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Partnering with IDEA Providers to Support Inclusion: Part 2

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide will help you capture your ideas as you engage with the webinar content. During this webinar, we will focus on how ongoing collaboration with IDEA partners can support inclusive services for children with disabilities or suspected delays and their families. Helpful resources are available in the Resources section of this guide.

Partnerships for Effective Inclusion



Strong, collaborative relationships are the foundation of high-quality inclusive services. Effective collaborations ensure children and families receive coordinated, seamless services that support full and effective participation.

Collaboration with partners who provide services to children who may be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an important part of your role as a disability services coordinator (DSC). You will collaborate with your IDEA partners for a variety of purposes, including:

- Coordinating child find and referral
- Facilitating the eligibility evaluation process
- Participating in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) development and reviews, including development of child and family outcomes and placement decisions
- Supporting IFSP or IEP implementation and ongoing service delivery in the least restrictive environment
- Providing collaborative professional development opportunities
- Facilitating transition planning

The '[Building Partnerships](#)' chapter of the Disabilities Services Orientation Guide has more information on the DSC's role in ongoing collaboration with IDEA partners.



National Center on
Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

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Collaboration & the Head Start Program Performance Standards

Head Start Program Performance Standards have specific requirements related to collaboration for the purposes of identification of children with disabilities or delays and service provision in inclusive environments, including:

- **Part 1302 Subpart F – Additional Services for Children with Disabilities**

- **1302.60 Full participation in program services and activities.**

A program must ensure enrolled children with disabilities, including but not limited to those who are eligible for services under IDEA, and their families receive all applicable program services delivered in the least restrictive possible environment and that they fully participate in all program activities.

- **1302.61 Additional services for children.**

(c) *Additional services for children with an IFSP or IEP.* To ensure the individual needs of children eligible for services under IDEA are met, a program must:

(1) Work closely with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, the family, and other service partners, as appropriate, to ensure:

(i) Services for a child with disabilities will be planned and delivered as required by their IFSP or IEP, as appropriate;

(ii) Children are working towards the goals in their IFSP or IEP;

(iii) Elements of the IFSP or IEP that the program cannot implement are implemented by other appropriate agencies, related service providers, and specialists;

(iv) IFSPs and IEPs are being reviewed and revised, as required by IDEA; and,

(v) Services are provided in a child's regular Early Head Start or Head Start classroom or family childcare home to the greatest extent possible.

(2) Plan and implement the transition services described in subpart G of this part...

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

(a) A program must coordinate with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to identify children enrolled or who intend to enroll in a program that may be eligible for services under IDEA, including through the process described in §1302.33(a)(3) and through participation in the local agency Child Find efforts.

(b) A program must work to develop interagency agreements with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to improve service delivery to children eligible for services under IDEA, including the referral and evaluation process, service coordination, promotion of service provision in the least restrictive appropriate community-based setting and reduction in dual enrollment which causes reduced time in a less restrictive setting, and transition services as children move from services provided under Part C of IDEA to services provided under Part B of IDEA and from preschool to kindergarten.

(c) A program must participate in the development of the IFSP or IEP if requested by the child's parents, and the implementation of the IFSP or IEP. At a minimum, the program must offer:

- (1) To provide relevant information from its screenings, assessments, and observations to the team developing a child's IFSP or IEP; and,
 - (2) To participate in meetings with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA 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.
- (d) A program must retain a copy of the IEP or IFSP for any child enrolled in Head Start for the time the child is in the program...

When Head Start programs have strong collaborative partnerships families receive consistent information, different providers can work together to share and build on one another's expertise, and children receive coordinated, effective services.

Reflect: What is your role in supporting inclusion through collaboration with IDEA partner agencies? Who else in your program is involved? What is their role? Where would clarification be helpful?

Collaboration & IDEA



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is clear that agencies across systems should collaborate to plan and implement services for young children with disabilities and their families. What are the potential collaborative activities? There are lots of options! The first step is to check-in with your LEA to explore the possibilities given state or local policies and practices.

Let's take a look at what IDEA, Section 619 says about activities or processes where school districts or local education agencies (LEA) can collaborate with community-

based partners. Here are some ideas for you and your LEA partner to consider:

- **Screening & evaluation**

- What does IDEA say?
 - *LEAs have 60 days from the time parental consent is received (or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe) to complete the initial evaluation ([34 CFR 300.301\(c\)\(1\)](#)).*
- What might collaboration look like?
 - LEAs accept screening information from Head Start or other community-based providers and do not duplicate or repeat to determine the need for evaluation to determine eligibility.

- **IEP development**

- What does IDEA say?
 - *LEAs must conduct a meeting to develop an IEP for a child within 30 days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services; and as soon as possible following development of the IEP, special education and related services must be made available to the child in accordance with the IEP ([34 CFR 300.323\(c\)](#)).*
- What might collaboration look like?
 - LEA staff observe children in Head Start programs during the evaluation process to develop functional IEP goals.
 - The child's team, including LEA staff, Head Start staff, and the family, collaboratively discuss the child's progress, unique strengths, and support needs to make an individualized placement decision.

- **Service delivery**

- What does IDEA say?
 - *IEP services must be provided in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate ([34 CFR 300.114\(a\)](#)).*
- What might collaboration look like?
 - IEP services planned with HS education staff and provided within HS program routines and activities.

- **Transition planning**

- What does IDEA say?
 - *LEA personnel must participate in transition planning conferences for children participating in Part C who are potentially eligible for Part B ([34 CFR 300.124](#)).*
- What might collaboration look like?
 - IEP teams provide information to families transitioning from Part C to Part B services, including how IEP services might be provided in Head Start classrooms.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the U.S Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Head Start (OHS) recently created guidance on collaboration between Head Start and IDEA Agencies to support inclusion. One of these documents, [Guidance on an Creating Effective Memorandum of Understanding](#), describes different areas where Head Start and IDEA agencies can collaborate to implement IDEA services. This guidance builds on the [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children](#)

[with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#), which has clear examples of how early childhood agencies should build partnerships and collaborate in order to provide inclusive services in accordance with IDEA legislation.

How Can You Collaborate?

What collaborative activities you engage in with your IDEA partners will depend on the purpose you're your partnership and how each agency has defined their role and responsibilities in the successful implementation of IDEA requirements.

Collaborative activities may include:

- Referral and eligibility
 - Joint use of screening results
 - Coordination of evaluation timelines, sites, and schedules
 - Coordination of joint meetings with families
- IFSP/IEP development
 - Coordination of joint meetings with families
 - Collaborative discussions about evaluation results, child progress, and child and family outcomes
 - Collaborative placement decisions
- IFSP/IEP implementation
 - Plan for collaborative service delivery in the least restrictive environment
 - IDEA and Head Start staff home visits together if a child enrolled in homebased Early Head Start services
 - LEA specialist comes to Head Start classroom to provide coaching and direct services
 - IDEA and Head Start staff collaboratively plan and co-teach activities
 - Communicate about strategies and supports
 - Collaboratively review child progress data and make instructional decisions
- Professional development
 - Plan and provide collaborative professional development opportunities on a variety of topics related to effective early childhood inclusion

IDEA is clear that children should receive services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The Department of Education's [Dear Colleague Letter Related to Preschool Least Restrictive Environments](#) reaffirms that "all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports to enable them to meet high expectations.". The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) has created helpful resources to support IEP teams to discuss and consider access to and participation in high-quality inclusive settings for every young child with a disability during IEP placement discussions. The [Making Sound Preschool LRE Decisions](#) resource lists important actions in the IEP development process along with guiding principles and practices that should inform placement decisions for young children with disabilities.

Reflect: What collaborative activities have you engaged in with your partners? How did the collaboration go? What might you try next?

Who Do You Reach Out To?

Are you ready to start collaborating with your program’s IDEA partners? Use these resources to help figure out how to contact them!

- [Head Start State Collaboration Offices](#)
- [Part B, Section 619 Coordinators](#)
- [Part C State Coordinators](#)

Reflect: Do you know who your IDEA partners are? Have you made connections with them? What’s your next step?

What's Next?



In this webinar, we explored some examples of collaborative activities that IDEA and Head Start partners have engaged in to support inclusion for children with disabilities and their families.

Take a moment to reflect on your current collaboration with your IDEA partners. What did you learn in this webinar? What questions do you still have? What support do you need in your role facilitating effective disabilities services?

Reflect: Did you learn anything new about collaborating with IDEA partners during the webinar or from the resources shared?

Reflect: What support do you need to facilitate effective inclusive services?

Helpful Resources

Online Resources

Federal Guidance on Inclusion and Collaboration

Office of Head Start

- [ACF-IM-HS-20-01 Inclusion of Children with Disabilities](#)

U.S. Department of Education

- [Dear Colleague Letter on Preschool Least Restrictive Environments](#)

Joint Guidance

- [Dear Colleague Letter on IDEA Services in Head Start](#)
- [Guidance on Creating an Effective Memorandum of Understanding to Support High-Quality Inclusive Early Childhood Systems](#)
- [Strengthening Collaboration Between IDEA Agencies and Head Start Programs](#)
- [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#)

Collaboration Examples and Support

- [Community Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion](#)
- [Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#)
- [State Examples for Inclusion](#)
- [Considerations for Developing State Policy and Guidance on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#)
- [Guiding Questions for Discussing Services in the LRE](#)

Partners in Inclusion

- [Head Start State Collaboration Offices](#)
- [Part B, Section 619 Coordinators](#)
- [Part C State Coordinators](#)

Online Communities

MyPeers: Head Start Disabilities-Inclusion Network

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-collaborative-platform-early-care-education-community>