

ERSEA Essentials: How Data-Based Criteria Facilitate Equitable Selection

[Music begins]

Narrator: Hello from East Coast Migrant Head Start Project. Today, we are going to talk about the selection process. Head Start programs must identify and enroll children and families who are most in need of services. Thoughtful selection policies and procedures prioritize the needs of the community in an equitable way. These priorities, based on annual community assessment data, form the selection criteria.

As criteria are identified, each is given a point value to prioritize children on the waitlist. *Don't forget*, programs must establish selection criteria points annually with the input and approval of the Policy Council and governing body or Tribal Council. A program must annually maintain a waiting list that ranks eligible children according to their program's selection criteria. This supports the equitable selection of the next child to be enrolled into services.

It is important to note that children who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA must represent 10% of funded enrollment. In addition, there are special considerations for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs when federally funded Pre-K is available in their community. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs must also give priority to families who frequently relocate for agricultural work. When selection criteria are informed by the community assessment, programs can be confident they are serving the families with the most need.