



## **ESSA Title I, Part A and Head Start Act LEA (Local Education Agency)/Head Start Coordination Guidance**

The ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires LEAs receiving Title I funds to develop agreements with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood development programs, such as Exceptional Children, NC Pre-K, and private childcare, to increase coordination. The Head Start Act also requires Head Start programs to enter into agreements with LEAs and other early childhood providers. The goal of this coordination is to provide higher quality learning experiences and a more seamless transition to kindergarten.

Agreements should be tailored to suit the community's unique needs and consider a comprehensive approach, rooted in best practices. The following activities must be addressed in a formal agreement between the LEA and Head Start.

### **Requirements:**

Check to indicate that each activity, referred to under Section 1119 of ESSA and Section 642 of the Head Start Act regarding coordination requirements, has been addressed in a formal agreement:

#### **Data and Records Sharing**

- Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for transferring records, with parental consent, from a Head Start program and/or other early childhood program to the LEA.

#### **Coordinating Services/Communication**

- Designating leaders responsible for the oversight and implementation of the agreement.
- Establishing regular channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, administrators, social workers, and health staff) in Head Start agencies or other early childhood education programs, as appropriate, to facilitate coordination of programs.
- Sharing information on selection priorities for eligible children to be served by programs.
- Sharing information on program service areas.
- Coordinating public information dissemination and access to programs for families.
- Coordinating the provision of additional services to meet the needs of working parents (such as before-school and after-school care).
- Coordinating the provision and use of facilities, transportation or other programs.

#### **Transition**

- Establishing comprehensive transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school, which could address sharing formative assessment data and summer enrollment programs.
- Conducting meetings involving families, preschool/kindergarten/elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers or, if appropriate, teachers from other early childhood education programs, to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children.

#### **Professional Development**

- Coordinating, organizing and participating in joint training of staff, including transition-related training of school staff, Head Start program staff, and, where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff. Other topics could include academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula and formative assessment, social and emotional development, and racial equity and implicit bias.
- Coordinating program technical assistance (such as shared opportunities for preschool pyramid model coaching).

#### **Curriculum and Instruction**

- Linking the educational services provided by the LEA and by local Head Start agencies.
- Coordinating educational activities, curricular objectives, instruction, and formative assessment.

**Services for Children with Disabilities**

- Developing coordinated procedures for:
  - Referral and evaluation processes.
  - Service coordination.
  - Least restrictive environment/reduction of dual enrollment.
  - Transition services, including from early intervention and to kindergarten.
  - Participation in the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
  - Implementation of the IEP.

**Family Engagement**

- Developing and implementing a family outreach and support program to enhance the continuity of family engagement between Head Start and schools and ensure families understand the importance of involvement in their children’s academic success.

**Practices Supporting Coordination:**

Activities to Support Effective Agreements	Characteristics of a Strong Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a local level self-assessment on coordination practices (See Toolkit in Resources list, below)</li> <li>• Engage a broad coalition of local stakeholders               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LEA, including principals and teachers</li> <li>○ Head Start</li> <li>○ Smart Start</li> <li>○ NC Pre-K</li> <li>○ Private child care</li> <li>○ Exceptional Children</li> <li>○ McKinney Vento (for homeless children and youth)</li> <li>○ Foster Care</li> <li>○ Health care providers</li> <li>○ Families</li> <li>○ Other community stakeholders (literacy programs, CCR&amp;R, before and after school programs, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discuss coordination at agency board meetings or local advisory councils</li> <li>• Draft coordination agreements</li> <li>• Review and update annually, or more often as needed</li> <li>• Include evaluation or measures of success to inform needed changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the LEA, Head Start, and early childhood programs covered by the MOU</li> <li>• Includes a vision, goals and/or purpose of the MOU (the why)</li> <li>• Outlines the major activities to meet the coordination requirements</li> <li>• Describes the roles and responsibilities of each agency</li> <li>• Describes the methods of communication</li> <li>• Provides a realistic timeline for implementing the activities</li> <li>• Includes implementation and oversight</li> <li>• Describes the length or term of the agreement</li> </ul>

**Resources:**

Early Learning Partners Contact Lists: [Head Start](#), [Smart Start](#), [Title 1 Toolkit: New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in ESSA](#)  
[Coordination Requirements in Head Start Act and ESSA](#)

**For more information contact:**

Carla Garrett, Title I Preschool Consultant NC Department of Public Instruction <a href="mailto:carla.garrett@dpi.nc.gov">carla.garrett@dpi.nc.gov</a>	Danielle Ewen, Principal EducationCounsel <a href="mailto:danielle.ewen@educationcounsel.com">danielle.ewen@educationcounsel.com</a>
Karen McKnight, Head Start State Collaboration Director NC Department of Public Instruction <a href="mailto:karen.mcknight@dpi.nc.gov">karen.mcknight@dpi.nc.gov</a>	Mandy Ableidinger, Policy and Practice Leader NC Early Childhood Foundation <a href="mailto:mableidinger@buildthefoundation.org">mableidinger@buildthefoundation.org</a>

\*Note: Some content edited for clarity and brevity. See Coordination Requirements for specific language.