall include:

Parent Participation

As our partners, parents participate in the evaluation and planning process. Parents are given the opportunity to receive training and participate on committees formed for the purpose of self-assessment and program planning.

Community Assessment

A Community Assessment is completed within the five county areas once every three years. This Assessment will collect data about community strengths, needs and resources. Montrose County ECC will use the data collected to make decisions about the way the agency will respond through our program and services.

Information is gathered by:

- Consulting and securing statistical information from school districts, health departments, Department of Social Services and other community and child development agencies
- Reviewing census data/reports and population research results
- Reviewing parent and community surveys

The Community Assessment will include the collection and analysis of the following information:

- The demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families, including their estimated number, geographic location and racial and ethnic composition
- Other child development, child care programs and family child care programs that serve Head Start eligible children, including KERA, home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools and other local pre-school programs, and the approximate number of Head Start eligible children served by each

- The estimated number of children four years old or younger with disabilities, including the types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies
- Data concerning the education, health, nutrition and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families, as defined by communities that serve young children
- Resources in the community that are used to address the needs of Head Start eligible children and their families, including assessments of their availability and accessibility
- The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity and languages they speak, including:
 - Children experiencing homelessness in collaboration with, to the extent possible, McKinney-Vento Local Education Agency Liaisons
 - Children in foster care
 - Children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies
- The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being
- Typical work, school and training schedules of parents with eligible children
- Strengths of the community

In each of the two years following completion of the Community Assessment, Montrose County ECC will review the county demographics and other statistical information to determine whether there have been significant changes in the information described in the Assessment. The Community Assessment will be updated and plans adjusted to reflect these changes.

We collaborate with social service agencies, health providers, childcare providers and the public schools in conducting and updating the Community Assessment and in interpreting its results. We utilize the results to design a program that meets community needs, and builds on strengths and resources.

Program Evaluation / Self-Assessment

We perform an annual program evaluation / self-assessment to determine our program's effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives for improving the school readiness of children in our program, and in implementing federal, state and local regulations.

The Montrose County ECC program evaluation is performed in the following manner:

- Work plans (objectives) are monitored by the staff quarterly.
 - Program coordinators monitor work plan objectives and report results to the Director.
 - The Director reports results to the Policy Council and the Board for approval and/or amendments.
- Staff performance evaluations are conducted at the beginning of the program year and prior to the end of the program year.
 - Employees and supervisor set individual performance goals and determine training needs.
- Policy council, staff, parents and community representatives perform an annual program self-assessment of the effectiveness and progress in meeting goals and objectives and in implementing federal regulations.

- The Director provides training to Policy Council members, self-assessment team members and staff (January-February).
- Teams evaluate each center using selected review Instruments (February-March).
- The Director compiles all self-assessment results and reports to the Policy Council and Board (April-May).
- Parents and staff are encouraged to complete program evaluation forms for the purpose of planning and quality improvement.
 - Evaluation forms are prepared and distributed to staff and parents throughout the program year.
 - Leadership Team and Coordinators are responsible for the distribution and collection of the evaluation forms.
 - Compiled evaluation results are used to plan for program changes, trainings and overall quality improvements.

The Montrose County ECC self-assessment uses program data, including:

- Aggregated child assessment data
- Professional development data
- Family engagement data as appropriate

to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting goals, compliance with program performance standards throughout the program year and the effectiveness of the professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness.

Utilizing Community Assessment & Self-Assessment Data

Once the Community Assessment & Self-Assessment are completed, the Policy Council, the Board, Advisory Committees and staff will be given summarized data. This will allow the governing bodies, parents and community members to have a voice in establishing Montrose County ECC's direction and service delivery strategies.

We use information from the community assessment to:

- Determine program philosophy and long range and short-range program objectives
- Determine the type of services that are most needed and the program option or options to be implemented
- Determine the recruitment area to be served, if limited resources make it impossible to serve the entire service area
- Determine appropriate locations for centers and the areas to be served by home based programs
- Set criteria that define the children and families who will be given priority for recruitment and selection
- Develop written plans for implementing services in each of the component areas
- Establish long range goals of the program and shorter, one-year program and financial objectives, which are consistent with the philosophy of Montrose County ECC

All written plans for implementing services are written with input from staff, reviewed and approved by the Policy Council at least annually and revised and updated as needed. The Policy Council and the Board will approve the final long- and short-term goals established.

Once Montrose County has established long- and short-term goals:

- Written work plans and an operating budget to implement services are developed with input from staff, parents, community, and governing bodies
- Draft plans and budget are then presented to the Finance Committee for review and input
- When the written plans and budget are finalized, they will be forwarded to the Policy Council for final approval
- Budgets will be analyzed at management meetings to determine the need for improvement and adjustments. Reports are then forwarded to the Policy Council for input and approval.
- Written plans are revised and budget modifications are made as required/needed

Montrose County ECC will develop, and submit to the Secretary, a report containing an improvement plan approved by the governing bodies to strengthen any areas identified in the self-assessment as weaknesses or in need of improvement.

Financial Requirements

Montrose County ECC will follow all financial requirements and limitations established in the Head Start Performance Standards, including but not limited to the following:

- Federal financial assistance will not exceed 80% of our approved total program costs
- Montrose County ECC will contribute 20% as non-federal match each budget period
- Costs to develop and administer our program will not be excessive or exceed 15 percent of the total approved program costs, which includes both federal costs and non-federal match

To assess total program costs and ensure we meet this requirement, we will:

- Determine the costs to develop and administer our program, including the costs of necessary resources
- Categorize total costs as development and administrative or program cost;
- Identify and allocate the portion of dual benefits costs that are for development and administration
- Identify and allocate the portion of indirect costs that are for development and administration versus program costs
- Delineate all development and administrative costs in the grant application and calculate the percentage of total approved costs allocated to development and administration

If at any time within the grant funding cycle, Montrose County ECC estimates that development and administration costs will exceed 15% of our total approved costs, we will submit a waiver request to the responsible HHS official that explains why costs exceed the limit, that indicates the time period the waiver will cover and that describes what we will do to reduce our development and administrative costs to comply with the 15% limit after the waiver period.

Communications

With Families

Communication between the program and families is a continuous process. Parents receive information in numerous ways:

- Newsletters & Letters
- Parents and staff communicate by phone
- Parents and staff communicate through Back & Forth Notebooks
- Parent bulletin board in center is updated as needed
- Information is given during home visits
- Parents visit central office for information
- Conferences are held with parents concerning special problems
- Parents participate in trainings
- Parents are invited to participate in center/classroom activities or committees
- The news media

Communication with parents is carried out in the parent's primary or preferred language, or through an interpreter, to the extent feasible.

With Governing Bodies and Policy Groups

We regularly provide the following information to the Board and to members of our Policy Council:

- Procedures and timetables for program planning
- Policies, guidelines and other communications from Montrose County ECC
- Program and financial reports
- Program plans, polices, procedures and Head Start grant applications

Information is collected and distributed in the following manner:

- Service Area Managers, Coordinators and Family Service workers collect information for the Director prior to Policy Council and Board meetings
- Written reports are given to the group
- Meeting notices, agendas and previous minutes are mailed prior to meetings
- Other items are distributed as necessary

Amongst Staff

We prioritize regular communication among all program staff to facilitate quality outcomes for children and families.

- Leadership Team meetings are held bi- weekly or more frequently if needed.
- Family Service Team meetings are held monthly or more frequently if needed.
- The Secretary receives and distributes mail, memos and other items daily.
- Interoffice memos and/or e-mail are used to inform staff of program issues, meetings, training events, etc.
- Montrose County ECC maintains a webpage with information and downloadable forms in each service area to be used by staff.
- Urgent announcements will be communicated via e-mail and phone calls.

Human Resources

Organizational Structure

Montrose County ECC's program is structured in the following manner to support our three major services areas and meet our program objectives.

The Director:

- Ensures that program management functions are formally assigned and adopted by staff
- Oversees all program management functions. Additional agency management staff will assist the Director in ensuring that program management functions are accomplished.

The CAA Fiscal Office oversees financial and budget function.

The CAA Administrative Assistance & CAA Human Resources Manager oversee personnel administration.

Management of Early Childhood Development and Health Services is as follows:

- Health Services Manager — oversees Health Services (child medical and dental)
- Education Services Manager — oversees Education Services, Transition services, Training and Career Development functions
- Nutrition Services Manager — oversees Nutrition Services and USDA CACFP operations
- Mental Health Services Manager — oversees Mental Health Services in collaboration with the Mental Health Professional
- Disabilities Services Coordinator — oversees services for children with Disabilities

Management of Families and Community Partnerships is as follows:

- Family Services Manager — oversees Social Services and Parent Involvement functions.

Our organizational structure is reviewed annually during the budget process. This process ensures that we maintain a current organizational chart.

Ethical Hiring

All employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts or other financial awards sign statements that they will not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or anything of significant monetary value from contractors or potential contractors.

General Staff Qualifications

All Montrose County ECC staff must have the knowledge, skills and experience they need to perform their assigned functions responsibly. Only candidates with the qualifications specified in this Part and in 45 CFR 1306.21 will be hired.

Current and former Head Start parents receive preference for employment vacancies for which they are qualified.

Staff and program consultants are familiar with the ethnic background and heritage of families in the program and are able to serve and effectively communicate, to the extent feasible, with children and families with no or limited English proficiency.

The program complies with Section 648A of the Head Start Act and any subsequent amendments regarding the qualifications of classroom teachers.

Director Qualifications

The Director demonstrates skills and ability in a management capacity relative to human services program management.

The Director must have, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree and experience in supervision of staff, fiscal management and administration.

The educational requirements for the Director must be met by satisfactory completion of one of the following.

- A Bachelor degree in early childhood education from a regionally accredited Colorado college or university; or
- A current early childhood professional Credential Level IV Version 2.0, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education; or
- A master's degree with a major emphasis in child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education; or
- Completion of all of the following three (3) semester hour courses from a regionally accredited college or university, at either a two-year, four-year or graduate level, in each of the following subject or content areas:
 - Introduction to early childhood professions
 - Introduction to early childhood lab techniques
 - Early childhood guidance strategies for children
 - Early childhood health, nutrition, and safety
 - Administration of early childhood care and education programs
 - Administration: human relations for early childhood professions or introduction to business
 - Early childhood curriculum development
 - Early childhood growth and development
 - The exceptional child; and,
 - Infant/toddler theory and practice or the Department approved expanding quality infant/toddler training; or,
 - Completion of a course of training approved by the Department that includes all of the above listed course content

The experience requirements for the Director must be met by completion of the following amount of work experience in a child development program, which includes working with a group of children in such programs as a preschool, child care center, kindergarten or Head Start program:

- Persons with bachelor's or master's degree with a major emphasis in child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education, or an early childhood professional Credential Level IV Version 2.0, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education; no additional experience is required.

- Persons with a 2-year college degree in early childhood education must have twelve months (1,820 hours) of verified experience working directly with children in a child development program.
- Persons with a bachelor's degree and completion of courses specified above must have twelve months (1,820 hours) of verified experience working directly with children in a child development program.
- Persons who have no degree but have completed the thirty semester hours specified above must have twenty-four months (3,640 hours) of verified experience working directly with children in a child development program.
- Verified experience acquired in a licensed, Colorado family child care home or school-age child care center may count for up to half of the required experience for Director qualifications. To have Colorado family child care home experience considered, the applicant must be or have been the licensee. The other half of the required experience must be working directly with children in a child development program.
- Experience with five-year-olds must be verified as follows:
 - If experience caring for five-year-old children occurs in a child care center classroom, the hours worked shall be counted as preschool experience; or,
 - If experience caring for five-year-old children occurs in an elementary school program, the hours worked shall be counted as school-age experience.

Director Qualifications Letter

Directors must have a current director qualifications letter issued by the Department prior to starting at Montrose County ECC. Director letters must be renewed prior to the expiration date or the letter becomes void. At the time of renewal for a director letter, education and experience must be verified to ensure qualifications are met. The renewal application and the official transcripts must be submitted to the Department. The renewed director letter shall expire five years from approval of the renewal application

All individuals holding a valid approval letter for director qualifications from the Department of Human Services, who have not completed the required courses in each of the following subject or content areas, must take one course every two years from a regionally accredited college or university at a two-year, four-year or graduate level. Official transcripts listing completion of one or more of the five courses shall be submitted to the Colorado Department of Human Services within thirty calendar days of completing each course until all five courses have been completed in:

- Early childhood guidance strategies
- Early childhood health, nutrition and safety or child nutrition
- The exceptional child
- Infant/toddler theory and practice; or expanding quality in infant and toddler training and,
- Administration: human relations for early childhood professions

Except for individuals holding an early childhood professional Credential Level IV Version 2.0, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education, Directors meeting all Director requirements, in centers operating more than six hours a day must complete a three semester credit hour course from a regionally accredited college or university, every five years, in a subject

related to the operation of a center and must be able to demonstrate the relationship of the course taken to the operation of Montrose County ECC.

Fiscal Officer Qualifications

We secure the services of a qualified Fiscal Officer with a history of successful management of a public or private organization.

We assess staffing needs in consideration of the fiscal complexity of the organization and applicable financial management requirements. We secure the regularly scheduled or ongoing services of a fiscal officer with sufficient education and experience to meet our needs. Any person hired to be our Fiscal Officer after November 7, 2016, must be a certified public accountant or have, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree in accounting, business, fiscal management or a related field.

Additional Staff Qualifications

Staff responsible for management and oversight of family services, health services and services to children with disabilities hired after November 7, 2016 must have, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree, preferably related to one or more of the disciplines they oversee.

Staff and consultants that serve as education managers or coordinators, including those that serve as curriculum specialists, must have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education or a baccalaureate or advanced degree and equivalent coursework in early childhood education with early education teaching experience.

Content Area Specialists Qualifications

We hire staff and consultants who meet the qualifications listed below to provide content area expertise and oversight on ongoing or regularly scheduled basis.

Education and Child Development Services are supported by staff or consultants with training and experience in areas that include:

- The theories and principles of child growth and development, early childhood education, and family support
- In addition, they must meet the qualifications for classroom teachers, as specified in section 648A of the Head Start Act, and any subsequent amendments regarding the qualifications of teachers

Family and Community Partnership Services are supported by staff or consultants with training and experience in field(s) related to social, human, or family services.

Parent Involvement Services are supported by staff or consultants with training, experience and skills in assisting the parents of young children in advocating and decision-making for their families.

Disabilities Services are supported by staff or consultants with training and experience in securing and individualizing needed services for children with disabilities.

In addition to the above requirements, staff must meet all requirements specified in the current job description.

Health Professional Qualifications

Health Services are supported by staff or consultants with training and experience in public health, nursing, health education, maternal and child health, or health administration.

All health procedures are performed only by a licensed or certified health professional.

Mental Health Services are supported by consultants who are licensed or certified mental health professionals with experience and expertise in serving young children and their families.

All staff or consultants who support nutrition services are registered dietitians or nutritionists with appropriate qualifications.

Teacher Qualifications

Each Montrose County ECC classroom is assigned one teacher who has one of the following:

- A Child Development Associate credential (CDA) that is appropriate to the age of the children being served
- A state awarded certificate for preschool teachers that meet or exceeds the requirements for a CDA
- A degree in early childhood education or a field related to early childhood education with experience in teaching preschool children

At least 50% of all Montrose County ECC teachers must have:

- A baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education; or
- A baccalaureate or advanced degree and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children.

Prior to employment, a lead teacher's qualifications must either meet the current educational goals set forth by the Head Start Act, or they must meet the minimum requirement and he/she must be willing to work toward obtaining the stated educational goal.

Montrose County ECC teachers must demonstrate competency to perform functions that include:

- Planning and implementing learning experiences that advance the intellectual and physical development of children, including improving the readiness of children for school by developing their literacy, phonemic, and print awareness, their understanding and use of language, their understanding and use of increasingly complex and varied vocabulary, their appreciation of books, their understanding of early math and early science, their problem-solving abilities, and their approaches to learning
- Establishing and maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment
- Supporting the social and emotional development of children
- Encouraging the involvement of the families and supporting the development of relationships between children and their families
- Early childhood observations skills for authentic assessment in accordance with the Results Matter standards

All teachers and other staff assigning checkpoint ratings (i.e., anyone responsible for finalizing assessment ratings for children) must also complete interrater reliability certification.

Teaching Assistant Qualifications

Each Montrose County ECC Teaching Assistant shall:

- Have at least a CDA
- Be enrolled in a program leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree; or
- Be enrolled in a CDA program to be completed within 2 years

Head Start Education Coordinators

Head Start Education Coordinators, including those that serve as curriculum specialists must:

- Have the capacity to offer assistance to other teachers in the implementation and adaptation of curricula to the group and individual needs of children in a Head Start classroom
- Have either:
 - A baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education; or
 - A baccalaureate or advanced degree and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children

Coach Qualifications

Coaches must have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or a related field and must have adequate training and experience in adult learning and in using assessment data to drive coaching strategies aligned with program performance goals.

Home Visitor Qualifications

Each Montrose County ECC Home Visitor shall:

- Have a minimum of a home-based CDA credential or comparable credential, or equivalent coursework as part of an associate's or bachelor's degree
- Demonstrate competency to plan and implement home-based learning experiences that:
 - Ensure effective implementation of the home visiting curriculum
 - Promote children's progress across the standards described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five*, including for children with disabilities and dual language learners, as appropriate
 - Build respectful, culturally responsive and trusting relationships with families

Home Visitors must have knowledge and experience in:

- Child development and early childhood education
- The principals of child health, safety and nutrition
- Adult learning principles
- Family dynamics

They are skilled in communicating with and in motivating people. In addition, they have knowledge of community resources and the skills to link families with appropriate agencies and services.

Family Services Staff Qualifications

Staff who work directly with families on the family partnership process hired after November 7, 2016, must have, within eighteen months of hire, at a minimum, a credential or certification in social work, human services, family services, counseling or a related field.

Training Certificate Requirements

To be counted for ongoing training, all training certificates must include:

- The title of the training
- The competency domain
- The date and clock hours of the training
- The name or signature, or other approved method of verifying the identity of trainer or training entity
- Expiration of training, if applicable
- Connection to social emotional focus, if applicable

Program Staffing Patterns

Montrose County ECC follows the following classroom staffing patterns:

- Colorado Day Care licensing regulations in regard to program staffing are met at all times
- Appropriate adult/child ratios are maintained in all program options
- The class size requirements specified in 45 CFR 1306.32 are maintained through the provision of substitutes when regular classroom staff are absent
- Staff are provided adequate time for planning and record keeping
- When a majority of children speak the same language, at least one classroom staff or Home Visitor interacting regularly with the children speak their language
- Parents are actively encouraged to volunteer or observe in classrooms
- Additional classroom staff members (Teacher Assistant, Special Aide) are employed to ensure inclusion of children with special needs/disabilities, if needed
- We provide adequate supervision of the staff

Emergency Staffing Procedure

In order to ensure continued program quality, the Director may determine a need to fill a position vacancy as soon as possible. For this reason, an employee may be hired prior to an approval from the Policy Council under the agreement that the employee will be listed as "provisional" and continued employment will be dependent on Policy Council approval. The following conditions apply:

- Employees will only be hired as "provisional" in extreme situations that require this action in order to keep the program in compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- Any staff person hired on a provisional basis will be approved/disapproved during the next Policy Council meeting.
- All job openings, with the exception of substitutes, will be posted as usual and interviews will be conducted on a normal schedule even if the filling of a position is considered an emergency. The only step in the hiring process that may be delayed due to emergency

status is the Policy Council approval which must be addressed at the next scheduled meeting.

Teacher Assistants and Substitute Teacher Assistants are two positions that may frequently require provisional employment status in order to meet classroom staffing requirements at all times.

References

This Policies & Procedures Manual incorporates the following regulations:

- [Head Start Act \(as amended December 12, 2007\)](#)
- [Head Start Program Performance Standards 45 CFR Chapter XIII September 2016](#)
- [Colorado Department of Human Servicing Child Care Facility Licensing](#)
- [Results Matter](#)

Montrose County ECC and our employees is responsible for following all relevant polices in the above-mentioned regulatory documents, whether these policies are specifically stated in this Manual or not.