**MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS, E.O.C.**

**EARLY CHIDHOOD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**1302.20; Act 645a 5 A-D**

**DETERMINING PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

**POLICY:**

The program operates program options that meet the needs of children and families.

**PROCEDURE:**

**1.0 Determining Program Structure**

* 1. The program chooses to operate one or more of the following program options: center- based, home-based, family child care, or an approved locally-designed variation (see §1302.24).
1. The program option(s) chosen meet the needs of children and families based on the community assessment described (§1302.11 b).
2. When the program serves preschool-aged children, the program provides more options than the home-based option alone.

1.2 In choosing program options and developing a program calendar, the program considers in conjunction with the annual review of the community assessment whether it would better meet child and family needs through:

1. conversion of existing slots to full school day or full working day slots,
2. extending the program year,
3. conversion of existing Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots as (see 1302.20 c), and
4. ways to promote continuity of care and services.
5. The program works to identify alternate sources to support full working day services.
6. If no additional funding is available, program resources may be used.

**2.0 Comprehensive Services**

2.1 All program options deliver the full range of services (as described in subparts C, D, E, F, and G of the Head Start Performance Standards, except that §§1302.30 through 1302.32 and §1302.34 do not apply to home-based options).

**3.0 Conversion of Slots**

3.1 Consistent with section 645(a)(5) of the Head Start Act, the Grantee may request to convert Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots through the re-funding application process or as a separate grant amendment.

1. Upon written request and pursuant to the requirements, the Head Start agency may use funds that were awarded to serve children age 3 to compulsory school age, in order to serve infants and toddlers if the agency submits an application to the Secretary of HHS containing, as specified in rules issued by the Secretary of HHS, all of the following information:
	1. The amount of such funds that are proposed to be used in accordance with section 645A b.
	2. A communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment demonstrating how the use of such funds would best meet the needs of the community.
	3. A description of how the needs of pregnant women, and of infants and toddlers, will be addressed in accordance with section 645A b, and with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of HHS pursuant to section 641A in areas including the agency’s approach to child development and provision of health services, approach to family and community partnerships, and approach to program design and management.
	4. A description of how the needs of eligible children will be met in the community.
	5. Assurances that the agency will participate in technical assistance activities (including planning, start-up site visits, and national training activities) in the same manner as recipients of grants under section 645A.
	6. Evidence that the agency meets the same eligibility criteria as recipients of grants under section 645A.
2. An application that satisfies the requirements specified shall be approved by the Secretary of HHS unless the Secretary finds that—
	1. the agency lacks adequate capacity and capability to carry out an effective Early Head Start program; or
	2. the information provided is inadequate.
3. In approving such applications, the Secretary shall take into account the costs of serving persons under section 645A.
4. If the application is approved, the Head Start agency shall be considered to be an Early Head Start agency and is subject to the same rules, regulations, and conditions as

apply to recipients of grants under section 645A, with respect to activities carried out under these requirements.

3.2 When proposing a conversion of Head Start services to Early Head Start services, the Grantee must obtain policy council and governing body approval and submit the request to the regional office.

3.3 The request to the regional office must include:

1. A grant application budget and a budget narrative that clearly identifies the funding amount for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs before and after the proposed conversion;
2. The results of the community assessment demonstrating how the proposed use of funds would best meet the needs of the community, including a description of how the needs of eligible Head Start children will be met in the community when the conversion takes places;
3. A revised program schedule that describes the program option(s) and the number of funded enrollment slots for Head Start and Early Head Start programs before and after the proposed conversion;
4. A description of how the needs of pregnant women, infants, and toddlers will be addressed;
5. A discussion of the agency’s capacity to carry out an effective Early Head Start program in accordance with the requirements of section 645A(b) of the Head Start Act and all applicable regulations;
6. Assurances that the agency will participate in training and technical assistance activities required of all Early Head Start grantees;
7. A discussion of the qualifications and competencies of the child development staff proposed for the Early Head Start program, as well as a description of the facilities and program infrastructure that will be used to support the new or expanded Early Head Start program;
8. A discussion of any one-time funding necessary to implement the proposed conversion and how the agency intends to secure such funding; and,
9. The proposed timetable for implementing this conversion, including updating school readiness goals.

**4.0 Source of Funding**

4.1 The program may consider hours of service that meet the Head Start Program Performance

 Standards, regardless of the source of funding, as hours of planned class operations for the

 purposes of meeting the Head Start and Early Head Start service duration requirements.