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| Policy Title: | MH/Disabilities Service Plan | Revision Date: | 7/30/2017 |
| Contact Person: | Health Manager | PC Approval Date: | 8/12/17 |
| Area: | Mental Health/Disabilities | SPCAA Board Committee Approval Date: | 8/15/17 |
| Stakeholders: | All SPCAA Staff | SPCAA Board Approval Date: |  |
| References: |  | Advisory Approval Date: |  |
| Related Documents: |  | | |

This plan is to describe the integration of children with disabilities in all components of HS/EHS and to clarify how our resources are being used efficiently and effectively to serve children with disabilities and their families. Services to children with disability is delivered in the least restrictive environment and are included in all activities.

Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff set a regular schedule of visits to the Head Start & Early Head Start program, which is communicated to staff and parents. Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff is available on site at least two times a semester to support parents and staff and/or to complete on-site monitoring. Parents are notified that Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff is available by appointment if they have questions or concerns they would like to discuss. Staff is also available to attend Parent Committee meetings and home-based socializations, as well home-based visits, provide training on relevant disability/inclusion topics and individual guidance for parents with specific issues they would like addressed. Finally, Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff is available to Head Start & Early Head Start staff, both to provide coaching and feedback on specific issues arising in their classrooms and to support individual staff as needed.

The Mental Health/Disabilities Services Plan addresses each aspect of the services we provide, including:

Provision for Disabilities Services: Strategies for addressing individualized needs, including the modification of group activities

\*Interagency Coordination: Nature of LEA or Part C Memorandum of Understanding

\*Mental Health/Disabilities Screening, Referral and Evaluation: Process for identifying, referring, and evaluating children to be diagnosed with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs), MCHAT, ASQ-SE2, Observation forms.

\*Mental Health/Disabilities Budgeting

\*Mental Health/Disabilities Recruitment, Enrollment

\*Developing and Implementing IEPs/IFSPs, and Mental Health Recommendation by License Professional Counselors.

\*Record-Keeping – Child Plus for Disabilities: Our system for documenting the identification and diagnosis of a child with an IEP/IFSP and Mental Health progress notes.

\*Mental Health/Disabilities Monitoring

\*Mental Health/Disabilities – Parent Involvement

\*Disabilities – Transportation

\*Memorandum of Understanding with Mental Health License Professional Counselors for children with Atypical behaviors.

**Provision of Disabilities Services:**

SPCAA Head Start & Early Head Start is committed to serving children with any and all suspected or diagnosed disabilities, to the fullest extent possible. As per the Head Start Program Performance Standards, we are open to serving children with eligibility criteria such as health impairments, emotional/behavioral disorders, speech/language impairments, hearing or vision impairments, orthopedic impairments, learning disabilities, autism, and traumatic brain injury.

We collaborate with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and Part C Agencies (such as Early Childhood Intervention) to ensure that disabilities services are individualized to each child and family, and are committed to adapting the program as needed to meet each child’s specific circumstances. Key elements of our approach are as follows:

\*Philosophy of Inclusion: We believe that it is our responsibility to provide inclusive care for children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. The Health Manager and Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff work with teachers to integrate any treatment, special education, related services or program modifications into group activities otherwise occurring in the classroom.

\*Modification of Group Activities: The Health Manager and Support staff, parents, and teaching staff work in collaboration with the LEA or Part C Agency, to make modifications to the general education setting to ensure that children with special needs can participate in the full range of program activities.

\*Appropriate Materials and Equipment: We work with our landlords to ensure, as far as possible within lease conditions, that our facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. On an annual basis, we use the budgeting process to identify and allocate the resources required to provide appropriate materials and equipment specific to the needs of children we serve.

\*Modified Program Options: We provide modified program options if alternate arrangements are sought by parents and articulated in the child’s IEP/IFSP. Specific examples might include joint placement of a child with another child care provider, use of volunteers and student interns to lower

staffing ratios, and shared provision of services (for instance, a home-based child enrolled in a child care program).

We have the highest standards for the quality of services to children and families so that children leaving our program are ready for school. The ultimate goal of this process is not only to serve children, but also to ensure parents, teachers, and Family Support Workers become more effective in addressing mental health issues in the classroom and at home. This means monitoring and supporting the Mental Health & Disabilities Providers in the following areas:

* Coordination with teaching, family services, and home-based staff
* Individual cases specific to children and families with identified concerns
* Group and individual parent education on mental health issues
* Coordination with disabilities services
* Utilization of community partners for services to families

Managers, MH/Disability Support staff, Deputy Administrator, Site Managers, Team Leaders, and other designated center staff will complete a Fall and Spring Site Monitoring Visit to include follow-up. Any concerns identified are shared with the site supervisor and entered in Child Plus. If the site supervisor is not available, the Site Monitoring Visit results are shared by email. MH/Disability Support staff follow up on mental health and disability concerns from the Site Monitoring Visits before the end of the semester when the monitoring was completed.

Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff participates in tri-annual file reviews during which at least 10% of the children’s files are monitored in Child Plus to determine what corrections are needed. Trends are also identified to determine if there is any additional training needed. After center staff has an appropriate amount of time to make corrections, the same files are brought back in for follow up and checked to ensure corrections have been made. A different cross-section of files is monitored during each file review.

Mental Health and Disabilities Support staff will follow up on mental health and disability concerns by email, phone calls and site visits as well as notify appropriate content area managers, Site Managers, and team leaders of their specific concerns by email, phone calls, site visits and during SRT.

Health Manager and MH/Disability Support staff discuss any concerns needing to be addressed during semi-monthly Staffing Round Table meetings (SRT), which are attended by service area Managers and Support staff, Deputy Administrator, Operation Director, Site Managers, and Team Leaders.

The Health Manager attend monthly Manager Meetings with the Deputy Administrator and other members of management. These meetings are used to discuss any issues or concerns related to the content areas and to plan for the upcoming month.

The Mental Health & Disabilities team hold monthly team meetings to discuss new referrals and the status of those children currently in services. Any concerns with the services provided are discussed at this time and plans are developed for solving problems.

Trainings and educational materials to staff and parents are provided on mental health issues throughout the year. Led by the Health Manager, we support parents in dealing with both adult mental health issues and behavioral issues with their children.

We provide opportunities for parents at Parent Meetings and Group Socializations to identify and discuss issues related to child and adult mental health, including periodic presentations by the Health Manager and MH/Disability Support staff or mental health community partners.

The Health Manager and MH/Disability Support staff also provide staff trainings for teachers, Family Support Workers, and home-based teachers on topics that are timely and relevant and make themselves available to staff on an individual basis to address specific questions or concerns that they might have.

Modify lesson plans and individualize plans to ensure full participation of children with disabilities Communicate to ensure appropriate support for all children, including those with disabilities Interagency Collaboration with LEAs and Part C Agencies

In order to meet the individualized needs of children with suspected or diagnosed disabilities, Head Start & Early Head Start collaborates with local LEAs and State Part C Agencies serving children in our community. These agreements include the following information on our collaboration:

\*Head Start & Early Head Start participation in recruitment efforts and identification of children with disabilities in collaboration with the LEA or Part C Agency

\*Opportunities for joint training of staff and parents when available

\*Procedures for referral for evaluations, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and placement decisions

\*Policies for transition of children with IEPs/IFSPs both into and out of Head Start & Early Head Start

\*Provisions for resource sharing with HS/EHS staff and families of children with IEPs/IFSPs;

\*Confirmation of HS/EHS commitment to provide the number of children receiving services under IEPs/IFSPs to the LEA or Part C Agency as requested

SPCAA Head Start & Early Head Start makes every effort to renew, update, and affirm each collaborative agreement on an annual basis.

Update and renew Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all participating LEAs and Part C Agencies Identifying Children with Disabilities:

To identify and follow up on (suspected) mental health/disabilities in the children we serve, we use a consistent, well-coordinated, clearly-documented process that consists of the following:

* Developmental, behavioral, and speech *screening* of all children within 45 days of program entry;
* Completion of the Modified Checklist for Autism (M-CHAT) in Toddlers on Early Head Start children at the age of 18 and 24 and if component is not completed at the required age, it is mandatory to complete at the first opportunity if age-appropriate to identify any red flags for autism;

The Health Manager and Support staff work closely with the Site Managers, Team Leaders and other staff on (a), (b), (c), and (d), and have primary responsibility for working with LEAs and Part C Agencies to complete (e) and (f). Tools to support this process include the Mental Health & Disabilities Plan of Action and Referral form, Consent to Release or Request Form, Request for Evaluation form, and the LEA or Part C Agency referral forms. We believe that the earlier we can start the identification process and needed services for children with disabilities, the more prepared these children will be when they enter Kindergarten

SPCAA Head Start & Early Head Start implements a clear process for budgeting, which ensures that adequate resources are allocated to meet the needs of children with suspected and diagnosed disabilities. In the Disabilities service area, this may include any of the following budget items, based on the needs of children and families.

The Health Manager keeps the HS/EHS Director apprised of any disabilities budgetary needs as they arise.

We ensure that no less than ten percent of our enrollment slots are filled by children with disabilities. We strive to achieve this enrollment goal by an on-going close collaboration with community partners throughout the process of recruitment, enrollment, and ultimately transition into and out of the program*.* By building and maintaining strong community partnerships, we seek to be recognized and recommended to families of children with suspected disabilities in this community. In the event the 10 percent cannot be obtained, a waiver is submitted to the regional office. The waiver requests exemption for the year and explains our efforts to recruit children with disabilities as well as our roadblocks.

SPCAA Head Start & Early Head Start management and staff collaborate closely with the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Part C Agencies in our community to develop and implement Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Family Services Plans (IFSPs). The Health Manager and Support staff, teachers, and Family Support Workers are integrally involved with parents in navigating this process.

SPCAA Head Start & Early Head Start staff contributes to the development of IEPs/IFSPs by participating in the multidisciplinary team’s deliberations on the child’s specific conditions and the desired outcomes of the plan. The written IEP/IFSP must be developed with the cooperation of child’s parents or guardians and the LEA or Part C Agency.

Mental Health & Disabilities staff participate in bi-annual folder reviews, during which at least 10% of the children’s files will be monitored through Child Plus review. Mental Health & Disabilities staff review the Mental Health and Disability information in Child Plus to determine what corrections are needed. Trends are also identified to determine if there is any additional training needed. After center staff has an appropriate amount of time to make corrections, the same file are monitored for follow up to ensure corrections have been made. A different cross-section of files is monitored during each file review.

The Health Manager holds meetings with Mental Health & Disabilities Support staff to discuss any concerns related to mental health and disabilities services and develop plans to address those concerns.

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| **Policy and Procedure** | **Reports** | **Frequency** | **Forms** | **Frequency** | **Staff Responsible** | **Timeline** |
| MH/Disabilities Service Plan | CP-3501,3015,3065 | Weekly basics | POA, Behavior form, | As needed | Center staff, Health Manager,MH/Disabilities Staff | On-going |
| Transition Services | None | Starting in April | Packet | When | MH/Disabilities Staff | On-going |
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