

Head Start

(Update 1/3/19)

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Forms

The following forms are referenced in this file:

- [Head Start Brochure \(English\)](#)
- [Head Start Brochure \(Spanish\)](#)
- 04-99 Head Start Information to Caregiver

Description

Head Start and Early Head Start provides quality early childhood education and comprehensive family support services to low-income and at-risk families in San Diego County. Families with pregnant women and/or children ages 0-5 years are encouraged to apply.

Head Start and Early Head Start's comprehensive services include early childhood education, health, mental health, nutrition, disability/inclusion, parent education and family support. Each child enrolled in the program receives developmental screenings and curriculum individualization. The program assists families to identify a medical and dental provider and obtain age-appropriate health screenings and any required follow-up treatment.

Head Start and Early Head Start recognize that parents and caregivers are a child's first teachers, so families are provided with opportunities for parenting education through parent meetings, parent teacher conferences, home visits, and special events. Families are encouraged to set goals for themselves and are provided resources and referrals to support their goal achievement.

The Head Start and Early Head Start program is provided at school sites, in the home, and at licensed childcare providers throughout the county of San Diego. All Head Start and Early Head Start services are free or at a low cost to families.

Families may apply for Early Head Start/Head Start at any point during the year. However, the majority of new openings are available at the beginning of each new school year (late summer/early fall), so families are especially encouraged to apply during spring and early summer.

Collaboration between CWS and partnering Head Start agencies

In the past, a client may not have received information on all enrollment opportunities and program options. In collaboration with Neighborhood House Association (NHA), Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee on Anti-Poverty Inc. (MAAC), Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) and Easter Seals North San Diego County, CWS clients will have a priority* direct referral process including enrollment contact persons. Due to this collaboration and priority referral preference, caregivers are not to directly contact the individual Head Start site.

* The word “priority” is used throughout to indicate additional referral points. NHA, MAAC, CAPSLO, and Easter Seals cannot guarantee enrollment.

CWS clients could be:

- Families/children who have an open case with CWS or
- Declared dependents, placed in-out-of-home or participating in voluntary services.

Refer to the [Case Status and Referrals](#) section for more information.

Partnering agencies’ direct referral process will ensure that families are informed of all enrollment opportunities and are provided assistance with their application.

Refer to form 04-99, Head Start Information to Caregiver, for a complete list of served areas and age. For families who reside in the non-served area, SWs will contact the Family and Community Partnership Coordinator.

SW collaboration

Head Start and Early Head Start staff members develop close partnerships with children and families as their programs involve frequent interaction between staff and families. Head Start and Early Head Start could be an excellent resource for social workers, as program staff can offer helpful information regarding the children and families, in preparing for court reports, placement decisions, and Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings.

A SW’s ongoing communication with the Head Start and Early Head Start program is critical to the family’s success and a child’s permanency in placement. Some examples of ways that SWs may work collaboratively with Head Start/Early Head Start:

- Visit Head Start and Early Head Start sites to observe children
- Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences and home visits
- Request that Head Start and Early Head Start staff participate in CFTs
- Inform Head Start and Early Head Start of placement changes so that a transfer to another Head start or Early Head Start location may be facilitated (if possible)
- Request documentation (e.g. physical exam, dental exam, hearing/vision screenings, immunizations, developmental screenings, attendance records, Parent-Teacher Conference records, etc.)
- Inform Head Start and Early Head Start staff of visitation restrictions so that staff can ensure that children are dropped off and picked up by appropriate individuals.

Access to Head Start SWs will follow these steps to access Head Start services for CWS clients:

Step	Who	Action
1	SW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the caregivers with the “Head Start Information to Caregiver” (form 04-99) which lists the Head Start sites.• Inform the caregiver to contact the Head Start agency listed on the 04-99.
2	Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the 04-99 and select the program that is the best fit for the family and child(ren).• Call the agency, based on the served area.
3	Head Start Agency	Schedule appointment with caregiver to complete an application.
4	Caregiver	Attend Head Start application appointment and bring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form 04-99• IFSP or IEP (if applicable)• Health Passport/Immunization Records/Medical Records (if available)• Income documentation (needed only if child is not detained/placed through CWS).

If additional support is necessary, SWs may contact the Family and Community Partnership Coordinator.

When CWS children change placements [including reunifying/starting a trial visit with the parent(s)], the SW and caregiver must contact the child’s current Head Start location so they may coordinate with the Head Start location near the new placement to ensure seamless transition of services.

When there is no dependent child in the household, the caregiver will need to provide income documentation. For foster children (out-of-home placement), no income verification is necessary.

Priority factors

Priority application/referral points are issued for the following:

- Poverty
- Child has an active IEP/IFSP
- Family receiving TANF/SSI
- CWS referred
- CWS out-of-home or declared a dependent of the court
- Homeless, as defined by McKinney-Vento Act.

Families may qualify for any/all points (e.g., if the child is not out of home and therefore not being awarded those points, they may qualify for TANF or IEP points instead).

Case status and referrals

The following table shows CWS case status as it relates to the collaboration/referral process:

Type of Case	Referral/Priority
Voluntary case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW will complete the 04-99 as described above.• The client will receive priority as a CWS-referred case using the 04-99.
Dependent children who are placed with the parents or in out-of-home placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW will complete the 04-99 as described above.• The client will receive priority as a CWS referred case using the 04-99.
ER referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not eligible to use the 04-99.• SW will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ give the client the main Head Start phone number (888-873-5145) for a standard Head Start referral.○ also may provide the general Head Start Brochure (available in English and Spanish).○ call the Family and Community Partnership Coordinator, and give the family name and contact information.

Case status and referrals (cont.)

The following table shows CWS case status as it relates to the collaboration/referral process:

Type of Case	Referral/Priority
Aged-out youth with non-dependent minor; no CWS case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not eligible to use the 04-99.• SW will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ give the client the main Head Start phone number (888-873-5145) for a standard Head Start referral.○ also may provide the general Head Start Brochure (available in English and Spanish).○ call the Family and Community Partnership Coordinator, and give the family name and contact information.• NHA will follow up with the family as a courtesy to CWS.
Minor dependents, aged-out youth or a non-minor dependent (NMD) with dependent minor; open CWS case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW will complete the 04-99 as described above.• The client will receive priority as a CWS referred case using the 04-99.

Emergency cards at Head Start

As with all educational placements, the SW **must** advise the caregiver of all current and/or updated contact orders so that when the caregiver provides Head Start with emergency contact information, the contact persons are in accordance with current Juvenile Court orders (e.g., a relative caregiver is not permitted to list a family member on the emergency card that has a no contact or supervised only order in the CWS court case).

Alignment with SET

This policy aligns with SET [Value 4](#) by creating shared responsibilities with community partners and SET [Value 3](#) by focusing on a child’s well-being while they are in our care.
