



Head Start and Early Head Start Services Plan

(Revised May 2022)

Head Start Philosophy

The overarching principle of our Head Start program is that families, children and staff are respected. There will be an immediate and complete acceptance of families as full partners in attaining the goals that the family sets for itself and its children. We will practice acceptance of value systems, with no demands that a family changes those systems to satisfy us. We will be non-judgmental in our attitudes.

We also believe based on much relevant research, that there are many ways to enhance a child's ability to learn. We believe that each child learns in a unique way, and being sensitive to that child's needs, we will design a curriculum for that child's enrichment across all domains of learning. We will follow the child's and family's lead, and involve the parent as the primary teacher of the child. We will advocate for the child in our center based classrooms, and we will advocate for the family in the home.

Simply put, our program's philosophy is to win the children's and family's hearts and to be persistent in our quest for excellence. This echoes our 4C mission statement:

***"We are committed to building stronger Central Texas communities,
One child and family at a time."***

The model for our service delivery has two major focus areas, each unique: Head Start and Early Head Start. We also believe that for a continuum of care, both programs should be addressed under a unified framework that encourages dialogue and partnership planning. In order to accomplish these goals, we will:

1. Engage the family to establish a trust relationship. Win the family's heart.
2. Observe the parent and child interaction patterns. Be responsive caregivers.
3. Fit the curriculum to the child, not the child to the curriculum. Win the child's heart.
4. Partner with the family to identify family strengths and stressors.
5. Partner with the family to identify priorities for the child and for the family.
6. Plan with the family to accomplish identified priority outcomes for family and child.
7. Assess the effectiveness of each individualized plan with evaluations from the family and staff.
8. Remain committed to our community partnerships and assess our communities' needs.
9. Expand 4C's realm of influence in our communities as advocates for children and families.
10. Support staff in their professional and personal goals.

Processes

Recruitment: All available means will be utilized in communicating within our communities about the Central Texas 4C Head Start program and how to access those services. Postings at our current Head Start Center locations, flyers to our current Head Start families, public schools, health clinics, WIC offices, ECI offices, Bell County Help Centers, and other community partners will be accomplished. Regular press releases to our newspapers, radio, and TV stations will be sent. Languages used will be English and Spanish. We will make special efforts to post information in targeted low-income areas (based on our Community Assessment). Our website, www.ct4c.org will include information about our services to children with disabilities.

Application: Applications will be available in two languages in various locations in our cities. There will be assistance available for helping to fill out the application from a person who speaks the same language as the family applying. Complete applications will be forwarded to a central location for data entry into the database system. Classroom lists will be generated in July-August so that staff can begin the process of orientation and enrollment with parents. Applications are also on our website.

Selection: From the lists generated by the computerized data tracking program, Head Start children and families with the highest point totals will be contacted first until a classroom is fully enrolled. The point system will assign points based on the approved Policy Council selection criteria, and will reflect different points for different locations based on the Community Assessment (for example, homeless children will receive 50 additional points in order to assure quickest enrollment).

Enrollment: During enrollment, every effort is made to establish a good relationship with each family in order to build mutual trust. All pertinent paperwork will be done with the parent that is required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards and State licensing. These forms are located in the Enrollment section of the Procedures Manual. Staff will also obtain any relevant releases in writing from the parent, after each item is explained. The Orientation Home Visit is scheduled at the parents' convenience. Parents are given the Parent Handbook and services begin.

Transition: As we begin enrolling families and children into our system, we will not complete the enrollment process until the parent is comfortable with the philosophy and procedures. Parents will be encouraged to tour the Head Start center where their child is enrolled and to visit with the teachers and Family & Community Advocate (FCA). We will explain the long-term commitment Head Start will make to the family. Other transitions will occur at several levels and are addressed in the service section of this Service Plan. (See: Disabilities, Family Partnerships, etc.)

Orientation: Orientation will serve as part of the family and child's transition into Head Start. Parents will receive a Parent Family Folder, which contains resources, policies and procedures. This will be the opportunity to begin the Family Partnership Process (IFPP). This orientation/home visit will help the parent further understand what we will be doing with their child at the center, and it gives the parent an opportunity to share information and expectations with us. Head Start staff is sensitive to the family's wishes and styles. Staff will also go over the Parent Handbook in more detail so that parents understand our roles and responsibilities in assuring that the programs meet licensing and Head Start requirements.

Volunteering: Parents are welcome at all times and are encouraged to volunteer at the center throughout the year. During orientation, parents will receive a mini-volunteer training. Regular volunteers receive a more in-depth volunteer training using the "Volunteer Training Handbook." We require all Head Start regular volunteers to get a TB tine test, paid for by the Head Start program and we do background checks on any regular volunteer.

Systems

Shared Governance:

Head Start parents are given a major role in the governing of our agency's Head Start program. Since Central Texas 4C has both Early Head Start and Head Start, parents will be combined in our Policy Council. Each classroom will elect a representative and an alternate to attend our Policy Council. The President of the Head Start Policy Council is seated on Central Texas 4C's Board of Directors. Budget and Policy information is presented and explained for those committees, who then report their approval/disapproval to the full Council. Members of the Head Start Policy Council who are interested in personnel issues will be invited to participate in interviewing prospective employees, and will also approve/disapprove personnel reports. Parents will have a seat on our Health and Education Advisory Committee and will help with decisions about prevention and early intervention strategies. The agency's Board of Directors shares the responsibilities of governance by being trained on and understanding the division of duties as set forth in the Head Start Program Performance Standards. There is an impasse procedure in place for problem resolution.

Planning:

Parents of enrolled children will assist in planning through the Head Start Policy Council, center committees and the Health and Education Advisory Committee. Parents will take part in surveys to indicate their individual needs, especially in the area of training and center committee program topics. Strategic planning is accomplished at many levels in the organization. The Head Start Plan is revised every year, with input from parents, staff, and community partners. The parents are invited to comment/criticize/suggest changes that are taken to the Policy Council for vote. Parents are included in individualizing their child's education. Self-Assessment involves parents, community representatives and staff to review the program's effectiveness each year. There is an annual confidential parent evaluation at the end of the school year so that parents can let administrators know whether the program met their expectations. These tools are then used by management to design or redesign systems to improve overall program performance.

Planning is regular and sustained. There are regular strategy meetings of administrators and coordinators to assess and plan needed changes, plan transition of children from Early Head Start to Head Start and other events. There are monthly meetings with coordinators, site directors, and FCAs to address concerns and present findings to administration. Case management meetings are conducted with Coordinators, FCAs, and Directors to discuss families and children that have a need for extra resources in order to empower the family, this includes those with disabilities.

Community Assessment is an ongoing process that continually searches out new data or information reflecting our communities. Federal, State, County, local, and individual sources are documented. Implications for planning are always an outcome of the Community Assessment and are maintained in that document. Planning with our community partners is continued through the agency's involvement in many avenues of collaboration, including public schools in the transition of children, community network groups for addressing community problems, faith-based groups, local city and county governments. We maintain formal agreements with over 90 entities in Bell/Coryell Counties.

Planning is constant in the classrooms. As staff interacts with the children and families, they must continually reassess the next step for the growth of that child or family. Individual development plans for each child are carefully monitored by the teaching staff, the parent, agency partners, coordinators, and management team members. Staff training is developed based upon the needs of children and families.

Budgeting is a critical piece of planning. The Executive Director, with input from the Finance Director, Human Resource Director, Head Start Director, Coordinators, and Policy Council, with oversight from the Board of Directors, is ultimately responsible for creating realistic budgets to share with all of those partners. There are also plans for school readiness, ongoing monitoring, data collection, emergency preparedness and training.

Communication:

There are different levels of communication in the agency, and we observe the fact that courtesy is paramount. We do not have a chain of command, but a chain of courtesy. The first priority in communication is for the administration and management levels to get clear information to and from staff who work with parents and children. This will be done in several settings: strategy meetings of administrative and mid-management staff, pre-service and in-service training each year, so that plans, policies and procedures can be addressed. There are monthly team meetings with directors, FCAs, and mid-management so that face-to-face communication can occur. Each center must conduct a staff meeting monthly, more if deemed necessary. Other means of communicating with staff are memoranda, agency newsletters, and Internet email, if available. In addition, classroom staff has occasional teacher work days that help in communication by giving additional time to network on a center-to-center basis through training, etc.

During recruitment, a variety of posted messages in English and Spanish will be distributed in our three cities. We will also use our community partners (ECI, WIC, Free Clinics, etc.) to get information to prospective clients. We will go door to door if necessary to be fully enrolled. During transition into the Head Start program, we will carefully assess and reassess our effectiveness in establishing that critical first approach to a family. We will listen to that family, and be supportive of the family's strengths, wants, needs, and wishes to the extent possible while maintaining full compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Face to face meetings will be the first means of communication. Staff communicates with parents on a daily basis. We will introduce some of our written materials, being careful not to overwhelm the family. The Family Handbook, which includes the Parent Guide, gives families an overview of how we conduct the program. Parents will, as part of our orientation packet, receive a "quick list" resource directory that might help the family, as they become part of our HS family. There are monthly nutrition newsletters in English and Spanish, and the Registered and Licensed Dietician consults with families if a nutrition assessment indicates that need.

Staff receives training in the area of communicating with families. Establishing trust with families will be crucial to the child and family's success, and we can only do that well if we know how to approach, engage, and then support families through our various communication skills. Records are kept and used as communicating tools. For example, home and center visits will be documented so that the parent and the teacher/FCA are clear about outcomes desired.

Record Keeping and Reporting:

Record keeping is methodical and important, but only in as much as that information is used to serve children and families and improve the program. Confidentiality is critical and is observed with all documentation. Child records include: health, immunizations, medical home, emergency contact information, ongoing assessment used for planning curricula for that child, tickler files to alert staff and parents to upcoming necessary health plans. Children's portfolios show their progress.

Records are kept daily on attendance and point-of-service for meal counts. If a child is absent two days in a row, a home visit is made on the third day to assure the safety of the child and family (sooner if deemed necessary). For every absence, there will be a coded reason for that

absence, so that we can determine if a family needs help in getting their child to the center, or if some other resource is needed. We have set a goal of 90% average daily attendance, but if it should fall below 85% (Head Start minimum), we will analyze the reasons using information generated by our daily attendance register.

Family records will record family information, demographics including race and ethnicity, Family Partnership Agreements as appropriate, goals, services and outcomes. These will be individualized for each family. Primary responsibility for maintaining family records will be the FCA. Some of the factors to be identified include education level, single parent, teen parent, public assistance, whether or not employed, and demographic data.

Center records will include outcomes for children in care, center staff meeting minutes, center parent meeting minutes, licensing and monitoring visit outcomes. Staff records will include all pertinent Human Resource files. (See section on Human Resources System.) Fiscal records are included under the Fiscal Management System. Governance records are kept in two primary locations: the Policy Council notebook and the Board of Directors notebooks (including Finance Committee). Regular reports from Human Resources and the Finance Department are made available to both governing groups for approval/disapproval. The PIR (Program Information Report) is generated each year through the computerized data system and sent to the Federal government for review.

Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:

There are several continuous improvement systems. One is at the administrative level which monitors overall agency effectiveness. Reports that come to the administration are an indication of how healthy the agency is. For instance, the absence reports generated from our computerized attendance data will indicate if there are problems preventing parents from getting their children to our centers, what other indicators are present that might explain absences, and whether or not staff has followed up as required. Financial reports that come to the administration monthly (or more often if needed) monitor the fiscal health of the agency and also illustrate whether or not the budget processes are based on real numbers. The Board of Directors and the Policy Council also monitor the executive, fiscal, child outcomes and human resource functions of the agency at their regular meetings. Regular Strategy Team meetings with administrative and mid-management staff cover conditions that need to be recognized for excellence or improvement along with follow-up on previous suggestions.

The evaluation process for staff is another continuous improvement system. Central Texas 4C, Inc. uses a unique evaluation system that encourages staff to set goals for personal and professional development, and encourages supervisors to be personally vested in the employees' success. The disciplinary policies as well as other policies of the agency are clear and are given to each employee at orientation. The Human Resource Director goes through the 4C Policy Handbook with each new employee to make sure that the employee has clear understanding of the agency's expectations in behavior, work ethic, dress, codes of conduct, conflict of interest, observance of confidentiality and professionalism. Agency policies are approved each year by the Policy Council and the Board of Directors. Evaluations are done at the end of an employee's introductory period, and thereafter when employees advance to new positions.

A third system is our annual self-assessment process (see more in next section), which includes parents, staff, board and local professionals. Our process includes analysis of the information gained by the self-assessment teams, using that analysis to design "focused visits" to the centers, empowering staff to learn by doing the focused visit with a supervisor, and designing specific outcomes that the particular staff/classroom/center will set as goals. Mentor Coaches help them obtain whatever tools they need to succeed. It becomes continuous improvement, rather than just a once-a-year occurrence.

The Federal Review Team monitors several times during our five year grant. The number of times depends on several factors and their visits can be both announced and unannounced. The Workforce Solution's Child Care Services program also conducts annual visits to our sites to determine if each center keeps its Rising Star rating (highest rank in the state's system). The center leadership staff of Central Texas 4C, Inc. also does monthly monitoring at each facility and reports findings back to administration. Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS) licenses and monitors all of our centers. USDA monitors the nutrition program and NAEYC may do announced or unannounced visits depending on their criteria for excellence.

Self- Assessment as Part of Continuous Improvement:

Besides the formal Self-Assessment process mentioned above in monitoring systems, there are many ways we assess how we are doing. Regular reports from the MIP accounting system help us assess where we are financially, and help us in our budgeting. Sharing those reports with the Board's Finance Committee and the Policy Council gives more analysis to assess how the agency's fiscal responsibilities are being overseen. Reports from Human Resources allow us to determine reasons for our staff turnover rates. Human Resource documentation also plays a large role in assessing the needs of staff, based on their evaluations, development plan, and surveys of training needs. When those needs are assessed accurately, then an individual's development plan will be tailored to that specific employee's job description. That individualization may lead to further clarification of job descriptions themselves.

The view that is taken in the agency regarding self-assessment is that it is child and family centered, and that careful attention to the operation of the program will always suggest ways to improve our services. When we really strive to meet and respect parents and children, we will not only address and correct problems, we will look for ways to strengthen the Head Start program as a total experience for our children and families. That means that our self-assessment process must be ongoing, non-defensive, and goal oriented. Setting goals for the agency has long been interwoven into the governance system, and planning with community partners also requires us to gain meaningful feedback from them. We do that in various ways, through committees, asking them to join our formal assessment teams, hearing their concerns when collaboration is not as smooth as we would like, then coming to consensus to develop plans together (see signed agreements as one indication of this effort).

One important aspect of self-assessment occurs when we work one-on-one with families. Teachers and FCAs in particular have a unique opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their efforts as they do home visits.

IFPA and follow-up required will show family outcomes. Those outcomes will be analyzed by appropriate staff to review the methods we use in working with families. Since we will be tracking risk indicators on our families, we can determine if all (or just some) of our strategies are having the desired outcomes. If not, we will redesign those strategies. Of course, developmental assessments of children's progress will also be ongoing and will also be analyzed to assess our effectiveness in helping each child reach full potential.

A special part of our self-assessment is the Board's Fraud Risk Assessment which looks carefully at policies and procedures, internal controls, conflicts of interest, contractor requirements and any area where fraud might be present. That report becomes part of our final Self-Assessment report which is shared through the agency's website at www.ct4c.org.

Human Resources:

Human Resource systems in the agency include all aspects of recruiting, interviewing, hiring, orienting, training, evaluating, mentoring and guiding staff to success. All recruiting advertisements are clearly marked with the fact that we are an Equal Employment Opportunity agency. Résumés and applications go first to the Human Resource Director who sorts and files according to credentials and experience. If there are five qualified applicants and one is hired, the other four go into a potential employee pool. Positions are posted internally for staff and parents before they are advertised. The Human Resource Director then has access to all applications and screens those applications for the Head Start Director and Nutrition Director as needed. They then work with HR to set up an interview schedule, and invite parents from the Policy Council to participate in that process. Notes taken during the interview process stay in the HR office and are treated confidentially. Following the interview but before hiring, the HR Director completes reference and criminal record checks. If a current or former Early Head Start or Head Start parent qualifies for a particular job, that parent is given preference in hiring, all other factors being equal. Currently, Central Texas 4C's job force is 33% former or current Head Start parents. Personnel files are kept in the HR office, and the office is locked when the HR Director is not present.

The HR Director is also responsible for communicating with new staff during an intense orientation process. All aspects of human resource functions are covered during that time: agency policies, procedures for payroll, required documentation, sexual harassment training, minimum standards training, Head Start philosophy, safety training, and other information documented in the personnel file. The employee during orientation sets up a professional development plan which is revisited every fall. The Head Start Director then follows up with each employee as he/she makes progress to higher degrees. The agency's evaluation process is a human resource system, in that it builds on strengths of employees, empowers them to set goals and achieve, and be partners with the agency in their own development. The disciplinary processes are clear. There are some infractions that lead to immediate termination with the agency: abuse of a child, parent, or staff member and theft of agency property, for example. Most other mistakes are viewed as opportunities for growth, and are documented as a notice of concern, with clear indications of expectations. If a notice of concern is not acted upon by the employee, he/she receives a written warning, again with clear expectations of job performance, support for improvement, and timelines addressed. Written warnings also make clear to the employee the consequences of not bringing performance to standards.

The Human Resource Director is an arbitrator when all other methods of solving staff problems fail. It is critical for an organization to have an HR director who does not "take sides," but listens well and works with all parties to resolve issues. The HR director is also on the front line of keeping the agency informed about legal issues revolving around the workplace, and as such, serves as the Safety Officer of the organization.

We have systems in place at Central Texas 4C, Inc. for rewarding excellence in the workplace. Each year, the Betty Neill Award of Excellence is presented to our top classrooms at the annual Board/Council banquet. Another part of recognizing good work is through our evaluation system, which always begins with a section called "Noteworthy Mention." During that evaluative process, we also give employees a chance to tell us what they have accomplished that we may not know. Setting goals with our employees, committing to helping them achieve those goals, makes partners of us all. We consider that is effective human resource management.

Central Texas 4C also has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) so that staff who experience personal difficulties has at least three sessions with a mental health professional. Those visits are paid for by the agency, but we never know who the participants are since we are billed in units, not by employee names.

Fiscal Management:

Fiscal Management policies and procedures are written to encompass all requirements of Federal and local grants administration and are on file in the Finance Director's office. The policies are reviewed and/or revised annually and submitted for approval to the Finance committee and Board. Care is taken in procurements to make processes fair and accessible to minority and women- owned businesses. Budgets are written as concisely and as close to true costs as possible. Budgets are also approved by the governing bodies of the agency. The personnel policies contain an agency code of conduct. All funding applications are approved by the Board and the Policy Council prior to submission to the funding agent, and members are advised that travel expenses are available. All aspects of fiscal procedures are tracked on MIP, a computerized system capable of tracking multiple funding sources, payroll, generating financial reports, etc. There are safeguards built into our system for accountability and are outlined in the Financial Policies and Procedures as are our procurement procedures. We pay bills by invoice only, and each program pays for food costs not allowable under USDA (i.e. adult meals). We use "point of service" counts rather than attendance figures to determine the USDA meal costs.

In order for staff to be empowered to purchase the small items they need, we use a requisition system which requires supervisory approval and includes a dollar limit per month for classroom use. The agency carries theft bond, employment practices and D&O insurance, as well as substantial liability, accident and comprehensive policies.

Subchapter B — The Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Program

Part 1301 — Program Governance

Part 1302 — Program Operations

Part 1303 — Financial and Administrative

Part 1305 — Definitions

Part 1301 — Program Governance

§1301.1 Purpose.

Central Texas 4C, Inc. (4C) has established and maintains a shared governance structure for program governance that includes a volunteer Board of Directors, a Policy Council and parent committees at each center. The Board has a legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs and to safeguard Federal funds. The Policy Council and center committees are responsible for the direction of the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Minutes of both Board and Policy Council are shared.

§1301.2 Governing body.

Composition. The composition of 4C's Board is in accordance with the requirements specified at section 642(c)(1)(A-E) of the Act: at least one member with background in fiscal management in accounting, one member with background in early childhood education, one member who is an attorney and one who is the President of our parent Policy Council. Other members shall be selected based on their passion for education, their business acumen and their belief in community service. 4C ensures that Board members do not have a conflict of interest, pursuant to section 642(c)(1)(C) of the Head Start Act and members annually sign statements to that effect. There are a total of 12 volunteers on the Board.

Duties and responsibilities. The Board is responsible for fiscal oversight, legal oversight, ensures compliance with Federal regulations, and approves all policies, annual budgets and grant requests. The Board uses results from our continuous improvement systems such as the Self-Assessment, child outcome data on school readiness goals and other information to monitor progress. The Board may establish an advisory committee if deemed necessary. By-Laws are established and reviewed annually. The Board selects the audit firm and reviews the audit annually. As part of the agency's yearly Self-Assessment, the Board selects an ad hoc committee to administer the Fraud Risk Program monitoring protocol.

§1301.3 Policy Council (PC)

4C has established and maintains a Policy Council responsible for the direction of the Head Start program at the agency level. Each Head Start and Early Head Start classroom elects a voting representative and an alternate to ensure proportionate representation on 4C's Policy Council. The Policy Council may then elect Community Representatives. Parents always have a majority both on the Policy Council and on each of four sub-committees: Executive, Finance, Human Resource and Operations. The new school year is the time for our "Transition Policy Council Meeting" where old and new policy councils meet together. Parents are elected for one year terms and the maximum number of terms one parent can serve is five.

§1301.4 Parent Committees

Each center establishes a parent committee as soon as possible with each new school year. At the first meeting, there is shared governance training and each classroom elects representatives and alternates to the Policy Council. Communication between parent center committees and the Policy Council is achieved through posted minutes of Policy Council minutes in each center. Representatives share information at the monthly parent meetings and seek feedback to take to the Policy Council. Parent Committees can undertake projects to benefit their center and all are encouraged to volunteer. Within the guidelines established by the governing body, the Policy Council may participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees. There are funds available to reimburse low-income members in order to attend meetings.

§1301.5 Training

Training is ongoing for all governance groups on eligibility, recruitment, selection criteria, financial information, what the audit means, regulations and advocating for Head Start in our communities.

§1301.6 Impasse procedures

Central Texas 4C has a written Impasse Procedure in place dated May of 2015. All shared governance participants receive training on what an impasse is and how it will be resolved, including arbitration.

Part 1302 — Program Operations

Subpart A — Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

§1302.10 Purpose.

This subpart describes requirements of grantees for determining community strengths, needs and resources as well as recruitment areas. It contains requirements and procedures for the eligibility determination, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance of children and explains the policy concerning the charging of fees.

§1302.11 Determining community strengths, needs, and resources.

Service area. 4C serves children in Bell County communities and in the city of Copperas Cove in Coryell County. The Community Assessment is formalized at a minimum once every 5 years. Community Assessment data on strengths and needs is continually gathered and analyzed to ensure that 4C continues to serve the families most in need and targeted at-risk children. Changes in locations are approved by the Board, Policy Council and the Regional Office.

Other sources of data for the Community Assessment: education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including social or economic factors that impact their well-being; typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children; other child development, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools; the approximate number of eligible children served; resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families; and strengths of the community. At this time, *we only enroll Head Start eligible children.*

§1302.12 Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility.

Process overview. 4C conducts an in-person (or if necessary a telephone) interview with each family to verify eligibility information as required and to create an eligibility determination record for enrolled participants.

Age requirements. For Early Head Start, a child must be an infant or a toddler younger than three years old except when the child is transitioning to Head Start. For Head Start, a child must be three years old by September 1 of the new school year. Early Head Start children may transition to Head Start when they turn three after that date if there is an opening and they re-qualify eligibility.

Eligibility requirements. A pregnant woman or a child is eligible if the family's income is equal to or below the poverty line. A child is categorically eligible if the family is eligible for public assistance (or at risk in the absence of child care including TANF child-only payments), the child is homeless, or the child is in foster care. There must be public assistance documentation from the state or local agency. A child not meeting the criteria may be enrolled provided that these participants make up no more than 10 percent of 4C's enrollment. Likewise, 4C may enroll an additional 35 percent of participants whose families do not meet the criteria whose incomes are between 100 and 130 percent of the Federal poverty line, if other HSPPS regulations are met.

Verifying age. Program staff must verify a child's age according to program policies and procedures. A program's policies and procedures cannot require families to provide documents that confirm a child's age if doing so creates a barrier for the family to enroll the child.

Verifying eligibility based on income, program staff must use tax forms, pay stubs, or other proof of income to determine the family income for the relevant time period. If the family cannot provide tax forms, pay stubs, or other proof of income for the relevant time period, program staff may accept written statements from employers, including individuals who are self-employed, for the relevant time period and use information provided to calculate total annual income. If the family reports no income for the relevant time period, a program may accept the family's signed declaration to that effect, if program staff describes efforts made to verify the family's income, and explains how the family's total income was calculated or seeks information from third parties about the family's eligibility, if the family gives written consent. If a family gives consent to contact third parties, 4C staff must adhere to program safety and privacy policies and ensure the eligibility determination record adheres to all HSPPS requirements. If the family can demonstrate a significant change in income for the relevant time period, 4C staff may consider current income circumstances.

Eligibility duration. If a child is eligible and is participating in a Head Start program, he or she will remain eligible through the end of the succeeding program year. If a child moves from Early Head Start program to Head Start, 4C staff must re-verify the family's eligibility. Then, if the parents want their Early Head Start child to go into Head Start, 4C will keep the child in the Early Head Start program until a slot in Head Start is available whenever possible depending on the wait list. An EHS child turning three after January first may remain in Early Head Start through the summer. 4C keeps eligibility determination records for each participant and ongoing records of the eligibility training for staff as required. A program may keep these records electronically for those currently enrolled, while enrolled, and for a minimum of one year after they have either stopped receiving services or are no longer enrolled. 4C staff that intentionally violates federal regulations is dealt with according to the agency's fraud and conduct policies.

Training for all who determine eligibility includes how to collect accurate eligibility information from families and third party sources and treat families with dignity and respect. Management and staff within 90 days and new Board members and new Policy Councils within 180 days must receive training. ERSEA training occurs annually.

§1302.13 Recruitment of children.

4C recruits eligible children ages 0-5, paying particular attention to our target populations of teen parents, children with disabilities, homeless children, dual language learners and children in foster care. We employ several means to communicate, both written and by word of mouth. We collaborate with and have specific agreements for services for our target populations. Those entities help us recruit and often refer families to our program.

§1302.14 Selection process.

Selection criteria. CENTRAL TEXAS 4C will utilize the computerized point system described below to prioritize entry into the program:

1. Head Start Age points: based on community need, a 3 year old receives 20 points and a 4 year old receives 5 points.
2. Early Head Start: 0-2 year-old receives 10 points; pregnant students & student parents receive 50 points
3. Income: a graduated point value based upon how far below poverty guidelines the income falls.
4. Family receiving TANF/SSI/SNAP – 40 points.
5. Medicaid child – 10 points
6. Single parent household or forced military separation–10 points (as indicated within the community assessment).
7. Diagnosed disability – 100 points (*Includes ECI, LEA*)
8. Foster child, CPS removal or child in homeless shelter – 80 points
9. There will be 30 points assigned to parents participating in any LEP or ESL program.
10. There are also 50 points assigned for public school-age pregnant teens in order to keep teen mothers (and fathers) in school.
11. The 130% allowance will be used when necessary in order to maintain full enrollment, *only* when there are no applications on the waiting list at 100% of poverty level.
12. Early Head Start children transitioning to Head Start – 30 points
13. Families living with other family members/friends due to economic hardship – 50 points

Children eligible for services under IDEA. 4C ensures at least 10 percent of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA, unless the responsible HHS official grants a waiver. The point value assigned for diagnosed disabilities will remain at 100 points until the 10% disability enrollment has been met; after the 10% has been met, priority points allowed for a diagnosed disability will be deleted for future enrollment vacancies.

Wait lists. 4C's PROMIS database program, at the beginning of each enrollment year, generates the wait list and maintains that list during the year according to the program's selection criteria.

§1302.15 Enrollment.

Funded enrollment. 4C will maintain full enrollment during the year, with each vacancy being filled in less than 30 days. 4C asks families to fill out a document signifying intent to remain enrolled for the following year. For those families, a slot is reserved. Under exceptional circumstances, a program may maintain a child's enrollment in Head Start for a third year, provided that family income is verified

again. An Early Head Start child, when possible depending on wait list, can remain past third birthday until a slot opens in Head Start and criteria points are honored. If an Early Head Start child turns three after January first, that child can remain in the EHS slot through the summer. If a program serves homeless children or children in foster care, it must make efforts to maintain the child's enrollment regardless of whether the family or child moves to a different service area, or transition the child to a program in a different service area, as required according to the family's needs.

Reserved slots. We have determined from the community assessment there are families experiencing homelessness in the area, and children in foster care that could benefit from services. 4C may reserve one or more enrollment slots when a vacancy occurs for those at-risk populations. We will not reserve more than three percent of our funded enrollment slots. If the reserved enrollment slot is not filled within 30 days, the enrollment slot becomes vacant and then must be filled in accordance with our regular enrollment procedures. 4C only serves eligible children or targeted at-risk children, teens, disabilities, etc. 4C observes the state's immunization requirements for enrollment with the exception of homeless children. Parent participation in any program activity is voluntary, including consent for data sharing, and is not required as a condition of the child's enrollment.

§1302.16 Attendance.

Promoting regular attendance. 4C tracks attendance daily. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of class time, 4C staff will attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being. 4C will monitor attendance monthly at a minimum. We will also provide information about the benefits of regular attendance for school readiness, support families to promote the child's regular attendance, conduct a home visit or make other direct contact with a child's parents if a child has multiple unexplained absences (such as two consecutive unexplained absences); and, within the first 60 days of program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, check patterns of absence through our PROMIS database system. 4C's monitoring team follows up with parents to support efforts to increase a child's attendance or engage the family in intensive case management so that child is not dropped from enrollment. If the child's attendance does not resume, then the program must consider that slot vacant. If a monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program has the capability to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate and will make necessary changes to inform its continuous improvement.

Supporting homeless attendance: If a program determines a child is eligible because of homelessness, 4C will allow the child to attend for up to 90 days or as long as allowed under state licensing requirements, without immunization and other records, to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. A program must work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible in order to comply with state licensing requirements. If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation, 4C will utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.

§1302.17 Suspension and expulsion.

Before a program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, a program must engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

A temporary suspension is a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated quickly by the provision of reasonable modifications. If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, a program must 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 ; continuing to utilize appropriate community resource; 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.

Prohibition on expulsion. 4C will not expel or dis-enroll a child from Head Start because of a 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, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. 4C will engage a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports to ensure that the child is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability. If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), the program must consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or, If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, the program must collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services. If, after a program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken, 4C will act in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable) and the mental health consultant to determine that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child. In that case, 4C will work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

§1302.18 Fees.

Policy on fees. 4C does not charge fees to participate in Head Start, including special events such as field trips.

Subpart B — Program Structure

§1302.20 Determining program structure.

4C has, in the past, used all available program options: center-based, home-based and a locally designed option. But 4C now uses the center-based option of service delivery because it meets the needs of children and families based on our current community assessment. We can continue full day care, align with public school calendars for our Head Start and Early Head Start children during the school year, continue Early Head Start throughout the summer and meet our targeted populations' needs. No matter what, our option is comprehensive for both child and family.

Conversion. 4C reserves the right in the future to consider conversion of slots from Head Start to Early Head Start if deemed necessary by future community assessments.

§1302.21 Center-based option.

4C's center-based option delivers the full range of services. Education and child development services are delivered primarily in classroom settings.

Ratios and group size. Our Head Start classrooms will have between 17 and 20 children, (with a Teacher and a Teacher Assistant) depending on the majority ages of children and our Early Head Start classrooms will have no more than eight children with two teachers. 4C's policy about ratios/group size states that after ratio is met, *each group of children—even if the “group” is one child—is supervised by a minimum of two adults.* An Early Head Start class that serves children under 36 months old must have two teachers with no more than eight children. Each teacher must be assigned consistent, primary responsibility for no more than four children to promote continuity of care for individual children. A program must minimize teacher changes throughout a child's enrollment, whenever possible. A class that serves a majority of children who are three years old will have no more than 17 children with a teacher and teaching assistant or two teachers. A class that serves a majority of children who are four years old must have no more than 20 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers.

Service duration: Early Head Start. 4C's center based option will provide a minimum of 1,380 annual hours of planned class operation for all enrolled children. Our Edwards Early Childhood Center, a locally designed option, is designed to meet the needs of young parents enrolled in school settings. This option is a center-based program during the school year and home-based services or a combination of home/center based services during the summer break, based on students' needs.

Service duration: Head Start. Our program provides a minimum of 1,020 annual hours of planned class operations over the course of at least eight months per year for 100% percent of our Head Start center-based funded enrollment. We follow the local ISD calendar for days of attendance.

Licensing and square footage requirements: All 4C facilities meet state, local licensing, NAEYC and HSPPS requirements.

§1302.22 Home-based option.

We used to use the home-based option delivering the full range of services, through visits with the child's parents, primarily in the child's home and through group socialization opportunities in an Early Head Start classroom, community facility, home, or on field trips. Currently, we do not use home-based.

Caseload. 4C's caseload for Home Based option is two visitors for sixteen children.

Service duration. We provide one home visit per week per family that lasts at least an hour and a half and provides a minimum of 46 visits per year in addition to 22 group socialization activities per year.

Meeting minimum requirements. 4C makes up planned home visits and socializations canceled by the program and to the extent possible attempt to make up planned home visits canceled by the family.

Safety requirements. The areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, preparing food, and eating in facilities used for group socializations in the home-based option meet or exceed safety standards of the HSPPS and NAEYC.

§1302.24 Family child care option. N/A

§1302.24 Locally-designed option.

At one time, 4C had a locally-designed option at Dickson Center which worked with Temple ISD to serve pregnant students or student parents in order to help them stay in school. The option was a center-based program during the school year and then switched during the summer. We currently use only center-based services full year.

Subpart C — Education and Child Development Program Services

§1302.30 Purpose.

4C provides high-quality early education and child development services, including children with disabilities, which promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school. We implement a research-based curriculum, and screening and assessment procedures that support individualization and growth in the areas of development described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five (HSELOF)*. We support family engagement in children's learning and development. We deliver developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts.

§1302.31 Teaching and the learning environment.

4C ensures teachers and other relevant staff provide responsive care, effective teaching, and an organized learning environment that promotes healthy development and children's skill growth aligned with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five, (HSELOF)* including children with disabilities and dual language learners. Ongoing supervision and a system of individualized and ongoing professional development are integrated into all educational systems.

Effective teaching practices. 4C's teaching practices emphasize nurturing and responsive practices, interactions, and environments that foster trust and emotional security and; are communication and language rich; promote critical thinking and problem-solving; explore social, emotional, motor, behavioral, language, literacy, math and science development; provide supportive feedback for learning; motivate continued effort; and support all children's engagement in learning experiences and activities. We focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in ELOF by aligning with and using the Framework and the curricula to direct planning of organized activities, schedules, lesson plans, and the implementation of high-quality early learning experiences that are responsive to and build upon each child's individual pattern of development and learning.

We integrate child assessment data in individual and group planning; and we include developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, social and emotional development, math, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical development that are focused toward achieving progress outlined in ELOF. For dual language learners we recognize bilingualism as a strength and we implement *research-based teaching practices* that support their development. For an infant or toddler dual language learner, we include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language, when there is a teacher with appropriate language competency, and experiences that expose the child to English. For a preschool age dual language learner, we include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language. If staff does not speak the home language of all children in the learning environment, we include steps to support the *development of the home language* for dual language learners such as having culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available and other evidence-based strategies. We also seek volunteers who speak children's home language/s who can be trained to work in the classroom to support children's continued development of the home language.

Learning environment. We ensure that teachers implement well-organized learning environments with developmentally appropriate schedules, lesson plans, and indoor and outdoor learning experiences that provide adequate opportunities for choice, play, exploration, and experimentation among a variety of learning, sensory, and motor experiences. For infants and toddlers, we promote relational learning and include individualized and small group activities that integrate appropriate daily routines into a flexible schedule of learning experiences. For preschool age children, we include teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, active and quiet learning activities, and opportunities for individual, small group, and large group learning activities.

Materials and space for learning. To support implementation of the curriculum, we provide age-appropriate equipment, materials, supplies and physical space for indoor and outdoor learning environments, including functional space. The equipment, materials and supplies include necessary accommodations and the accessible space to children with disabilities.

Promoting learning through approaches to rest, meals, routines, and physical activity. 4C provides all children an opportunity to rest and/or nap. Children are not required to go to sleep, but an environment and transition to a quieter room will help children relax. Meals are served family style as soon as a child can sit at a small table with feet on the floor. Until then, the babies are held and bottles are never propped.

Meal times are great for many learning opportunities including social/emotional, language, science and nutrition. Food is never used as punishment or as a bribe. We provide ample time for children to eat and we don't force children to finish their food.

4C uses routines such as diapering and transitions between activities as opportunities for strengthening development and skill levels.

We recognize active play and physical activity as important to learning and teachers integrate intentional movement and physical activity into curricular activities and daily routines in ways that support health and learning. Our program will not use physical activity as reward or punishment.

§1302.32 Curricula.

Curricula. 4C's core curriculum is *Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers* and *Creative Curriculum for Pre-School*, both of which are based on scientifically valid research and have standardized training procedures and curriculum materials to support implementation;. They are aligned with the *HSELOF*, the *Texas PreK Guidelines*, *Texas Early Learning Guidelines* and *Texas Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)*. The curriculum is sufficiently content-rich to promote measurable progress toward development and learning. Both have an organized developmental scope and sequence that include plans and materials for learning experiences based on developmental progressions and how children learn.

Trained Mentor Coaches support staff to effectively implement curricula, providing support, feedback, and supervision for continuous improvement and professional development. There are other curriculum materials around dental hygiene, mental health, transportation, etc. supporting the core curriculum.

§1302.33 Child screenings and assessments.

Screening. Within 45 calendar days, in collaboration with each child's parent and with parental consent, we utilize ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE2 at the orientation home visit to identify concerns and establish baseline for later aggregation of school readiness outcomes. This comprehensive tool measures developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills. We use as part of the screening

additional information from family members, teachers, and relevant staff familiar with the child's typical behavior. If concerns are identified, we work with direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional and with the parent's consent, to promptly address any needs identified. We refer to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA for a formal evaluation to assess the child's eligibility for services as soon as possible, and within timelines required under IDEA. We partner with the child's parents and the relevant local agency to support families through the formal evaluation process. If a child is determined to be eligible for services under IDEA, we ensure that the services are delivered to the child and family. If, after the formal evaluation, the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA determines the child is not eligible for early intervention or special education and related services under IDEA, we seek guidance from other professional services which may be available through a child's health insurance or it may be appropriate for the program to provide needed services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Head Start funds may be used for such services when no other sources of funding are available.

Assessment for individualization. 4C uses TSGold for structured assessments which provide ongoing information to evaluate the child's developmental level and progress in outcomes aligned to the goals described in ELOF. Data from TSGold will inform teachers, parents and program administrators in continuous improvement and individualization strategies. Data is collected weekly and aggregated quarterly for reporting to governing bodies, administrators and parents. If data shows an individual child is not progressing as expected, professionals are consulted and referrals are made if indicated.

Characteristics of screenings and assessments. TSGold is valid and reliable for the purpose intended and allows for individualization. Screenings and assessments which may include observations are conducted with dual language staff, parents, and contractors as indicated. We assess language skills in English and in the child's home language, to assess both the child's progress in the home language and in English language acquisition. We conduct screenings and assessments for domains other than language skills in the language or languages that best capture the child's development and skills in the specific domain. Those conducting the screening or assessment know and understand the child's language and culture and have sufficient skill level in the child's home language to accurately administer the screening or assessment and to record and understand the child's responses, interactions, and communications. If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English and qualified bilingual staff, contractors, or consultants are not able to conduct screenings and assessments, we use an interpreter in conjunction with a qualified staff person to conduct screenings. If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English and can demonstrate that there is not a qualified bilingual staff person or interpreter, then screenings and assessments may be conducted in English. In such a case, a program must also gather and use other information, including structured observations over time and information gathered in a child's home language from the family, for use in evaluating the child's development and progress.

Prohibitions on the use of screening and assessment data. The use of screening and assessment data is prohibited for the purposes of ranking, comparing, or otherwise evaluating individual children for purposes other than research, training, or technical assistance, and is prohibited for the purposes of providing rewards or sanctions for individual children or staff. 4C *will not* use screening or assessments to exclude children from enrollment or participation.

§1302.34 Parent and family engagement

Engaging parents and family members. 4C offers many opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in the program's education services.

Our centers are open to parents during all program hours. Teachers regularly communicate with parents to ensure they are well-informed about their child's routines, activities, and behavior.

Teachers hold two parent conferences at the center and two home visits per year at a minimum for each family, including one before the program year begins, if feasible, to engage the parents in the child's learning and development. Parents have the opportunity to learn about and to provide feedback on selected curricula and instructional materials used in the program. Parents and family members have opportunities to volunteer in the class and during group activities. Teachers continually inform parents about the results from screenings and assessments and discuss their child's progress.

§1302.35 Education in home-based programs.

4C's home-based program provides *home visits and group socialization* activities that promote secure parent-child relationships and help parents provide high-quality early learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts.

Home-based program design. Our home-based program ensures all home visits are planned jointly by the home visitor and parents. Communication is directly between teacher and parent or, if necessary, with the help of an interpreter. For infants and toddlers, we focus on the development of the home language, while providing experiences that expose both parents and children to English. For preschoolers, teachers focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language. We utilize research-based strategies and activities for children who are dual language learners that recognize bilingualism and bi-literacy as strengths. Our methods for the home-based program include strategies and activities that promote the home as a learning environment that is safe, nurturing, responsive and rich in language and communication. Individualized learning experiences are planned using information from our ongoing assessments and visit are scheduled with enough time to serve each child and family. We do not do home visits with babysitters. There are two EHS teachers/home visitors who travel together to conduct each home visit to address school readiness goals and family concerns and goals.

Home-based curriculum. 4C uses *Creative Curriculum* and *Partners for a Healthy Baby*, both research-based curricula, that deliver developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate home visits and group socialization activities that support children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school. Both curricula align with HS Early Learning Outcomes Framework. We promote the parent's role as the child's primary teacher through experiences focused on the parent/child relationship while recognizing the family's traditions, culture, values, and beliefs. We monitor curriculum implementation and fidelity, and provide support, feedback, and supervision for continuous improvement through our system of training and professional development. This is just one way 4C supports staff. Our Health and Education Advisory Committee is one way parents can be involved in approval of the instructional materials that are used.

Group socializations are planned jointly with families, held with both child and parent participation, occur in a classroom, community facility, home or field trip setting, as appropriate. 4C's socializations

provide age appropriate activities for participating children that are intentionally aligned to school readiness goals. We encourage parents to share experiences related to their children's development with other parents.

Screening and assessments. We inform parents about the purposes of and the results from screenings and assessments as an integral part of discussing their child's progress.

Subpart D — Health Program Services

§1302.40 Purpose.

4C provides high-quality health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and that will support each child's growth and school readiness. Our program has established and maintains a Health Services Advisory Committee that includes Head Start parents, professionals, and other volunteers from the community.

§1302.41 Collaboration and communication with parents.

At a minimum, a program must obtain advance authorization from the parent or other person with legal authority for all health and developmental procedures administered through the program or by contract or agreement, and, maintain written documentation if they refuse to give authorization for health services. Our goal is to complete health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services and exams within 45 calendar days from the first day the child attends class, but no later than the required 90 days. Health services for follow-up or treatment will also have appointments scheduled or be completed within 90 days from the first day the child attends class. During the enrollment visit, we share with parents the policies for health emergencies and our plan for all classroom staff to have CPR and First Aid. Specialized medical training is provided as indicated, i.e. allergies, feeding tube, etc.

§1302.42 Child health status and care.

Source of health care. Deadlines for health services begin for center based care when a child first attends class: for home based care when the first home visit occurs. Within 30 calendar days we consult with parents to determine whether each child has ongoing sources of continuous, accessible health care and health insurance coverage. If the child does not have such a source of ongoing care and health insurance coverage 4C assists families in accessing a source of care and health insurance that will meet these criteria, as quickly as possible.

Ensuring up-to-date child health status. Within 90 calendar days, we obtain determinations from health care and oral health care professionals as to whether or not the child is up-to-date on a schedule of age appropriate preventive and primary medical and oral health care. (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment- - EPSDT). We assist parents with making arrangements to bring the child up-to-date as quickly as possible; and, if necessary, directly facilitate provision of health services to bring the child up-to-date. Within 45 calendar days we either obtain or perform evidence-based vision and hearing screenings. The Welch-Allyn vision screener enables us to accurately screen all 4C infants and toddlers for vision and we use the OtoAcoustic Emissions (OAE) for hearing. We identify each child's nutritional health needs, taking into account available health information, including the child's health records, and family and staff concerns, including special dietary requirements, food allergies, and community nutrition issues as identified through the community assessment or by the Health Services Advisory Committee.

Ongoing care. We help parents follow recommended schedules of well-child and oral health care. 4C implements appropriate strategies for staff and parents to identify developmental, medical, oral, nutritional or mental health concerns. 4C will facilitate and monitor necessary preventive care, treatment and follow-up, including topical fluoride supplements as recommended by oral health professionals and approved by 4C's Health and Education Advisory Committee.

Extended follow-up care. We facilitate further diagnostic testing, evaluation, treatment, and follow-up plans, as appropriate, by a licensed or certified professional for each child with a health problem or developmental delay, such as elevated lead levels or abnormal hearing or vision results that may affect child's development, learning, or behavior. PROMIS is the database system used to track referrals and services provided and monitor the implementation of a follow-up plan. We assist parents, as needed, in obtaining any prescribed medications, aids or equipment for medical and oral health conditions.

Use of funds. Head Start funds are used for the provision of diapers and formula for enrolled children during the program day. We may use program funds for professional medical and oral health services when no other source of funding is available. When program funds are used for such services, grantee and delegate agencies must have written documentation of their efforts to access other available sources of funding.

§ 1302.43 Oral health practices.

4C promotes effective oral health hygiene by ensuring all children with teeth are assisted by appropriate staff, or volunteers, if available, in brushing their teeth with toothpaste containing fluoride once daily. Best practice will be to follow the advice of our local dental health professionals in the use of non-fluoride toothpaste for extremely young children.

§ 1302.44 Child nutrition.

Nutrition service requirements. 4C designs and implements nutrition services that are culturally and developmentally appropriate, meet the nutritional needs of and accommodate the feeding requirements of each child, including children with special dietary needs and children with disabilities. Special attention is given to specific dietary needs of each child when furnished with written statement from parent(s). 4C will make changes to menus to meet needs of a child with food allergies, religious reasons or other special dietary concerns.

4C serves meals family style and children are allowed 30 minutes or time as needed for each meal. Our meals and snacks provide at a minimum one half to two thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs. We serve all children (except infants) meals and snacks that conform to USDA and Head Start requirements. We feed *infants* and toddlers according to their individual developmental readiness and feeding skills as recommended in USDA requirements and ensure infants and young toddlers are fed on demand to the extent possible and ensure bottle-fed infants are never laid down to sleep with a bottle and are always held for feeding. Bottles remain in classrooms for no more than an hour before being returned to kitchen. We serve all children in center-based settings a nourishing breakfast upon arrival.

Late arrivals also get nourishing breakfast foods that consist of unsweetened dry cereal, milk, one half fresh fruit and/or 100% juice. If a child comes after point of service attendance has been taken, USDA will not reimburse for that meal. We provide appropriate healthy snacks and meals to each child and family during group socialization activities in the home-based option. We make safe drinking water available to children during the program day.

4C promotes breastfeeding and proper handling of breast milk, and makes accommodations for mothers who wish to breast-feed during program hours. When necessary we provide referrals to lactation consultants or counselors.

Payment sources. 4C uses funds from USDA's CACFP program as the primary source of payment for meal services. Early Head Start and Head Start funds may be used to cover those allowable costs not covered by the USDA.

§1302.45 Child mental health and social and emotional well-being.

Wellness promotion. 4C supports a program-wide culture that promotes children's mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health. We provide supports for effective classroom management and positive learning environments, supportive teacher practices, and, strategies for supporting children with challenging behaviors and other social, emotional, and mental health concerns. We have an agreement with a mental health consultant with a schedule that ensures partnering with staff and families in a timely and effective manner. Parental consent is always obtained for mental health consultation services at enrollment. We continue to build community partnerships to facilitate access to additional mental health resources.

Mental health consultants. A program must ensure mental health consultants assist in implementing strategies to identify and support children with mental health and social and emotional concerns. Part of our continuous improvement is to enhance classroom management and teacher practices promote positive mental health and social and emotional functioning. All staff addresses prevalent child mental health concerns and behavior concerns and in helping both parents and staff to understand mental health and access mental health interventions, if needed. We severely limit suspension and we prohibit expulsion.

§1302.46 Family support services for health, nutrition, and mental health.

Parent collaboration. 4C collaborates with parents to promote children's health and well-being by providing medical, oral health, nutrition and mental health education support services that are understandable to individuals, including individuals with low health literacy.

Opportunities. We help parents learn about preventive *medical and oral health care*, emergency first aid, environmental hazards, and health and safety practices for the home including health and developmental consequences of tobacco products use and exposure to lead, and safe sleep. We discuss their child's *nutritional status* with staff, including the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, and the negative health consequences of sugar-sweetened beverages, and how to select and prepare nutritious foods that meet the family's nutrition and food budget needs. We provide information about *healthy pregnancy and postpartum care* including breastfeeding. We also make sure parents have support and treatment options for parental mental health or substance abuse problems, including perinatal depression. Parents have an opportunity to discuss with staff and identify issues including observations and any *concerns about their child's mental health*, typical and atypical behavior and development, and how to appropriately respond to their child and promote their child's social and emotional development. Opportunities to learn about *child safety* in vehicles and while walking begin at the parent orientation home visit and continue throughout the year. 4C provides ongoing support to assist parents' *navigation through health systems* to meet the general health and specifically identified needs of their children and must assist parents. We support families by helping them understand how to access health insurance for themselves and their families, including information about private and public health insurance and designated enrollment periods. We assist parents in accessing information to help them understand the

results of diagnostic and treatment procedures as well as plans for ongoing care and other services they will receive while enrolled in the program. We assist parents with applications for Medicaid, CHIP or indigent health services and then follow up by *making sure they have a medical home*.

§1302.47 Safety practices.

4C will use *Caring for our Children Basics* as the primary resource for training on and maintaining adequate safety policies and practices. We will ensure that all facilities, equipment and materials, background checks, safety training, safety and hygiene practices and administrative safety procedures are adequate to ensure child safety.

Facilities. All facilities where children are served, including areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, and eating will, at a minimum meet licensing requirements. All will be clean and free from pests, pollutants, hazards and toxins that could endanger children's safety. Facilities will be continually monitored to prevent child injury and remain free from hazards, including choking, strangulation, electrical, and drowning hazards, hazards posed by appliances and all other safety hazards. Rooms will be well lit, including emergency lighting and will be equipped with safety supplies that are readily accessible to staff, (first aid kits, fire extinguishers, etc.) No weapons will be allowed. Toileting/diapering areas are separate from food areas. Children are kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance.

Equipment and materials. Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, strollers, and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children, meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or the American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM). All equipment and materials will be: clean and safe and appropriately disinfected; be age appropriate; be designed to ensure *appropriate supervision* of children at all times; allow for the separation of infants and toddlers from preschoolers during play in center-based programs; and be kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance.

Background checks. All employees have complete background checks that meet HSPPS.

Safety training. All staff with regular child contact have initial orientation training prior to working with children and then, within three months of hire, ongoing training in all state, local, federal and program-developed health, safety and child care requirements which includes the following: the prevention and control of infectious diseases; prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and use of safe sleeping practices; administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent; prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions; building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic; prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment; emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies; handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants. We also train on appropriate precautions in transporting children, if applicable; first aid and CPR; and recognition and *reporting of child abuse and neglect* and regular child contact. All staff with no regular responsibility for or contact with children have initial orientation training within three months of hire; ongoing training in all state, local, tribal, federal and program-developed health and safety requirements applicable to their work; and training in the program's emergency and disaster preparedness procedures.

Safety practices. All 4C staff and consultants follow appropriate practices to keep children safe including, Reporting of suspected or known child abuse and neglect, including that staff comply with

applicable federal, state, local, and laws; safe sleep practices, including ensuring that all sleeping arrangements for children under 18 months of age use firm mattresses or cots, and for children under 12 months, soft bedding materials or toys must not be used; appropriate indoor and outdoor supervision by two staff at all times; only releasing children to an authorized adult, and all standards of conduct described in 4C's Policy Manual. *Hygiene practices.* All staff systematically and routinely implements hygiene practices that at a minimum ensure: appropriate toileting, hand washing, and diapering procedures are followed; safe food preparation; and, exposure to blood and body fluids are handled consistent with standards of OSHA.

Administrative safety procedures. 4C has established and follows procedures for emergencies, fire prevention and response, protection from contagious disease, including appropriate policies for when a child is ill, and from an infectious disease outbreak, including appropriate notifications of any reportable illness, following 4C protocol for medications. 4C has written procedures and systems to ensure children are only released to an authorized adult. For child specific health care needs and food allergies, there is a plan of action for emergencies. For food allergies, we also post individual child food allergies prominently where staff can view wherever food is served.

Disaster preparedness plan. The agency has an *Emergency Preparedness Plan* that addresses all minor and major emergencies such as violence near centers (man-made) or tornados (natural). 4C reports any significant safety incidents to licensing, NAEYC and the Head Start Regional office as required.

Subpart E — Family and Community Engagement Program Services

§1302.50 Family engagement.

Purpose. 4C's program is child centered, but family focused. Our engagement strategies weave into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. We have developed innovative two- and sometimes three-generation approaches that address prevalent needs of families.

Family engagement approach. 4C recognizes parents as their children's primary teachers and nurturers and we implement intentional strategies to engage parents in their children's learning and development and support parent-child relationships, including specific strategies for father engagement. 4C staff has a long history of being able to establish good rapport with our families and we have always stated that trust and respect are overarching principles in establishing communication. We honor the unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of families. We collaborate with families in a family partnership process that identifies needs, interests, strengths, goals, and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability. 4C engages and empowers families through accessing resources and opportunities to participate.

We communicate in the family's preferred language or through an interpreter and ensure that our families have the opportunity to share personal information in an environment in which they feel safe. Procedures are in place for teachers, home visitors, and family support staff to share information with each other as appropriate and according to our Privacy Statement, HIPPA and FERPA.

§1302.51 Parent activities to promote child learning and development.

4C promotes shared responsibility with parents for children's early learning and development, and implement family engagement strategies that are designed to foster parental confidence and skills in promoting children's learning and development. We offer activities that support parent-child relationships and child development including language, dual language, literacy, and bi-literacy development as appropriate. We provide parents with information about the importance of their child's regular attendance, and partner with them to remove barriers. For dual language learners, we provide information and resources for parents about the benefits of bilingualism. We offer opportunities for parents to participate in research-based parenting curricula, *Nurturing Parenting*, *Love and Logic* and *Circle of Security* that build on parents' knowledge and offer parents the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development.

§1302.52 Family partnership services.

Family partnership process. At enrollment, the 4C FCA initiates the family partnership process that includes a family partnership agreement to support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability, to support child learning and development, to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities, and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their children. The process continues for as long as the family participates in the program, based on parent interest and need.

Identification of family strengths and needs. The intake and family assessment procedures to identify family strengths and also begins at enrollment. The Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework outlines strategies for family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and the local community, and families as advocates and leaders.

Individualized family partnership services. FCAs collaborate with families to identify needs, interests, and aspirations related to the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). We involve families in governance, connect them with resources, provide non-judgmental support in order to help families achieve identified individualized family engagement outcomes. Staff and resources are assigned based on the urgency and intensity of identified family needs and goals.

Existing plans and community resources. We collaborate with many other community agencies to address family needs, strengths, and goals in order to avoid duplication of effort and facilitate systems and services for the family.

§1302.53 Community partnerships and coordination with other early childhood and education programs.

Community partnerships. 4C has ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships with many community organizations ranging from onsite delivery of services as appropriate to facilitating access to community services responsive to children's and families' needs. These written agreements include: health care providers, child and adult mental health professionals, dentists, other health professionals, nutritional service providers, providers of prenatal and postnatal support, substance abuse treatment providers, agencies that provide services to children with disabilities and their families, elementary schools, high schools, state preschool providers, libraries, shelters, child care services, churches, colleges and universities, public schools, family preservation and support and child protective services and others.

In all our collaborative systems, we will carefully guard confidentiality and that will be part of our community partnership agreements. We have agreements with all six local ISD's which range from providing collaborative classrooms to transitions to services for our children with special needs.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. 4C centers all carry the highest Rising Star rating from Texas' QRIS.

Data systems. 4C shares relevant data with state education data systems when we can receive similar support and benefits as other participating early childhood programs.

Subpart F — Additional Services for Children with Disabilities

§1302.60 Full participation in program services and activities.

4C provides full program services and opportunities to all enrolled children with disabilities, including but not limited to those who are eligible for services under IDEA, so that the children and their families can participate in all program activities. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment possible.

§1302.61 Additional services for children.

Additional services for children with disabilities. 4C makes sure that services are individualized and that the child's needs are being met. We provide any necessary modifications to the environment, to support the full participation of each individual child with disabilities. Children with disabilities are protected from discrimination under and provided with all services and program modifications required by the ADA and the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Services during IDEA eligibility determination. While the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA determines a child's eligibility, 4C provides individualized services and supports to meet the child's needs. 4C has supportive services for the child and family pending the evaluation results and eligibility determination. We individualize program services based on available information such as parent input and child observation and assessment data and may use program funds for these purposes.

Additional services for children with an IFSP or IEP. 4C works closely with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, the family, and other service partners to ensure services that are planned and delivered as required by the child's IFSP or IEP. Elements of the IFSP or IEP that 4C cannot implement are implemented by other appropriate agencies, related service providers and specialists. 4C participates in ARD meetings and IFSP meetings to review and revise IFSPs and IEPs as required by IDEA. Services are provided in a child's regular Early Head Start or Head Start classroom to the greatest extent possible and our Family and Community Advocates (FCAs) provide follow-up on all services.

Transition services. For children with an IFSP who are transitioning out of Early Head Start, 4C collaborates with the parents, and the LEA, to ensure appropriate transition is undertaken in a timely and appropriate manner. For children with an IEP who are transitioning out of Head Start, 4C collaborates with the parents and the LEA to ensure steps are undertaken to support the child and family as they transition into Kindergarten.

§1302.62 Additional services for parents.

Parents of all children with disabilities. 4C's Family and Community Advocates, during discussions with the parents about disability services and how to best support the child's development. 4C will help parents to access services and resources for their family, including securing adaptive equipment and devices and resources available through a child's health insurance or other entities, creating linkages to family support programs like the Special Needs Network, and helping parents establish eligibility for additional support programs.

Parents of children eligible for services under IDEA. 4C will help parents understand the referral, evaluation, and service timelines required under IDEA and actively participate in the eligibility process and IFSP or IEP development process with the LEA. We will inform parents of their right to invite the program to participate in all meetings. 4C wants our parents to understand the purposes and results of evaluations and services provided under an IFSP or IEP. 4C has systems in place to ensure their children's needs are accurately identified in, and addressed through, the IFSP or IEP.

1302.63 Coordination and collaboration with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA.

4C participates in Child Find efforts and has interagency agreements with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to provide service delivery to children eligible for services. Services include the referral and evaluation process, service coordination and promotion of service provision in the least restrictive setting. Collaboration reduces time and facilitates transition services as children move from services provided under Part C of IDEA to services provided under Part B of IDEA and from pre-school to kindergarten. 4C always participates in the development of the IFSP or IEP if requested by the child's parents as well as the implementation of the IFSP or IEP. 4C will provide relevant information from its screenings, assessments, and observations to the team developing a child's IFSP or IEP and will participate in meetings to develop or review an IEP or IFSP for a child being considered for Head Start enrollment, a currently enrolled child, or a child transitioning from a program. We retain a copy of the IEP or IFSP for any child enrolled in Head Start for the time the child is in the program, consistent with the IDEA requirements. For our Early Head Start program, we coordinate services through ChildTeam, the local Early Childhood Intervention agency.

Subpart G — Transition Services

§1302.70 Transitions from Early Head Start.

Implementing transition strategies and practices. Timing for transitions. To ensure the most appropriate placement following participation in Early Head Start, at least six months prior to each child's third birthday, 4C begins the transition process. We take into account the unique strengths and needs of the child, the current and changing family circumstances and the availability of Head Start. We also take into consideration other early education opportunities and child development services in the community that will meet the needs of the child and family. 4C transitions the child into Head Start or another program as soon as possible after the child's third birthday but permits the child to remain in Early Head Start for a limited number of additional months following the child's third birthday if necessary for an appropriate transition.

Family collaborations. 4C provides information about the child's progress during the program year and provides strategies for parents to continue their involvement in and advocacy for the education and development of their child.

Early Head Start and Head Start collaboration. As a 0-5 Head Start program, Early Head Start and Head Start work together to maximize enrollment transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start, consistent with the eligibility.

Transition services for children with an IFSP. We provide additional transition services for children with an IFSPs are already described in our services for children with disabilities.

§1302.71 Implementing Transitions from Head Start to kindergarten.

Family collaborations for transitions. 4C has strategies to help parents understand their child's progress during Head Start and understand practices to effectively provide academic and social support for their children during their transition to kindergarten as well as how to foster their continued involvement in the education of their child. We educate parents in positive ways to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the elementary school setting, including services and supports available to children with disabilities and various options for their child to participate in language instruction educational programs. We also help parents in the ongoing communication with teachers and other school personnel so that they can participate in decisions related to their children's education.

Community collaborations for transitions. 4C collaborates with local public schools to support family engagement to ensure children's relevant records are transferred to the school or next placement in which a child will enroll, consistent with privacy requirements. We foster communication between appropriate staff and their counterparts in the schools to facilitate continuity of learning and development, consistent with privacy requirements. We invite school staff to participate in joint training and professional development activities with Head Start staff.

Learning environment activities. 4C has several strategies for successful transitions to kindergarten for enrolled children including encouraging parent/child trips to future schools that familiarize children with the transition to kindergarten and foster confidence about such transition. We annually advise parents of public school open house dates, Kindergarten Roundup and other orientation opportunities. There are also classroom activities to help prepare children for changes in the educational setting.

Transition services for children with an IEP. We provide additional transition services for children with an IEP, (see subpart F).

§1302.72 Transitions between programs.

For families and children who move out of the community in which they are currently served, including homeless families and foster children, 4C will undertake efforts to support effective transitions to other Early Head Start or Head Start programs. If Head Start is not available, the program will assist the family to identify another early childhood program that meets their needs. If families have decided to transition their child to other early education programs, including public pre-kindergarten, in the year prior to kindergarten entry, 4C will provide information to the family about the next placement and will collaborate with parents to protect their child's privacy as practicable and appropriate during the transition.

Subpart H — Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women

§1302.80 Enrolled pregnant women.

Within 30 days of enrollment, 4C will determine if the pregnant woman has a medical home and health insurance coverage. If the woman does not have a medical home and/or health insurance coverage, we work to remedy those issues as quickly as possible. We make sure that the pregnant woman has the ability to access comprehensive services through referrals that include nutritional counseling, food assistance, oral health care, mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and emergency shelter or transitional housing in cases of domestic violence. We schedule the newborn visit within two weeks after the infant's birth to offer support and identify family needs.

§1302.81 Prenatal and postpartum information, education, and services.

We make sure that the pregnant mom, fathers, partners or other relevant family members receive prenatal and postpartum information, education and services that address fetal development, the importance of nutrition, the risks of alcohol, drugs, and smoking, labor and delivery, parental depression, infant care and safe sleep practices, and the benefits of breastfeeding. We also address needs for appropriate supports for emotional well-being, nurturing and responsive caregiving, and father engagement during pregnancy and early childhood.

§1302.82 Family partnership services for enrolled pregnant women.

We engage enrolled pregnant women and other relevant family members in our family partnership services. We include a specific focus on factors that influence prenatal and postpartum maternal and infant health. We also initiate discussions about program options, plan for the infant's transition to program enrollment, and support the family during the transition process.

Subpart I — Human Resources Management

§1302.90 Personnel policies.

Establishing personnel policies and procedures. 4C maintains written personnel policies and procedures that are approved by the governing body and policy council and that are available to all staff.

Background checks and selection procedures. Before a person is hired, 4C conducts an interview, verifies references, conducts a sex offender registry check and obtains one of the following: (1) state or tribal criminal history records, including fingerprint checks or (2) Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history records, including fingerprint checks. We have 90 days after an employee is hired to complete the background check process by obtaining the second fingerprint check listed above if it was not obtained prior to the date of hire; and, conducts a child abuse and neglect state registry check, if available.

We review the information found in each employment application and completed background checks to assess the relevancy of any issue including any arrest, pending criminal charge or conviction and we determine eligibility for employment based on state and federal regulations. Those factors determine whether the prospective employee can be hired or the current employee must be terminated. We ensure a newly hired employee, consultant, or contractor *does not have unsupervised access* to children until the complete background check process is complete.

Complete background checks for each employee, consultant, or contractor are conducted at least once every five years which must include both types of fingerprint checks and we make employment decisions based on that information to ensure child safety.

4C actively recruits current and former Head Start parents for employment vacancies.

Standards of conduct. All 4C staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers will not endanger the health or safety of any child. We will not allow corporal punishment, the use of isolation to discipline a child, binding or tying/taping a child to restrict movement or speech, the use of food or physical activity as punishment or reward, the use of potty training methods that punish or humiliate a child, the use of any form of emotional abuse (including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring or corrupting a child). We will not allow physical or verbal abuse of a child. We will respect the child, the child's family, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity.

Confidentiality. 4C requires staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality/privacy policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members.

Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff. 4C's personnel policies include appropriate disciplinary policies for staff, consultants, and volunteers who violate our standards of conduct.

Communication with dual language learners and their families. 4C staff knows our families and are familiar with their ethnic backgrounds and heritages. 4C is able to serve and effectively communicate, either directly or through interpretation and translation, with children who are dual language learners and to the extent feasible, with families with limited English proficiency. If a majority of children in a center-based or home-based program speak the same language, at least one center staff member or home visitor speaks the language.

§1302.91 Staff qualifications and competency requirements.

Purpose. 4C intends to keep observing equal opportunity in hiring and helping to develop excellent and qualified staff. We work hard to ensure all staff, consultants, and contractors engaged in the delivery of program services have sufficient knowledge, training and experience and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions and to ensure high-quality service delivery in accordance with the program performance standards. Ongoing training and professional development support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

Head Start Director. 4C's Head Start Director serves children 0-5 and has a baccalaureate degree and experience in supervision of staff, fiscal management, and administration. Any new hire in this position will be required to have a baccalaureate degree.

Fiscal Officer. 4C has assessed staffing needs in consideration of the fiscal complexity of the organization and applicable financial management requirements and has employed the services of a Finance Director with sufficient education and experience to meet our needs. Any new hire in this position will be required to have a baccalaureate degree at a minimum, CPA preferred.

Family, health, and disabilities management. Currently, 4C has leadership in Health with an associate's degree, in Disabilities with a baccalaureate degree and in Family Services with a master's degree. Any new hires in these positions will be required to have a baccalaureate degree.

Education management. 4C's Education Coordinator currently holds a, associate's degree in early childhood, baccalaureate degree in pediatric nursing and a master's degree in business with many years' experience teaching. Any new hire in this position will be required to have a baccalaureate degree.

Early Head Start center-based teacher qualification requirements. 4C meets HSPPS requirements by ensuring center-based Teachers that provide direct services to infants and toddlers in Early Head Start centers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or comparable credential, and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

Head Start center-based teacher qualification requirements.

No less than fifty percent of all Head Start teachers nationwide must have a baccalaureate degree in child development, early childhood education, or equivalent coursework. 4C's goal is to exceed 50%. As prescribed in the Head Start Act, 4C ensures that all center-based Teachers have at least an associate's or bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education, equivalent coursework, or otherwise meet the requirements.

Head Start assistant teacher qualification requirements. All of 4C's Teacher Assistants, at a minimum, have a CDA credential or a state-awarded certificate that meets or exceeds the requirements for a CDA credential, are enrolled in a program that will lead to an associate or baccalaureate degree or are enrolled in a CDA credential program to be completed within two years of the time of hire.

Competencies of Center-based Teachers and Teacher Assistants. 4C's Teachers and Assistant Teachers demonstrate competency to provide effective and nurturing teacher-child interactions, plan and implement learning experiences that ensure effective curriculum implementation and use of assessment and promote children's progress across the standards described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* and applicable state early learning and development standards, including for children with disabilities and dual language learners, as appropriate.

Home visitors in our Early Head Start home-based program 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 plan. They demonstrate competency to plan and implement home-based learning experiences that ensure effective implementation of our home visiting curriculum and promote children's progress across the standards described in the *HSELOF*, including for children with disabilities and dual language learners, as appropriate, and to build respectful, culturally responsive, and trusting relationships with families.

Family services staff qualification requirements. 4C's Family & Community Advocates (FCAs) who work directly with families on the family partnership process hired after November 7, 2016, must have a credential, certification or degree in social work, human services, family services, counseling or a related field within eighteen months of hire.

Health professional qualification requirements. 4C ensures that health procedures are performed only by a licensed or certified health professional and all mental health consultants are licensed or certified mental health professionals. We use mental health consultants with knowledge of and experience in serving young children and their families. To support nutrition services, 4C works with a licensed and registered dietician.

Coaches. 4C's Mentor Coach has years of experience plus an associate's degree in early childhood education, baccalaureate degree in pediatric nursing and an advanced degree in business.

§1302.92 Training and professional development.

4C provides to all new staff, consultants, and volunteers an orientation that focuses on the goals and underlying philosophy of the program and on the ways they are implemented. We establish and implement a systematic approach to staff training and professional development designed to assist staff in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills needed.

Required training includes: Teaching staff completes a minimum of 24 clock hours of professional development per year and directors a minimum of 30 clock hours which satisfies requirements of the Head Start Act; Training on methods to handle suspected or known child abuse and neglect cases.

Training for child and family services staff will include best practices for implementing family engagement strategies in a systemic way, as described throughout this part; Training that builds their knowledge, experience, and competencies to improve child and family outcomes.

Research-based approaches for education staff will be focused on effective curricula implementation, knowledge of the content in *HSELOF*, partnering with families, supporting children with disabilities and their families, providing effective and nurturing adult-child interactions, supporting dual language learners, addressing challenging behaviors, preparing children and families for transitions and use of data to individualize learning experiences to improve outcomes for all children.

Our research basis for coaching consists of CLASS assessment, ITERS and ECERS and *The Coaching With Fidelity* tool which provide the coordinated coaching strategy for education staff. Based on these tools, we determine the intensity of coaching necessary to identify strengths, areas of needed support, and which staff would benefit most from coaching. Our coaching provides opportunities for staff to be observed and receive feedback and modeling of effective teacher practices directly related to clearly articulated program goals. We provide opportunities for all staff to receive research-based professional development. Our coaching aligns with our school readiness goals, curricula, and other approaches to professional development and our coach has adequate training and experience in adult learning and in using assessment data to drive practice-based coaching strategies. There is ongoing communication between the coach, program director, education coordinator and any other relevant staff. We have policies that ensure assessment results are used for staff development and continuous improvement and never for punitive measures. 4C has staff that meets requirements for coaching.

§1302.93 Staff health and wellness.

4C ensures that each staff member has an initial health examination and a periodic re-examination as recommended by their health care provider that includes screeners or tests for communicable disease as appropriate. We ensure staff do not, because of communicable diseases, pose a significant risk to the health or safety of others in the program that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. We make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance, and provide regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health, wellness, and health education. 4C also funds an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides mental health services to staff as needed.

§1302.94 Volunteers.

4C ensures that regular volunteers have been screened for appropriate communicable diseases in accordance with state or local laws. A program must ensure children are never left alone with volunteers.

Subpart J — Program Management and Quality Improvement

§1302.100 Purpose.

4C provides management staff and systems and a process of ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement for achieving program goals that ensures child safety and the delivery of effective, high-quality program services.

§1302.101 Management systems

Implementation. 4C ensures a program, fiscal, and human resource management structure that provides effective management and oversight of all program areas and fiduciary responsibilities to enable delivery of high-quality services in all of the program services described in subparts C, D, E, F, G, and H. We provide regular and ongoing supervision to support individual staff professional development and continuous program quality improvement. 4C ensures budget and staffing patterns that promote continuity of care for all children. We allow sufficient time for staff to participate in appropriate training and professional development. We maintain automated accounting and record keeping systems adequate for effective oversight: *MicroInformationProcessing* (MIP) for finance and Human Resources; PROMIS for ERSEA, demographic data and family outcomes; TSGold for child outcomes and locally designed data tools for cross-checking, i.e., PIR information and tracking facility maintenance.

Coordinated approaches. Our training and professional development system effectively supports the delivery and continuous improvement of high-quality services. 4C ensures services for dual language learners and their families. We use information from our community assessment about the languages spoken throughout the program service area to anticipate child and family needs. We identify community resources and establish ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations to bring services to our children and families. We systematically and comprehensively address child and family needs by facilitating meaningful access to program services, including, at a minimum, curriculum, instruction, staffing, supervision, and family partnerships with bilingual staff, oral language assistance and interpretation, or translation of essential program materials. We are dedicated to the full and effective participation of all children with disabilities. We provide services with appropriate facilities, program materials, curriculum, instruction, staffing, supervision, and partnerships, according to ADA and The 504 Rehabilitation Act.

Management of program data: We effectively support the availability, usability, integrity, and security of data. We have policies and procedures on data management and have them approved by the governing body and policy council. We honor confidentiality of all program data.

§1302.102 Achieving program goals.

Establishing program goals. In collaboration with the governing body and policy council, 4C has established strategic long-term goals for ensuring programs are remaining responsive to our communities and goals for the provision of educational, health, nutritional, and family and community engagement program services. All agency goals are to further promote the school readiness of enrolled children and aid families in pursuit of well-being.

Our school readiness goals are aligned with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five*, Texas early learning standards and expectations of the schools that Head Start children will attend. Effective health and safety practices to ensure children are safe at all times because of the policies and procedures in place which satisfy NAEYC, TDFPS and Head Start.

Monitoring: Ongoing compliance oversight and continuous improvement. We have a monitoring system in place supported by a written monitoring plan. We have a data collection plan. Data is used to correct quality and compliance issues, work with the governing body and the policy council to address issues, and implement procedures that prevent recurrence of previous quality and compliance issues

Ongoing assessment of program goals. We conduct a program self-assessment annually, we use aggregated child assessment data, professional development and parent and family engagement data to evaluate the program's progress. We measure the effectiveness of our professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness. We communicate and collaborate with the governing body and policy council, program staff, and parents when conducting the annual self-assessment. We submit results of the self-assessment to the responsible HHS official.

Using data for continuous improvement. We ensure that data are aggregated and analyzed three times per year for Head Start and four times for Early Head Start. We use data to assist in identifying risks and informing strategies for continuous improvement in all program service areas with special attention to dual language learners and children with disabilities. We also use data to direct continuous improvement related to curriculum choice and implementation, teaching practices, professional development, program design and other program decisions. We use information from ongoing monitoring, the annual self-assessment, program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services to identify program needs and implement plans for program improvement.

Reporting. Management reports are generated and presented to the board and policy council, at least semi-annually. We produce reports to the responsible HHS official immediately or as soon as practicable, related to any significant incidents affecting the health and safety of program participants, circumstances affecting the financial viability of the program, breaches of personally identifiable information, or program involvement in legal proceedings, any matter for which notification is required by applicable law. Required reports will be those regarding the following: staff or volunteer compliance with laws addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders; incidents that require classrooms or centers to be closed for any reason; legal proceedings by any party that are directly related to program operations; and, all conditions required to be reported to TDFPRS including disqualification from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and license revocation.; and the Annual Report required by the Head Start Act. Any deficiency identified must be reported in writing to HHS, TDSHS, TDFPRS and NAEYC.

§1302.103 Implementation of program performance standards.

The significant changes that 4C made after November 7, 2016 because of the new HSPPS are: 1) 4C is now requiring our Family and Community Advocate positions (new hires) to meet the new requirements. For staff hired before that date, we are supporting staff as they work toward their degree plans. 2) We now have the research-based curriculum to satisfy requirements for practice-based coaching. 3) We established policies and procedures to ensure the protection of personally identifiable information (PII); 4) We have already completed the required ERSEA training of staff and governing bodies. 5) We are implementing procedures to meet the new 30 day requirement in Health for determining a client's medical home and insurance. 6) We now have agreements in place for research-based curricula for parent education.

Part 1303 — Financial and Administrative Requirements

§1303.1 Overview.

Section 641A of the Act requires that the Secretary modify as necessary program performance standards including administrative and financial management standards.

Subpart A — Financial Requirements

§1303.2 Purpose.

This subpart establishes regulations applicable to program administration and grants management for all grants under the Head Start Act.

§1303.3 Other requirements.

4C abides by the HHS regulations that apply to all grants made under the Act:

Cite	Title
45 CFR part 16	Department grant appeals process
45 CFR part 30	HHS Standards and Procedures for Claims collection
45 CFR part 46	Protection of human subjects
45 CFR part 75	Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal
45 CFR part 80	Nondiscrimination under programs receiving federal assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services- Effectuation of title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
45 CFR part 81	Practice and procedure for hearings under part 80
45 CFR part 84	Nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in federally assisted
45 CFR part 87	Equal treatment for faith based organizations
2 CFR part 170	FFATA Sub-award and executive compensation
2 CFR 25.110	CCR/DUNS requirement

§1303.4 Federal financial assistance, non-federal match, and waiver requirements.

In accordance with Head Start Act, federal financial assistance to a grantee will not exceed 80 percent of the approved total program costs. 4C contributes 20 percent as non-federal match each budget period. 4C reserves the right to request a waiver of the match requirement under certain circumstances.

§1303.5 Limitations on development and administrative costs.

Limitations. Developmental and administrative costs cannot exceed 15 percent of the total approved program costs which includes both federal costs and non-federal match, unless the responsible HHS official grants a waiver. Identify and allocate the portion of indirect costs that are for development and administration versus program costs; and waivers: The responsible HHS official may grant a waiver if the agency ever needs to demonstrate efforts to reduce its development and administrative costs.

Subpart B — Administrative Requirements

§1303.10 Purpose.

4C observes standards of organization, management, and administration that will ensure that all program activities are conducted in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Act and the objective of providing assistance effectively, efficiently, and free of any taint of partisan political bias or personal or family favoritism.

§1303.11 Limitations and prohibitions.

4C will adhere to the sections of the Head Start Act that pertain to union organizing, the Davis-Bacon Act, limitations on compensation, non-discrimination, unlawful activities, political activities, and obtaining parental consent.

§1303.12 Insurance and bonding.

4C has insurance policies in place that cover child accidents, fidelity bond requirements, directors and officers insurance, liability coverage, fire, content, property, vehicle insurance, employment practices, notary bond insurance, Workers Compensation and Health Insurance.

Subpart C — Protections for the Privacy of Child Records

§1303.20 Establishing procedures.

4C has established procedures to protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information (PII) in child records. We also have an agency Privacy Statement in place.

§1303.21 Program procedures – applicable confidentiality provisions.

Since 4C collaborates with educational entities, we will honor FERPA regulations. 4C serves children eligible for services under, IDEA, and we comply with the applicable confidentiality provisions in Part B or Part C of IDEA to protect the PII in records of those children. We also honor HIPPA regulations.

§1303.22 Disclosures with and without parental consent.

Disclosure with parental consent. 4C obtains a parent's written consent before the program may disclose any PII from child records. That parent's written consent specifies what child records may be disclosed, explains why the records will be disclosed, and identifies the party or class of parties to whom the records may be disclosed. The written consent must be signed and dated. 4C explains to the parent that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. If a parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive.

Disclosure without parental consent but with parental notice and opportunity to refuse. The procedures to protect PII allow 4C to disclose such PII from child records without parental consent if the program notifies the parent about the disclosure, provides the parent, upon the parent's request, a copy of the PII from child records to be disclosed in advance, and gives the parent an opportunity to challenge and refuse disclosure of the information in the records before the program forwards the records to officials at a program, school, doctor's office or school district in which the child intends to enroll.

Disclosure without parental consent. The procedures to protect PII must allow the program to disclose such PII from child records without parental consent on a need-to-know basis such as: an audit or monitoring review; complying with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; the disclosure is in compliance with an *ex parte* court order obtained by the United States Attorney General (or designee not

lower than an Assistant Attorney General) concerning investigations or prosecutions of a serious offense; a parent is a party to a court proceeding directly involving child abuse and neglect or dependency matters; or 4C initiates legal action against a parent or a parent initiates legal action against 4C, then 4C may disclose to the court the child records relevant for the program to act as plaintiff or defendant. The Secretary of Agriculture or an authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service can conduct program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program if the results will be reported in an aggregate form that does not identify any individual.

A caseworker or other representative from a state, local, or tribal child welfare agency has the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement when that agency is legally responsible for the child's care and protection

Written agreements. When 4C establishes a written agreement with a third party, 4C will annually review and, if necessary, update the agreement.

4C will also annually notify parents of their rights about protection/privacy of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

§1303.23 Parental rights.

Inspect record. A parent has the right to inspect his/her child's records only. 4C will get the records as quickly as possible, but no more than 45 days after request.

Amend record. A parent has the right to ask us to amend information in the child's record that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy and those requests will be considered carefully. If the request is denied, 4C will give a written decision to the parents and inform them of their right to a hearing.

Hearing. If the parent requests a hearing 4C will schedule a hearing within a reasonable time, notify the parent and ensure the person who conducts the hearing does not have a direct interest in its outcome. If the parent disagrees with the results of the hearing, they have the right to place a statement to that effect in the child's file. 4C will provide a parent an initial copy of child records.

Right to inspect written agreements. A parent has the right to review any written agreements with third parties that received the child's information.

§1303.24 Maintaining records.

4C will maintain child records for seven years in a manner that ensures only parents and 4C officials (or persons acting on behalf of 4C) have access. After that time, records must be shredded.

Subpart D — Delegation of Program Operations

N/A (4C has no delegates)

Subpart E — Facilities—Major Renovations Only

§1303.46 Recording and posting notices of federal interest.

Recording notices of federal interest. 4C has 4 facilities with federal interest: Troy Head Start, Holland Head Start, Harker Heights Head Start and Marlboro Heights Head Start. Those four facilities have a notice posted inside and outside stating that there is federal interest in those buildings. Since all of those are modular buildings on donated use of the land, we did not have to file a notice with Bell County.

§1303.47 Contents of notices of federal interest. All of 4C's notices of federal interest include the language required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

§1303.48 Grantee limitations on federal interest. 4C cannot mortgage, use as collateral for credit or loans or transfer to another party any facility purchased with Head Start funds without the responsible HHS official's written permission.

§1303.49 Protection of federal interest in mortgage agreements. N/A

§1303.50 Third party leases and occupancy arrangements.

If 4C receives federal funds to purchase, construct or do major renovation of a facility or modular unit on property we do not own, we must have a lease or other occupancy agreement of at least 30 years for purchase or construction and at least 15 years for a major renovation or placement of a modular unit. The occupancy agreement must include the following: A statement of 4C's right of continued use and occupancy of the leased or occupied premises during the entire term of the lease; Designate the regional grants management officer to receive a copy of any notice of default and include the regional grants management officer's current address; Specify that the responsible HHS official has the right to cure any default under the occupancy agreement within the designated period to cure default; and Specify that the responsible HHS official has the right to transfer the lease to another interim or replacement grantee.

§1303.51 Subordination of federal interest. N/A because 4C does not borrow money on any facility.

§1303.52 Insurance, bonding, and maintenance.

Purpose. If 4C uses federal funds to purchase a facility, excluding modular units, we must obtain a title insurance policy for the purchase price that names the responsible HHS official as an additional loss payee.

Insurance coverage. 4C maintains insurance coverage at the full replacement value of the owned facility, for as long as the grantee owns or occupies the facility. If 4C ever purchases a building, we would submit to the responsible HHS official, within 10 days after coverage begins, proof of insurance coverage required.

Maintenance. 4C keeps all facilities purchased or constructed in whole or in part with Head Start funds in good repair in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, including Head Start requirements, NAEYC requirements, zoning requirements, building codes, health and safety regulations and child care licensing standards.

§1303.53 Copies of documents.

4C must submit to the responsible HHS official, within 10 days after filing or execution, copies of deeds, leases, loan instruments, mortgage agreements, notices of federal interest, and other legal documents related to the use of Head Start funds for purchase, construction, major renovation, or the discharge of any debt secured by the facility.

§1303.54 Record retention.

4C will retain records pertinent to the lease, purchase, construction or major renovation of a facility funded in whole or in part with Head Start funds, for as long as the grantee owns or occupies the facility, plus three years.

§1303.55 Procurement procedures.

4C will comply with all grants management regulations, including specific regulations applicable to transactions in excess of the current simplified acquisition threshold, cost principles, and its own procurement procedures, and must provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and full competition. Full information can be found in 4C's Financial Policies and Procedures.

§1303.56 Inspection of work.

For any facility purchase or major renovation, 4C will submit to the responsible HHS official a final facility inspection report by a licensed engineer or architect within 30 calendar days after the project is completed that satisfies all federal requirements.

Subpart F — Transportation

§1303.70 Purpose.

Applicability. This rule applies to all agencies, including those that provide transportation services, with the exceptions and exclusions provided in this section, regardless of whether transportation is provided directly on agency owned or leased vehicles or through arrangement with a private or public transportation provider.

Providing transportation services. Since 4C does not provide direct transportation services, we do provide reasonable assistance to the families, such as information about public transit availability and Medicaid transportation, and we note that in our recruitment. We pay for bus passes when necessary to help a child get to a center. 4C makes reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other agencies in our communities.

Waiver. 4C reserves the right to request a waiver in writing from the responsible HHS official if there are changes in the future to our transportation services.

§1303.71 Vehicles.

Child restraint systems. 4C must ensure each vehicle used to transport children receiving services is equipped for use of age-, height- and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems as defined in part 1305, Definitions.

§1303.72 Vehicle operation N/A

§1303.73 Trip routing. N/A

§1303.74 Safety procedures. N/A

§1303.75 Children with disabilities.

If a child with disabilities needs transportation, 4C ensures there are school buses or allowable alternate vehicles adapted or designed for transportation of children with disabilities available as necessary to transport such children enrolled in the program. This requirement does not apply to the transportation of children receiving home-based. We satisfy this requirement by collaboration with our public schools and Medicaid transportation services. 4C ensures that any special transportation requirements in a child's IEP or IFSP are followed, including special pick-up and drop-off requirements, seating requirements, equipment needs, any assistance that may be required, and any necessary training for bus drivers and monitors.

Part 1304 — Federal Administrative Procedures (for Federal offices only)

Part 1305 — Definitions

§1305.1 Purpose. The purpose of this part is to define terms.

§1305.2 Terms.

ACF means the Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Act means the Head Start Act, Sec. 635 *et seq.*, Pub. L. 97-35, 95 Stat. 499-511 (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. Section 9801, *et seq.*).

Agency means the body that receives the Head Start grant.

Aggregate child-level assessment data means the data collected by an agency on the status and progress of the children it serves that have been combined to provide summary information about groups of children enrolled in specific classes, centers, home-based or other options, groups or settings, or other groups of children such as dual language learners, or to provide summary information by specific domains of development.

Allowable alternate vehicle means a vehicle designed for carrying eleven or more people, including the driver, that meets all the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards applicable to school buses, except 49 CFR 571.108 and 571.131.

Budget period means the interval of time, into which a multi-year period of assistance (project period) is divided for budgetary and funding purposes.

Case plan is defined as presented in 42 U.S.C. 675(1) which, in summary, is a written document that must include a number of specified items including, but is not limited to, a plan for safe and proper care of the child in foster care placement, health records, and a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child in foster care.

Child-level assessment data means the data collected by an agency on an individual child from one or more valid and reliable assessments of a child's status and progress, including but not limited to direct assessment, structured observations, checklists, staff or parent report measures, and portfolio records or work samples.

Child records means records that: Are directly related to the child; Are maintained by the program, or by a party acting for the program; and Include information recorded in any way, such as print, electronic, or digital means, including media, video, image, or audio format.

Child restraint system means any device designed to restrain, seat, or position children that meets the current requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213, Child Restraint Systems, 49 CFR 571.213, for children in the weight category established under the regulation, or any device designed to restrain, seat, or position children, other than a Type I seat belt as defined at 49 CFR 571.209, for children not in the weight category currently established by 49 CFR 571.213.

Child with a disability is defined in the same manner as presented in the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9801.

CLASS: Pre-K means The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The CLASS is an observational instrument that assesses classroom quality in preschool through third grade classrooms. This tool meets the requirements described in 641(c)(1)(D) and 641A(c)(2)(F) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9836(c)(1)(D) and 9836a(c)(2)(F)). The CLASS assesses three domains of classroom experience: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

Emotional Support measures children's social and emotional functioning in the classroom, and includes four dimensions: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity and Regard for Student Perspectives. Positive Climate addresses the emotional connection, respect, and enjoyment demonstrated between teachers and children and among children. Negative Climate addresses the level of expressed negativity such as anger, hostility, or aggression exhibited by teachers and/or children in the classroom. Teacher Sensitivity addresses teachers' awareness of and responsiveness to children's academic and emotional concerns. Regard for Student Perspectives addresses the degree to which teachers' interactions with children and classroom activities place an emphasis on children's interests, motivations, and points of view.

Classroom Organization measures a broad array of classroom processes related to the organization and management of children's behavior, time, and attention in the classroom. It includes three dimensions: Behavior Management, Productivity, and Instructional Learning Formats. Behavior Management addresses how effectively teachers monitor, prevent, and redirect behavior. Productivity addresses how well the classroom runs with respect to routines and the degree to which teachers organize activities and directions so that maximum time can be spent on learning activities. Instructional Learning Formats addresses how teachers facilitate activities and provide interesting materials so that children are engaged and learning opportunities are maximized.

Instructional Support measures the ways in which teachers implement curriculum to effectively support cognitive and language development. It includes three dimensions: Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling. Concept Development addresses how teachers use instructional discussions and activities to promote children's higher order thinking skills in contrast to a focus on rote instruction. Quality of Feedback addresses how teachers extend children's learning through their responses to children's ideas, comments, and work. Language Modeling addresses the extent to which teachers facilitate and encourage children's language.

Assessments with the CLASS involve observation-based measurement of each dimension on a seven point scale. A score ranging from 1 (minimally characteristic) to 7 (highly characteristic) is given for each dimension and represents the extent to which that dimension is characteristic of that classroom. Relevant dimension scores are used to calculate each domain score.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) means a license issued by a state or other jurisdiction, in accordance with the standards contained in 49 CFR part 383, to an individual which authorizes the individual to operate a class of commercial motor vehicles.

Construction means new buildings, and excludes renovations, alterations, additions, or work of any kind to existing buildings.

Continuity of care means Head Start or Early Head Start services provided to children in a manner that promotes primary caregiving and minimizes the number of transitions in teachers and teacher assistants that children experience over the course of the day, week, program year, and to the extent possible, during the course of their participation from birth to age three in Early Head Start and in Head Start.

Deficiency is defined in the same manner as presented in the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9801.

Delegate agency is defined in the same manner as presented in the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9801.

Development and administrative costs mean costs incurred in accordance with an approved Head Start budget which do not directly relate to the provision of program component services, including services to children with disabilities, as set forth and described in the Head Start program performance standards (45 CFR part 1304).

Disclosure means to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication of PII contained in child records by any means, including oral, written, or electronic means, to any party except the party identified as the party that provided or created the record.

Double session variation means a center-based option that employs a single teacher to work with one group of children in the morning and a different group of children in the afternoon.

Dual benefit costs mean costs incurred in accordance with an approved Head Start budget which directly relate to both development and administrative functions and to the program component services, including services to children with disabilities, as set forth and described in the Head Start program performance standards (45 CFR part 1304).

Dual language learner means a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time, or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language. The term "dual language learner" may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms frequently used, such as bilingual, English language learner (ELL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), English learner, and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE).

Early Head Start agency means a public or private non-profit or for-profit entity designated by ACF to operate an Early Head Start program to serve pregnant women and children from birth to age three, pursuant to Section 645A(e) of the Head Start Act.

Enrolled (or any variation of) means a child has been accepted and attended at least one class for center-based or family child care option or at least one home visit for the home-based option.

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

Facility means a structure, such as a building or modular unit, appropriate for use in carrying out a Head Start program and used primarily to provide Head Start services, including services to children and their families, or for administrative purposes or other activities necessary to carry out a Head Start program.

Family means all persons living in the same household who are supported by the child's parent(s)' or guardian(s)' income; and are related to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) by blood, marriage, or adoption; or are the child's authorized caregiver or legally responsible party.

Federal interest is a property right which secures the right of the federal awarding agency to recover the current fair market value of its percentage of participation in the cost of the facility in the event the facility is no longer used for Head Start purposes by the grantee or upon the disposition of the property. When a grantee uses Head Start funds to purchase, construct or renovate a facility, or make mortgage payments, it creates a federal interest. The federal interest includes any portion of the cost of purchase, construction, or renovation contributed by or for the entity, or a related donor organization, to satisfy a matching requirement.

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) means the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration's standards for motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment (49 CFR part 571) established under section 30111 of Title 49, United States Code.

Financial viability means that an organization is able to meet its financial obligations, balance funding and expenses and maintain sufficient funding to achieve organizational goals and objective. *Fixed route* means the established routes to be traveled on a regular basis by vehicles that transport children to and from Head Start or Early Head Start program activities, and which include specifically designated stops where children board or exit the vehicle.

Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the state agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child-care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the state or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is federal matching of any payments that are made.

Full-working-day means not less than 10 hours of Head Start or Early Head Start services per day.

Funded enrollment means the number of participants which the Head Start grantee is to serve, as indicated on the grant award.

Going concern means an organization that operates without the threat of liquidation for the foreseeable future, a period of at least 12 months.

Grantee means the local public or private non-profit agency or for-profit agency which has been designated as a Head Start agency under 42 U.S.C. 9836 and which has been granted financial assistance by the responsible HHS official to operate a Head Start program.

Head Start agency means a local public or private non-profit or for-profit entity designated by ACF to operate a Head Start program to serve children age three to compulsory school age, pursuant to section 641(b) and (d) of the Head Start Act.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF): Ages Birth to Five describes the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs must foster in all children. It includes five central domains: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Literacy; Cognition; and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development. These central domains are broken into five domains for infants and toddlers and seven domains for preschoolers. Infant and Toddler domains are Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Communication; Cognition; and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development. Preschool domains are Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Communication; Literacy; Mathematics Development; Scientific Reasoning; and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development. Domains are divided into sub-domains with goals that describe broad skills, behaviors, and concepts that are important for school success. Developmental progressions describe the skills, behaviors and concepts that children may demonstrate as they progress. As described in the Head Start Act, the Framework is central to program operations that promote high-quality early learning environments (42 U.S.C. 9832(21)(G)(iv)(II)(aa), 42 U.S.C. 9835(o), 42 U.S.C.836(d)(2)(C), 42 U.S.C. 9836a(g)(2)(A), 42 U.S.C. 9837(f)(3)(E), 42 U.S.C. 9837a(a)(3), 42 U.S.C. 9837a(a)(14), 42 U.S.C. 9837b(a)(2)(B)(iii), 42 U.S.C. 9837b(a)(4)(A)(i), and 42 U.S.C. 9837b(a)(4)(B)(iii)).

Homeless children means the same as homeless children and youths in Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act at 42 U.S.C. 11434a (2).

Home visitor means the staff member in the home-based program option assigned to work with parents to provide comprehensive services to children and their families through home visits and group socialization activities.

Hours of planned class operations means hours when children are scheduled to attend. Professional development, training, orientation, teacher planning, data analysis, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, classroom sanitation, and transportation do not count toward the hours of planned class operations.

Income means gross cash income and includes earned income, military income (including pay and allowances, except those described in Section 645(a)(3)(B) of the Act), veteran's benefits, Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, and public assistance benefits. Additional examples of gross cash income are listed in the definition of "income" which appears in U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60-185 (available at <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-185.pdf>).

Indian Head Start agency means a program operated by an Indian tribe (as defined by the Act) or designated by an Indian tribe to operate on its behalf.

Indian tribe is defined in the same manner as presented in the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9801.

Individualized Education Program is defined in the same manner as presented in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*).

Individualized Family Service Plan is defined in the same manner as presented in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*).

Legal status means the existence of an applicant or grantee as a public agency or organization under the law of the state in which it is located, or existence as a private nonprofit or for-profit agency or organization as a legal entity recognized under the law of the state in which it is located. Existence as a private non-profit agency or organization may be established under applicable state or federal law.

Local agency responsible for implementing IDEA means the early intervention service provider under Part C of IDEA and the local educational agency under Part B of IDEA.

Major renovation means any individual or collection renovation that has a cost equal to or exceeding \$250,000.00. It excludes minor renovations and repairs except when they are included in a purchase application.

Migrant family means, for purposes of Head Start eligibility, a family with children under the age of compulsory school attendance who changed their residence by moving from one geographic location to another, either intrastate or interstate, within the preceding two years for the purpose of engaging in agricultural work and whose family income comes primarily from this activity.

Migrant or Seasonal Head Start Program means: With respect to services for migrant farm workers, a Head Start program that serves families who are engaged in agricultural labor and who have changed their residence from one geographic location to another in the preceding 2-year period; and, with respect to services for seasonal farmworkers, a Head Start program that serves families who are engaged primarily in seasonal agricultural labor and who have not changed their residence to another geographic location in the preceding 2-year period.

Minor renovation means improvements to facilities, which do not meet the definition of major renovation.

Modular unit means a portable prefabricated structure made at another location and moved to a site for use by a Head Start grantee to carry out a Head Start program, regardless of the manner or extent to which the modular unit is attached to underlying real property.

National Driver Register means the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's automated system for assisting state driver license officials in obtaining information regarding the driving records of individuals who have been denied licenses for cause; had their licenses denied for cause, had their licenses canceled, revoked, or suspended for cause, or have been convicted of certain serious driving offenses.

Parent means a Head Start child's mother or father, other family member who is a primary caregiver, foster parent or authorized caregiver, guardian or the person with whom the child has been placed for purposes of adoption pending a final adoption decree.

Participant means a pregnant woman or child who is enrolled in and receives services from a Head Start, an Early Head Start, a Migrant or Seasonal Head Start, or an American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start program.

Personally identifiable information (PII) means any information that could identify a specific individual, including but not limited to a child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child.

Program means a Head Start, Early Head Start, migrant, seasonal, or tribal program, funded under the Act and carried out by an agency, or delegate agency, to provide ongoing comprehensive child development services.

Program costs mean costs incurred in accordance with an approved Head Start budget which directly relate to the provision of program component services, including services to children with disabilities, as set forth and described in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR part 1304).

Purchase means to buy an existing facility, including outright purchase, down payment or through payments made in satisfaction of a mortgage or other loan agreement, whether principal, interest or an allocated portion principal and/or interest. The use of grant funds to make a payment under a capital lease agreement, as defined in the cost principles, is a purchase subject to these provisions. Purchase also refers to an approved use of Head Start funds to continue paying the cost of purchasing facilities or refinance an existing loan or mortgage beginning in 1987.

Real property means land, including land improvements, buildings, structures and all appurtenances thereto, excluding movable machinery and equipment.

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

Relevant time period means: The 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted; or during the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the application is submitted, whichever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application.

Repair means maintenance that is necessary to keep a Head Start facility in working condition. Repairs do not add significant value to the property or extend its useful life.

Responsible HHS official means the official of the Department of Health and Human Services who has authority to make grants under the Act.

School readiness goals mean the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve their readiness for kindergarten.

School bus means a motor vehicle designed for carrying 11 or more persons (including the driver) and which complies with the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards applicable to school buses.

Service area means the geographic area identified in an approved grant application within which a grantee may provide Head Start services.

Staff means paid adults who have responsibilities related to children and their families who are enrolled in programs.

State is defined in the same manner as presented in the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9801.

Termination of a grant or delegate agency agreement means permanent withdrawal of the grantee's or delegate agency's authority to obligate previously awarded grant funds before that authority would otherwise expire. It also means the voluntary relinquishment of that authority by the grantee or delegate agency. Termination does not include: Withdrawal of funds awarded on the basis of the grantee's or delegate agency's underestimate of the unobligated balance in a prior period; Refusal by the funding agency to extend a grant or award additional funds (such as refusal to make a competing or noncompeting continuation renewal, extension or supplemental award); Withdrawal of the unobligated balance as of the expiration of a grant; and Annulment, i.e., voiding of a grant upon determination that the award was obtained fraudulently or was otherwise illegal or invalid from its inception.

Total approved costs mean the sum of all costs of the Head Start program approved for a given budget period by the Administration for Children and Families, as indicated on the Financial Assistance Award. Total approved costs consist of the federal share plus any approved non-federal match, including non-federal match above the statutory minimum.

Transition period means the three-year time period after December 9, 2011, on the Designation Renewal System during which ACF will convert all of the current continuous Head Start and Early Head Start grants into five-year grants after reviewing each grantee to determine if it meets any of the conditions under §1304.12 of this chapter that require re-competition or if the grantee will receive its first five-year grant non-competitively.

Transportation services means the planned transporting of children to and from sites where an agency provides services funded under the Head Start Act. Transportation services can involve the pickup and discharge of children at regularly scheduled times and pre-arranged sites, including trips between children's homes and program settings. The term includes services provided directly by the Head Start and Early Head Start grantee or delegate agency and services which such agencies arrange to be provided by another organization or an individual. Incidental trips, such as transporting a sick child home before the end of the day, or such as might be required to transport small groups of children to and from necessary services, are not included under the term.

Verify or any variance of the word means to check or determine the correctness or truth by investigation or by reference.

