<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Multi-state</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact information</strong></td>
<td>Amanda Bryans, Division Director, Office of Head Start Administration for Children and Families 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW – Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20024 (202) 205-9380 <a href="mailto:Bryans@acf.hhs.gov">Bryans@acf.hhs.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General description</strong></td>
<td>The Head Start Act, amended as the &quot;Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007,&quot; states that Head Start programs must address children's transitions to kindergarten through parent training, transfer of children's records, curriculum alignment, joint professional development, and collaboration with schools and other service agencies.</td>
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| **Goals** | • Children and families make successful adjustments to school  
• Children arrive in kindergarten with the skills they need to master the curriculum  
• Gains made in Head Start do not “fade out” once children leave |
| **History** | Throughout its history, Head Start has made a variety of efforts to improve children’s transitions to school. These efforts began in part as a response to research suggesting that the positive effects of Head Start faded over a child’s subsequent schooling. In 1987, the Head Start Transition Project provided grants for trial implementation of a selection of transition models across Head Start centers. The Project targeted transitions primarily through a combination of school-based activities for children and parent outreach. Beginning in 1991, a larger, multi-site, multi-state demonstration project was launched. The Head Start Act as amended in 2007 embodies in statute this longstanding commitment to improving children’s transitions. |
| **Services and activities** | Section 642A of The Head Start Act requires that Head Start Agencies:  
• Develop transition policies and procedures in collaboration with local educational agencies  
• Align curricular objectives with state early learning standards  
• Collaborate with public education programs by sharing information, transportation, facilities, and through joint staff training  
• Develop family outreach and support programs  
• Promote the involvement of Head Start parents in their children’s transition to school by working with the local educational agency to inform parents about their rights and responsibilities concerning their child's education, thus enabling them to participate in decisions regarding their children  
• Establish effective procedures for referring children with disabilities to agencies providing services under IDEA part C, and to collaborate with those agencies  
• Establish comprehensive transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school and engage the local educational agency in doing so  
• Help parents of limited English proficient children understand and be prepared for the transition to school |
• Develop and implement a family outreach and support program, in cooperation with entities carrying out parental involvement efforts under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and family outreach and support efforts under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

• Assist families, administrators, and teachers in enhancing educational and developmental continuity and continuity of parental involvement in activities between Head Start services and elementary school.

Sample findings from the Head Start Transition Demonstration:

• Of 31 sites implementing specialized services, six were rated as “very good to excellent” on implementation measures, eight were “fair” on all measures, and seventeen showed a combination of strong and fair.

• Characteristics of the most successful programs included positive relationships between public schools and Head Start; highly committed, competent, and respected leadership; and a successful record of creating and maintaining strong community partnerships.

• All demonstration sites reported strongly valuing transition partnerships and supports. Many schools institutionalized aspects of the transition programming beyond the funding period.

Funding sources

Head Start is a federally funded program that provides grants to local organizations to run Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Lessons learned

• Transition responsibilities must be clearly articulated and assigned.

• Working with families before and during transitions is as important to successful transitions as working with children.

• Joint planning, joint training, and joint policies regarding children’s transitions to school are critical as misperceptions and misunderstandings still abound.

• Parents with positive transition experiences for one child tend to be able to repeat the experience for other children.

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**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>The Head Start Act calls for curriculum alignment and joint professional development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic</td>
<td>Head Start statute and regulation call on programs to have children and families ready for school success and to work in partnership toward ready schools through a variety of services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Head Start statute determines the program’s operation nationally.</td>
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1 Information for this profile was collected from the following sources:
Head Start Performance Standards, 45 CFR Ch. XIII (10-1-07 Edition)