

## IS YOUR CHILD ELIGIBLE FOR HEAD START OR EARLY HEAD START?

It is very important for you to complete your application during recruitment time which starts in February so that your application can be processed before selection in July for the school year starting in August. Applications are not accepted during summer months. Your application must be completed by summer break for your child to be considered for enrollment in July.

*Applications can NOT be completed without proof of birth & proof of eligibility. Please come to the application appointment prepared with the necessary documents or your appointment will have to be rescheduled.*

*Please bring the following documents to the application open house or your application appointment:*

### Proof of birth for the applying child.

One of the following is acceptable proof:

- Birth Certificate
- Preschool Immunization Form
- Insurance Card
- Proof of Pregnancy (for Early Head Start Hamblen County pregnant mommy program)

### Age Limits:

Your child must turn three before 08/15 of the current school year to be eligible for a 3 year old slot. These are limited and four year olds are considered first.

Your child must turn four before 08/15 of the current school year to be eligible for a 4 year old slot.

You must be pregnant or your child must be between 6 weeks old and 36 months old to be eligible for a slot at Early Head Start in Hamblen County only.

## **Proof of Eligibility**

Applicants are classified as either *Categorically Eligible* or *Income Eligible*. Please read the following to see if your child may be eligible and what documents you need to apply:

### **Categorical Eligibility**

Your child is categorically eligible if your child or family is one of the following **1-4**:

If you are categorically eligible, you are not required to submit any proof of income

#### **1. Homeless according to the McKinney Vento Definition**

The term "homeless children and youth" –

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; **and**
- B. includes –
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  - ii. children and youths who 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...
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

#### **2. Receiving ongoing Families First benefits from the Department of Human Services**

You will need a copy of the letter from DHS stating your family is currently receiving Families First benefits.

#### **3. Receiving ongoing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits from the Social Security Administration.**

You will need a copy of the letter from the Social Security Administration stating your family is currently receiving SSI benefits.

#### **4. Been placed in foster care or a temporary kinship placement by the Department of Children's Services or through a court order.**

You will need a copy of the foster care placement contract or Court Order stating that the child is in foster care or in temporary kinship placement including temporary custody placements.

## Income Eligibility

You are income eligible if your family's income falls within the Federal Poverty Guidelines for your family size. Persons in the Family include those in your home that are related by blood, marriage or adoption and are supported by the income of the parents of the child applying to Head Start or Early Head Start.

<b>2014 HHS Poverty Guidelines</b>	
<b>Persons in Family</b>	<b>Total Annual Income</b>
1	\$11,670
2	\$15,730
3	\$19,790
4	\$23,850
5	\$27,910
6	\$31,970
7	\$36,030
8	\$40,090
For each additional person, add	\$4,060

The program can take some over-income applicants if there are no other eligible applicants or if you child has a diagnosed disability with an IFSP or Early Head Start or and IEP for Head Start. Proof of disability must be turned in with the application. Proof must be documented IFSP or IEP paperwork.

Proof of income is required for all applicants that wish to apply as income eligible. If you filed taxes, please provide a copy of your tax return.

If you did not file taxes, please ask your family service worker what other documents can be accepted. You must sign a form stating you did not file taxes with the Federal Government or explain the reason for not using your tax return for income eligibility.

All proof of income will be verified for eligibility. We must have proof of income for both parents if they are related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption and living in the home. Please bring these documents to your application appointment.

W-2s, check stubs, unemployment check stubs, written statements from employers, child support documentation, disability and social security payments can be accepted to calculate income if you did not file a tax return or if circumstances have changed since filing your return.

## **What happens after you apply? See below for information:**

Once you apply for Head Start or Early Head Start, your application will be reviewed. If the information submitted is approved for eligibility, your child will be placed on a waitlist according to our point system.

We take applications throughout the school year. However it is best to apply during our recruitment time which starts in February so that your application can be processed. If your application is not received before summer break, your child will not be on the waitlist for selection in July for the school year beginning in August. All applications completed after selection in July will automatically be put on the waitlist and will only be used for vacancies that occur after the beginning of the school year. Again, it is very important that you complete your application during the recruitment months which starts in February to be eligible for the next school year.

In July, our selection committee will take children from the waitlist from highest to lowest points and place them into classroom slots.

Your family service worker will contact you if your child was selected for enrollment. Children who are not initially selected remain on the waitlist and may be contacted to fill a vacancy during the school year.

## **Who to contact and other information:**

Transportation is only provided by bus for some centers. No transportation is provided for any Early Head Start services.

You must have a current immunization record to start school. Head Start/Early Head Start also requires a current physical and dental exam.

Part of our program is building family partnerships. Head Start and Early Head Start place a strong emphasis on parent involvement. We receive federal money matches for parent involvement and participation which is a requirement of the program.

During your child's enrollment at Head Start or Early Head Start you will work with a Family Service Worker to create goals for your family. We will assist you in making progress towards and achieving these goals during your participation in the program.

