

Early Learning Ventures EHS Service Plan

1302 Subpart A - Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA)

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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

Performance Standard:

Service Area - A program must propose a service area in the grant application and define the area by county or sub-county area, such as a municipality, town or census tract or jurisdiction of a federally recognized Indian reservation.

If a program decides to change the service area after ACF has approved its grant application, the program must submit to ACF a new service area proposal for approval.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV Early Head Start's service area includes: Arapahoe, Adams, Garfield, Mesa, Morgan and Pueblo Counties in Colorado. The service area will continue to be defined by the data and findings of the Community Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment and annual updates of the Assessment. The Policy Council, Governing Board and Administration for Children and families approve the service area.

Any proposed changes to ELV's Early Head Start service area will be submitted to the Administration for Children and Families for approval.

While the service area is based on children's residence, ELV may enroll a child that lives outside of the service area if the child's parent(s) works or is a full-time student within the service area. Each case will be reviewed individually and must be approved by the Family Engagement Manager.

Performance Standard:

Community Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment - To design a program that meets community needs, and builds on strengths and resources, a program must conduct a community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period. The community assessment must use data that describes community strengths, needs, and resources.

A program must annually review and update the community assessment to reflect any significant changes.

A program must consider whether the characteristics of the community allow it to include children from diverse economic backgrounds that would be supported by other funding sources, including private pay, in addition to the program's eligible funded enrollment.

A program must not enroll children from diverse economic backgrounds if it would result in a program serving less than its eligible funded enrollment.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV will ensure that a comprehensive Community Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment is conducted every five years, typically in alignment with the five-year grant period. Per the Standards, the following information will be collected and analyzed:

- The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak, including: children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies;
- The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;
- Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children;
- Other child-development, child-care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and 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

The findings of the Community Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment will be shared with and approved by the Governing Bodies. ELV will utilize the Community Needs Assessment for planning and to determine the grantee's Early Head Start philosophy, services and its long- and short-term program objectives; determine appropriate locations for centers; and establish criteria that define the types of children and families who will be given priority for recruitment and selection.

Annually, each of the four years following completion of the Community Assessment, Early Learning Ventures will conduct a review of the Assessment to determine whether there have been significant changes. Per the Standards, this will include data regarding:

- Increased availability of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten (including an assessment of how the pre-kindergarten available in the community meets the needs of the parents and children served by the program, and whether it is offered for a full school day);
- Rates of family and child homelessness; and
- Significant shifts in community demographics and resources.

ELV will utilize information from the Annual Review to plan and make any necessary adjustments to services, program objectives and the selection criteria. Early Learning Ventures will continue to consider whether the characteristics of the community allow it to include children from diverse economic backgrounds that would be supported by other funding sources, including private pay, in addition to the program’s eligible funded enrollment. ELV will not enroll children from diverse economic backgrounds if it would result in the program serving less than its eligible funded enrollment.

1302.12 Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility

Performance Standard:

Process Overview – Program staff must: conduct an in-person interview with each family, verify information and create an eligibility determination record for enrolled participants. Program staff may interview the family over the telephone if an in-person interview is not possible or convenient for the family.

Policy and Procedures:

Application Intake

1. The family has an option of completing a waitlist application online, during the enrollment process at their child care partnership program or directly with a Specialist.
2. When the waitlist application has been completed without the support of the Specialist (i.e.. online or during the child care enrollment process), CORE or the child care partnership program will notify the Specialist of the new application.
3. ELV Child Care Partnership Specialists (CCPS) will then complete the application (Demographic Information Form (Waitlist Application or Online Application), Health Information and History Form, Authorization for Health and Developmental Screenings, Eligibility Verification Form and the Selection Criteria Worksheet. Parent will present proof of residency requirement: address verification or proof of working in the county, verification of child’s age (should be in CORE) and proof of income (three months of income preferred, current income can be used if significant changes), or documentation confirming eligibility (SSI, TANF,

4. SNAP Housing Status Section of Eligibility Form, or Court documentation of Foster or Kinship Care). The following forms of income are acceptable: check stubs, W-2's, 1040's, employer verification letter or form, unemployment check stubs, and/or parent declaration on the Income Eligibility Form.
5. The parent signs all forms, acknowledging that all information is true and correct and all income has been reported at the time of the application. In addition, the CCPS signs the form as a witness to the parent's signature. When application was not already completed online, for example, by provider or specialist), the CCPS will enter the child's information in CORE to be placed on the EHS waitlist. For an application completed online, the CCPS will go to the EHS Application module in CORE and update the application status as Approve to put child on the waitlist. This does not enroll the child, but instead allows the application to move on to the next step of the enrollment process.
6. From information provided, the CCPS makes a *preliminary* determination of eligibility. The specialist then sends the full ELV QCCP Application to the Family Engagement Manager, for final signature. The manager will update the child's waitlist status in CORE by indicating that they have reviewed the application under EHS Child module. This will make the child eligible for enrollment.
7. Each family is presented at the weekly ERSEA meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure full enrollment, to staff families with the same number of points from the selection criteria and to discuss families needing scholarships. Priority of selection goes first to the highest number of selection criteria points, with a focus on children needing full-time care. Next priority is the Child Care Partners current enrollment within the contracted slot range and the capacity to serve the family.
8. If ELV staff cannot meet during a particular week, any income eligible children will be approved on the Friday prior to the regularly scheduled meeting. Any over income children will be staffed during the next regularly scheduled meeting.
9. Once the family's enrollment has been completed through the ERSEA meeting, the assigned Child Care Partnership Specialist will send out enrollment notification letters both to the family and the Child Care Partner.

Performance Standard:

Age Requirements - For Early Head Start, except when the child is transitioning to Head Start, a child must be an infant or a toddler younger than three years old.

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.

Policy and Procedures:

To be eligible for enrollment in ELV EHS, a child must be at least six weeks old and less than three years old.

The Child Care Partnership Specialist (CCPS) verifies age with the birth certificate or an appropriate copy. For children already enrolled at a Child Care Partner site, the existing documentation on file should be used. If an original certified copy of the birth certificate is unavailable, the parent/guardian can submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation of the child's identity and age. If none of these are available, parents may fill out and sign ELV's birth affidavit.

1. The CCPS verifies birth certificate (when available) and makes a copy if the document is not already uploaded in Alliance CORE.
2. The original is immediately returned to parent and copy is uploaded to Alliance CORE (if needed).

The verification of placement or out of home placement order is accepted for foster children; the original certified Birth Certificate is not required since foster parents do not receive this from the state.

The policy of ELV is to assist homeless families in any way possible to acquire paperwork. ELV has a birth verification form to use in lieu of a certified birth certificate. The CCPS will continue to work with a family to obtain any missing documentation.

Performance Standard:

Eligibility Requirements - A child is eligible if:

- The family's income is equal to or below the poverty line; or,
- The family is eligible for or, in the absence of child care, would be potentially eligible for public assistance; including TANF child-only payments, or,
- The child is homeless, as defined in part 1305; or,
- The child is in foster care.

If the family does not meet a criterion of this section, a program may enroll a child who would benefit from services, provided that these participants only make up to 10% of a program's enrollment.

Policy and Procedures:

Children will be considered eligible if they are from families with income equal to or below the poverty line or if they qualify as eligible per the performance standards (homeless, foster care, kinship care, public assistance—TANF, “Child Only” TANF, Supplemental Security Income or SNAP).

Children are identified as homeless according to the definition of the McKinney-Vento Act: “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,” including children who:

- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Early Learning Ventures follows the definition of homeless child in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)). If a child is living with non-parent relatives due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, the child may meet this definition of a homeless child. A child experiencing homelessness is eligible for Head Start. Some examples of circumstances leading a child to kinship care include economic hardship, substance misuse, or incarceration. If the child is living with non-parent relatives for these or similar reasons, the child may be considered homeless and then would be eligible for Head Start.

While relatives of ELV and QCCP staff can apply and may receive services if eligible, children (and other relatives) are not given priority for enrollment. Child Care Partnership Specialists (CCPS) cannot complete the application intake process with, or verify eligibility for self or a family member; another CCPS shall review the application and verify eligibility. If the child or relative meets the same criteria used by all applicants, the child shall be considered for enrollment. The enrollment and placement of a staff member’s relative (i.e. grandchild, nephew) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Family

Engagement Manager must be notified of all such situations. Whenever possible, arrangements shall be made for enrollment in another classroom within the center or at another center.

Enrollment will be made up of the greatest number of children from eligible families. ELV may accept up to 10% of enrolled children from families whose income exceeds 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. Over income enrollment slots will be used for children that have disabilities or multiple risk factors. Alliance CORE, the program's child and family management system, is used to monitor that the agency does not exceed the 10% over income threshold. ELV may enroll up to an additional 35% of children from families whose income falls between 100-130% of the federal income guidelines. Priority will be given to those families that fall below [Economic Policy Institute's Family Budget Calculator](#).

Performance Standard:

Additional Allowances for Programs- A program may enroll an additional 35% of participants whose families do not meet a (eligibility) criterion described and whose incomes are below 130 percent of the poverty line.

Policy and Procedures:

Per the Standards, ELV Early Head Start will continue to implement outreach to ensure that it is meeting the needs of eligible children and children with disabilities, before serving children who do not meet the above criteria.

Early Learning Ventures' EHS program may enroll children who are not eligible according to the federal income guidelines or are not categorically eligible. When ELV enrolls participants whose family incomes are between 100 and 130% of the poverty line, it will ensure that it can report the following to the Head Start regional program office:

- How it is meeting the needs of low-income families or families potentially eligible for public assistance, homeless children, and children in foster care, and include local demographic data on these populations;
- Outreach and enrollment policies and procedures that ensure it is meeting the needs of eligible children, before serving over-income children or pregnant women;
- Efforts, including outreach, to be fully enrolled with eligible children;
- Policies, procedures, and selection criteria it uses to serve eligible children;
- Its current enrollment and its enrollment for the previous year;
- The number of served, disaggregated by eligibility criteria; and,
- The eligibility criteria category of each child on the program's waiting list.

Performance Standard:

Verifying Eligibility - To verify eligibility based on income, staff must use tax forms, pay stubs, or other proof of income to determine the family income for the relevant time period.

To verify whether a family is eligible for, or in the absence of child care, would be potentially eligible for public assistance, the program must have documentation from the state, local, or tribal public assistance agency that shows the family receives public assistance or shows the family is potentially eligible to receive public assistance.

To verify whether a family is homeless, a program may accept a written statement from a homeless services provider, school personnel, or other service agency attesting that the child is homeless or any other documentation that indicates homelessness, including documentation from a public or private agency, self - declaration, information gathered on enrollment or application forms, or notes from an interview with staff to establish the child is homeless (Housing Status section on the Eligibility Verification form); or any other document that establishes homelessness.

To verify whether a child is in foster care, staff must accept a court order or other legal or government-issued document, a written statement from a government child welfare official that demonstrates the child is in foster care, or proof of a foster care payment.

Policy and Procedures:

Family income must be verified by Child Care Partnership Specialist (CCPS) and the Family Engagement Manager before determining that a child is eligible for enrollment. The Federal Poverty Guidelines are used to determine eligibility based on family size and gross income. The family is income eligible if the gross income does not exceed the guidelines. Verification must include examination of any of the following: Individual Income Tax Form 1040, W-2 forms, pay stubs, pay envelopes, or Employer verification letters, Social Security, unemployment benefits, or statements from the parent(s) declaring income when other documentation is unavailable.

Income must be included for anyone who is related to the child(ren) by blood, marriage, or adoption and are living in the same household. Family size includes all persons living in the same household who are: supported by the income of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child enrolling or participating in the program and related to parent(s) or guardian(s) by blood, marriage, or adoption. ELV recognizes same sex parents and/or guardians; in such case staff will consider both partners when determining income and family size.

When enrolling a child whose mother is pregnant, only the pregnant mother (not her

unborn baby) will be counted in family size; the program instead will use the actual family size at the time of application. After a baby is born, a parent may request for eligibility to be re-calculated (if the family was previously ineligible).

ELV must re-determine current eligibility for any siblings of enrolled children that apply for enrollment into the program.

Per the Standards, if a family cannot provide tax forms, pay stubs, or other proof of income for the relevant time period, ELV 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 with appropriate multipliers.

If a family reports no income for the relevant time period, staff will discuss with the family their situation to clarify and better understand the family's expenses, financial support and resources available to meet the family's expenses or basic needs. ELV may accept the family's signed declaration to that effect, if staff describes the 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.

ELV utilizes the Housing Status questionnaire on the Eligibility Form to determine that the child is experiencing homelessness or non-permanent housing.

To verify whether a child is in foster care, ELV must receive court order or other legal or government-issued document, a written statement from a government child welfare official that demonstrates the child is in foster care, or proof of a foster care payment.

When parents of the child are divorced and have joint custody, staff determine if one parent is receiving child support from the other. In such case, the income of the parent receiving child support is used to determine income eligibility. If neither parent provides child support, the program determines eligibility using the sum each parent's income divided by 2. Family size in this situation will be calculated by adding the number of people in both families and dividing them in half. An exception to this is if one of the parents is receiving public assistance, in which case the child is eligible.

The Family Engagement Manager reviews the Eligibility Verification Form and all required documentation as a check and balance system. Once this is complete the Manager signs the form and updates CORE to ensure the child is ready to enroll. Child Care Partnership Specialists upload the ELV QCCP EVF along with the supporting documentation to Alliance CORE.

Performance Standard:

Eligibility Duration - Children who are enrolled in a program receiving funds under the authority of section 645A of the Act (Early Head Start Programs) remain eligible while they participate in the program.

If a child moves from an Early Head Start program to a Head Start program, program staff must verify the family’s eligibility again. If a program operates both an Early Head Start and a Head Start program, and the parents wish to enroll their child who has been enrolled in the program’s Early Head Start, the program must ensure, whenever possible, the child receives Head Start services until enrolled in school, provided the child is eligible.

Policy and Procedures:

Children enrolled in Early Head Start at a center remain eligible until age 3 (4 for a FCCH); therefore, if the child maintains continuous enrollment, the family’s income nor eligibility does not need to be re-verified at any time during EHS enrollment.

As stated, eligibility is not required to be re-verified annually for Early Head Start children. However, if the family of a child with an eligibility status as “over-income” or in the “101-130% above poverty” has seen a change in its economic status and would fall within the federal income guidelines, documentation may be requested in order to modify the current eligibility status to “income eligible

If a child is enrolled through Early Learning Ventures QCCP and then terminates enrollment, eligibility must be re-verified if more than 60 calendar days has lapsed before re-enrollment.

ELV will assist families who want to transition from Early Head Start to a local Head Start program. Parents will be informed that their child’s eligibility will be re- verified when applying to the Head Start program.

Performance Standard:

Records - A program must keep eligibility determination records for each participant. A program may keep these records electronically.

A program must keep eligibility determination records for those currently enrolled, as long as they are enrolled, and, for one year after they have either stopped receiving services; or are no longer enrolled.

Policy and Procedures:

Per the Standards, each eligibility determination record will include:

- Copies of any documents or statements, including declarations, that are deemed necessary to verify eligibility as previously outlined in 1302.12;
- A statement that program staff has made reasonable efforts to verify information by:
 - Conducting either an in-person, or a telephone interview with the family; and,
 - Describing efforts made to verify eligibility; and, collecting documents required for third party verification that includes the family's written consent to contact each third party, the third parties' names, titles, and affiliations, and information from third parties regarding the family's eligibility.
- A statement that identifies whether the:
 - Family's income is below income guidelines for its size, and lists the family's size;
 - Family is eligible for or, in the absence of child care, potentially eligible for public assistance;
 - Child is experiencing homelessness or the child is in foster care;
 - Family is eligible under the 10% allowed for "Over Income;" or,
 - Family is eligible under the 35% allowed for families between 101-130% of poverty per the Federal Income guidelines.

ELV Early Head Start will maintain eligibility determination records in CORE and will be available for a minimum of three years.

Performance Standard:

Program Policies/Procedures on Violating Eligibility Determination Regulations

A program must establish written policies and procedures that describe all actions taken against staff who intentionally violate federal and program eligibility determination regulations and who enroll pregnant women and children that are not eligible to receive Early Head Start or Head Start services.

Training on Eligibility - A program must train all governing body, policy council, management, and staff who determine eligibility on applicable federal regulations and program policies and procedures.

A program must train management and staff members who make eligibility determinations within 90 days of hiring new staff. A program must train all governing body and policy council members within 180 days of the beginning of the term of a new

governing body or policy council. A program must develop policies on how often training will be provided after the initial training.

A program must keep ongoing records of the eligibility training for staff. A program may keep these records electronically.

Policy and Procedures:

Any staff member, Child Care Partner who suspects that another staff member or Child Care Partner has been fraudulent or has violated the code of ethics regarding the application process is strongly encouraged to speak to the EHS Director or Family Engagement Manager, and is protected under the “Whistleblower” Act. An investigation and any subsequent discipline will take place up to, and including termination or contract termination.

Any family member who knowingly gives fraudulent or inaccurate information at the time of the application intake process may be dis-enrolled. Cases of suspected fraud will be reviewed with the Early Head Start Director.

In compliance with the Standards, training will include, at a minimum:

- Methods on how to collect complete and accurate eligibility information from families and third-party sources;
- Strategies for treating families with dignity and respect and for dealing with possible issues of domestic violence, stigma, and privacy; and,
- Explanation of policies and procedures that describe actions taken against staff, families, or participants who attempt to provide or intentionally provide false information.

Training

Staff will receive annual ERSEA training. Staff who are responsible for overseeing the Eligibility and Enrollment process will be training annually on the following:

- Early Head Start Eligibility
- Application Intake Process and Verification of Documents
- Methods on how to collect complete eligibility information from families and third-party sources (including strategies for treating families with dignity and respect and for dealing with possible issues of domestic violence, stigma and privacy)
- Consequences for Staff, Providers and Parents who are found to be fraudulent or in violation of the Code of Ethics.

ELV will train management and staff members who make eligibility determinations within 30 days of hiring new staff. The program will train all Governing Body and Policy Council

members within 180 days following the effective date of this rule, and within 180 days of the beginning of the term of a new Governing Body or Policy Council member after the initial training has been conducted.

ELV Early Head Start will maintain documentation of required training in the records of staff and providers in Alliance CORE. Meeting notes must document training for members of the Governing Bodies.

1302.13 Recruitment of Children

Performance Standard:

Recruitment - In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process designed to actively inform all families with eligible children within the recruitment area of the availability of program services, and encourage and assist them in applying for admission to the program. A program must include specific efforts to actively locate and recruit children with disabilities and other vulnerable children, including homeless children and children in foster care.

Policy and Procedures:

Both ELV QCCP staff and Child Care Partners have the responsibility to participate in recruitment. Although the recruitment process is active all year, planning for the next enrollment year begins after reviewing the community needs assessment and self-assessment.

Assistance is provided to families in completing the application process so that all required paperwork is completed. A comfortable setting is provided to families to ensure sensitivity and confidentiality while offering assistance.

Parents are informed of Early Head Start's policy to serve families with the greatest need; it is not a "first come, first served" program.

Along with Partner input, ELV develops and implements a recruitment plan. This plan includes strategies for recruiting the most children possible in each service area. The goal is to solicit as many applications as possible.

Child Care Partners are encouraged to:

- Work with Specialist to develop a flyer that also includes EHS information.
- Director includes an EHS overview during program tours.
- Make phone calls to organizations in the community to let them know that you are

recruiting for Early Head Start (i.e. CCCAP, Homeless Organizations, Department of Human Services, Part C organizations, Early Childhood Councils, WIC, Foster Care Agencies, SNAP etc.).

- Have a positive social media presence to encourage community awareness about your program. Post articles of relevance/worth for larger community.
- Review current enrollment within your program/center and project any children who might be aging out of current program option. Then review the waitlist to prioritize any potentially eligible children and their families.
- Include ELV EHS child demographic information form in your center's enrollment packet. Child Care Partnership Specialist can then follow up to complete the application and put family on the ELV EHS waitlist.
- Utilize CORE messaging to let current families know that you are recruiting new children.
- Host a contest with parents and staff for referring the most families.
- Announce ELV EHS openings during a family engagement event.
- Ask families to pass out flyers to friends, neighbors, and/or take to their workplace.
- Do door to door canvassing in the community.
- Drop off flyers at businesses in the neighborhood
- Set up an informational booth at the nearest shopping center.
- Have a recruitment day or specific time of the week/month for new application intake.
- Connect with other community campaigns; help with events and share publicity.
- Be active in your community, attend fairs, community events specifically ones targeted for families.
- Develop a strong relationship with the public school system in your neighborhood. Ask if you can leave flyers.
- Consider advertising in heavy traffic areas such as Laundromats and unemployment offices.

Program Wide:

- Centers are provided with the ERSEA Service Plan which includes recruitment ideas and training.
- ELV sends out press releases (print) or public services announcements (broadcast). Press releases are run in local newspapers.
- ELV maintains a waiting list of eligible families so enrollment opportunities that occur throughout the year can be filled within the required 30-day limit.
- Community events offered to make the community aware of ELV QCCP services.
- In the event of an ELV EHS countywide need for enrollment all Child Care Partnership Specialists will develop a county specific recruitment plan to include some of the ideas presented above.

1302.14 Selection Process

Performance Standard:

Selection Criteria - A program must annually establish selection criteria that weigh the prioritization of selection of participants, based on community needs identified in the community needs assessment as described in 1302.11, and including family income, whether the child is homeless, whether the child is in foster care, the child's age, whether the child is eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and, other relevant family or child risk factors.

If a program serves migrant or seasonal families, it must select eligible participants, and give priority to children whose families can demonstrate they have relocated frequently within the past two years to pursue agricultural work.

A program must not deny enrollment based on a disability or chronic health condition or its severity.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures maintains a Selection Criteria and will review and update, if necessary, on an annual basis. The 5-year comprehensive Community Assessment, as well as annual updates, the Self-Assessment and Parent Surveys will be utilized to evaluate if the Selection Criteria is reflective of the needs of eligible children in the service area.

The Selection Criteria will be reviewed annually with the Governing Bodies; any changes must be approved.

Quality Childcare Partnership Program Selection Criteria

Select all the descriptions that best describe the child/family circumstances.

Date: _

Category	Criteria Description	Weight	Child	Child
Child Status	Child's age at enrollment under 2.5 years	100		
	Child is learning multiple languages	2		
	Child has a Developmental Disability and/or IFSP/IEP in place	100		
	Child is overweight or underweight (as identified by physician)	3		
	Parent or physician suspects developmental delay or child receiving informal services for suspected delay	10		
	Child is at risk for negative adult health outcomes OR was born with a medical condition requiring extra medical attention.	2		
	Child was exposed prenatally to substance abuse/exposure	10		
	Child experienced one of the ACEs not listed elsewhere on the form (death of parent/guardian/sibling, parent or sibling mentally ill, suicidal, severely depressed or terminally ill, witness to neighborhood violence) (10 points per experience)	Up to 30		
Child Home Environment	Child lives in single parent / guardian household	10		
	Child lives in teen parent household	10		
	Child has siblings enrolled in program	1		
	Child has been or is exposed to domestic violence or abuse and neglect	25		
	Child has been or is exposed to second hand smoke	10		
	Child has been or is exposed to drug abuse or alcohol abuse	25		
Family Status	Family/Child eligible for CCAP/ TANF CCAP (but not currently receiving)	5		
	Parent approved for full time CCAP/ TANF CCAP	10		
	One parent employed or in school	5		
	Both parents employed or in school	3		
	Family does not have health insurance	3		
	Parent is/has been incarcerated	5		
	One parent has less than high school diploma	3		
	Both parents have less than high school diploma	5		
	Mother is pregnant	1		
	Family was impacted by COVID (reduced work hours, lost job, lost housing, etc)	25		
	TANF	100		
	SNAP	100		
	SSI	100		
	Income Eligible	100		
Family income is between 101-130% poverty guidelines	50			
Eligibility Status	Child is in kinship care	100		
	Child is in foster care	100		
	Child is experiencing homeless (as defined by McKinney Vento Act), or in non-permanent housing situation	150		
Individual County Adjustment	Staff completing this form can award up to 10 weighted points to accommodate extreme differences within each of the designated counties. (i.e Townships/Suburbs with over 50% of children experiencing poverty: Pueblo: Avondale, Blende, Rye, Salt Creek, Vineland), and/or if family is over income but falls below Living Wage from the Economic Policy Institutes Budget Calculator : _____	10		
Site Adjustments	Site has at least 18 objectives marked in progress (purple) on the CIP at the time of this application	10		
Totals				

Performance Standard:

Children Eligible for Services under IDEA - A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA, unless the responsible HHS official grants a waiver. Children eligible for services under IDEA should be prioritized for available slots in accordance with the program’s selection criteria.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV will ensure that 10% of enrollment is made available for children with disabilities. This is supported by using the Selection Criteria in which higher points are awarded if a child has a suspected or diagnosed developmental disability. The process includes:

1. Parent signing release of information form;
2. IFSP or IEP obtained from Early Intervention, LEA or Parent;
3. If EHS is determined to be the appropriate placement, services are provided directly or indirectly through other providers such as Early Intervention or the LEA;
4. Collaboration with family is essential throughout this process.

Performance Standard:

Waiting Lists - A program must develop at the beginning of each enrollment year and maintain during the year a waiting list that ranks children according to the program’s selection criteria.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV will maintain during the program year a waiting list that ranks children according to points on the Selection Criteria. Children with the highest points as determined by the Selection Criteria will be prioritized for selection for enrollment. A waiting list is maintained using the Selection Criteria to assure that eligible children enter the program as vacancies occur. The waiting list is maintained through Alliance CORE to ensure that children with the highest need are served first.

1302.15 Enrollment

Performance Standard:

Funded Enrollment - A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.

Policy and Procedures:

All reasonable attempts to keep children enrolled will be made. Upon dis-enrollment of an

EHS child, providers will notify the Child Care Partnership Specialist promptly. The child with the highest Selection Criteria points on the waiting list within the service area will be enrolled during the next weekly ERSEA meeting, and no longer than 30 days.

The enrollment date is the 1st day a child attends after the child is approved as an EHS child from ERSEA team to attend a center-based program or a family child care home. ELV believes strongly in the prompt delivery of services for children and families. The expectation is for every child to enter the classroom/program no more than 7 days after center receipt of the child's approval letter.

Performance Standard:

Continuity of Enrollment - A program may maintain a child's enrollment in Early Head Start as described in 1302.12.

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, according to the family's needs.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV follows classroom quality across the entire center of each of the Quality Child Care Partnership sites, allowing for developmentally appropriate and accessible, quality care at each stage of the child's preschool journey.

The agency will ensure that, whenever possible, eligible EHS children receive Head Start services until kindergarten. Because enrollment in Head Start is not guaranteed, the transition plan for an EHS child who needs full day/full year care will be developed to reflect their needs and ensure a seamless transition to a preschool program within the Child Care Partner sites.

For families and children who move out of the community in which they are currently served, including homeless and foster children, ELV will maintain the child's enrollment if feasible. Otherwise, ELV will support effective transitions to other EHS or Head Start programs. If EHS or HS is unavailable or does not meet their needs, ELV will assist the family to identify another early childhood program that meets their needs.

In the case of an age eligible child transitioning from one Child Care Partner site to another, parents will be informed that continued EHS enrollment will be dependent on the center's contracted EHS enrollment capacity. If there is available EHS capacity, the child will follow an EHS transition plan. If there is not available capacity, the child will be placed back on the waitlist until space becomes available. Transitions are further outlined in 1302.71.

Performance Standard:

Reserved Slots - If a program determines from the community assessment there are families experiencing homelessness in the area, or children in foster care that could benefit from services, the program may reserve one or more enrollment slots for pregnant women and children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care, when a vacancy occurs. No more than three percent of a program’s funded enrollment slots may be reserved. If the reserved enrollment slot is not filled within 30 days, the enrollment slot becomes vacant and then must be filled within 30 days.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV will utilize the findings of the Community Assessment to determine the needs of children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care. If needed, ELV will reserve up to 3% of funded enrollment slots for such children. ELV will utilize the results of the community assessment to determine if we will hold up to 3% of slots for families experiencing homelessness or foster children. If the reserved enrollment slots are not filled within 60 days from the date of vacancy ELV will fill the vacancy with other eligible children.

Performance Standard:

Other Enrollment – A program must consider whether the characteristics of the community allow it to include children from diverse economic backgrounds that would be supported by other funding sources, including private pay, in addition to the program’s eligible funded enrollment. A program must not enroll children from diverse economic backgrounds if it would result in a program serving less than its eligible funded enrollment.

Policy and Procedures:

By nature of the EHS-CCP grant all other integrated enrollment is managed by the individual Child Care Partner site.

Performance Standard:

State Immunization Enrollment Requirements - A program must comply with state immunization enrollment and attendance requirements, with the exception of homeless children as described in 1302.16.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV will ensure that all children comply with Colorado’s immunization enrollment and attendance requirements. ELV will work with families of children experiencing homelessness to obtain records and immunizations required for state licensing. Families may be enrolled up to 90 days without records and immunizations.

Performance Standard:

Voluntary Parent Participation - 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.

Policy and Procedures:

Parent and Family Involvement and Engagement will be encouraged, but never required.

1302.16 Attendance

Performance Standard:

Promoting Regular Attendance - A program must track attendance for each child.

A program must implement a process to ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child’s well-being.

A program must implement strategies to promote attendance.

If a child ceases to attend, the program must make appropriate efforts to reengage the family to resume attendance. If the child’s attendance does not resume, then the program must consider that slot vacant. This action is not considered expulsion.

Policy and Procedures:

Attendance Procedures

1. Child Care Partners take attendance of children daily and is tracked in Alliance CORE.
2. Parents are expected to call the Child Care Partner each day that a child is unexpectedly absent.
3. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within 1 hour of the program start time, a delegated staff member at the Child Care Partner site *must attempt* to reach the parent to ensure the child’s well-being. Documentation is entered into Alliance Core.
4. The reason for the absence is noted in Alliance CORE by Child Care Partner
5. Attendance and follow-up are entered into Alliance CORE by either the Child Care Partner

Family Engagement Manager, Child Care Partnership Specialist and appropriate Child

Care Partner staff will sign up for a scheduled Attendance Report through Alliance CORE to monitor attendance. Whenever a child misses three consecutive days of attendance or Average Daily Attendance falls below 85%, the child's name will appear on the Attendance report. Cause and pattern, as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days are examined on a monthly basis. The Child Care Partnership Specialist will work with the family to eliminate barriers to attendance. If a family does not call the site, nor respond to calls, the Child Care Partnership Specialist will send a no contact letter requesting that the family respond with their intent to continue in EHS CCP within eight business days from the date the letter has been sent out. The date of required contact is specified within the letter. A copy of the letter is to be included in the child's file on CORE.

If a child has two consecutive months of poor attendance (lower than 85%) the family will receive a concern letter. The letter instructs the adult family member to contact the designated specialist within eight business days of the letter date to meet regarding attendance. The date of required contact is specified within the letter. During the attendance meeting, parent will be required to review, initial and sign an Attendance Agreement. A copy of the agreement is to be included in the child's file.

In accordance with the Standards, ELV EHS will implement the following procedures to promote attendance:

- Provide information about the benefits of regular attendance;
- 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 child enrollment, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, use individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year and develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children, such as direct contact with parents or intensive case management, as necessary.

Permission for Extended Child Leave

When a child is absent due to family travel (more than 1 week but less than 1 month), the parent must follow Child Care Partner's policies regarding extended leave; including but not limited to payments of fees and ample notification to the center. A 1-month notice must be given for an extended leave of absence for the child who is enrolled in Early Head Start. The Early Head Start slot for the child will be held for up to 3 weeks; anything beyond that time frame will be addressed on an individual, case by case basis. The child must be in attendance on the return date. If the child has not returned, nor has there been contact with Early Head Start staff, the slot will not be retained and services provided by the Early

Head Start Program will be forfeited. In the case that a second leave needs to be taken within the program year, the situation will be brought to the ERSEA team for approval. In the case of a teen parent program that has a break in the summer, the specialist will work with the site to ensure that each teen parent and their child intend to return to the center and document using the extended child leave document.

Performance Standard:

Managing Systematic Program Attendance Issues - If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate. The program must use this data to make necessary changes in a timely manner as part of ongoing oversight and correction and inform its continuous improvement efforts.

Policy and Procedures:

When Average Daily Attendance for the Child Care Partner program falls below 85%, the Child Care Partner must complete an attendance analysis. Cause and pattern, as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days are examined. A Corrective Action plan is put in place if the low ADA is the result of temporary family problems affecting attendance or other factors. ELV will use the data to make any necessary changes in order to promote and support higher attendance rates.

Performance Standard:

Supporting Attendance of Homeless Children - If a program determines a child is eligible, it must 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.

If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program facility, the program must utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV will work with families of children experiencing homelessness or non-permanent housing to obtain records and immunizations required for state licensing. ELV will utilize community resources, in communities where available, to provide transportation for families experiencing homelessness without a means of transportation.

1302.17 Suspension and Expulsion

Performance Standard:

Limitations on Suspension - A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.

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

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.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures will ensure that suspension due to a child's behavior will be prohibited, except as a last resort in circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications.

Per the Standards, before ELV determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, ELV must engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

Per the Standards, if a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, ELV will help return a child to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible by:

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

The Early Head Start Director must be notified prior to a child's suspension and will review all documentation of steps that have been taken, prior to approval of a child's suspension.

Performance Standard:

Prohibition on Expulsion - A program cannot expel or dis-enroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior. When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, a program must explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program.

Policy and Procedures:

When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, Early Learning Ventures' EHS program will explore and document the following steps, at a minimum, in accordance with the Standards:

- Engage a mental health consultant
- Consider the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and support to ensure that a child with a disability is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability
- Consult with the parents and the child's teacher, and:

If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP), ELV will consult with the Early Intervention (or other agency responsible for the IFSP) to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or, if the child does not have an IFSP, ELV will collaborate, with parental consent, with Early Intervention to determine the child's eligibility for services.

If, after a program has explored and documented all possible steps in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines 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, the program must work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

1302.18 Fees

Performance Standard:

Policy on Fees - A program must not charge eligible families a fee to participate in Head Start, including special events such as field trips, and cannot in any way condition an eligible child's enrollment or participation in the program upon the payment of a fee.

Allowable Fees - A program must only accept a fee from families of enrolled children for services that are in addition to services funded by Head Start, such as child care before or after funded Head Start hours. A program may not condition a Head Start child's enrollment on the ability to pay a fee for additional hours.

In order to support programs serving children from diverse economic backgrounds or using multiple funding sources, a program may charge fees to private pay families and other non-Head Start enrolled families to the extent allowed by any other applicable federal, state or local funding sources.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Head Start Child Care Partnership funding is layered with child care subsidy to fund full working day program options (10+ hours). Parents voluntarily enter into partnership with CCCAP who assesses a co-payment based on parent's income to be paid to the Child Care Partner Site, as prescribed by the guidelines of their subsidized childcare subsidy program. ELV, as the EHS grantee does not accept payments from families.

Fees may not be charged to parents for field trips or other activities that are part of the EHS day. Child Care Partnerships may be able to seek reimbursement if the activity is approved by the Education Manager in advance.