

PSESD 2018-19 Head Start 10CH010715 and 10HP010007 Disability Waiver Requests

1. Your request should indicate funded enrollment, and the current number of children enrolled (not cumulative). Use the number reported on your most recent end-of-month enrollment report in HSES. Include the number of children enrolled with disabilities on this same date.
 - a. Grantees with delegates must report these numbers for each delegate agency.
 - b.

Puget Sound Educational Service District HS 10CH010715 Grant Funded Enrollment and Disability Enrollment			
Month/Year	Funded Enrollment	Disabilities (IEP/IFSP)	Disability %
Sep-18	187	5	3%
Oct-18	187	5	3%
Nov-18	187	6	3%
Dec-18	187	6	3%
Jan-19	187	6	3%
Feb-19	187	7	4%
Mar-19	187	10	5%

Puget Sound Educational Service District EHS CCP 10HP010007 Grant Funded Enrollment and Disability Enrollment			
Month/Year	Funded Enrollment	Disabilities (IEP/IFSP)	Disability %
Sep-18	160	10	6%
Oct-18	160	11	7%
Nov-18	160	11	7%
Dec-18	160	11	7%
Jan-19	160	11	7%
Feb-19	160	11	7%
Mar-19	160	11	7%
Apr-19	160	12	7.5%

2. Was a disability waiver granted last year? (i.e., was the 10% enrollment requirement met the previous year?) If so, describe what changed this year that prevented your agency from meeting the requirement.

There was no disability waiver requested last year for the 10CH 010715 Grant--which is a new 5 year grant this year—or for the 10HP010 007 grant. We previously had a waiver request for our precursor to the 715 grant, 10CH010187 for last year. We also had a waiver request for 007 in 2017.

10 CH01715:

The 10CH010715 grant is comprised of 2 subcontractors both within King County. Tukwila SD Head Start and Kent Youth and Family Services, both programs have experienced their own set of barriers to recruiting, referring and maintaining children with identified disabilities as defined by Head Start.

Tukwila SD Head Start: This program has 2 Head Start classes both of which are housed in local elementary schools. This program has developed and maintained a very strong relationship with the Child Find office within the district. The process includes the family advocate communicating with the Child Find coordinator regarding referrals, in addition the Child Find office distributes Head Start applications to families that have appointments from being referred by physicians or directly due to parent concerns. When referrals are made from one of the Head Start classrooms the district responds almost immediately preceding in a timely manner and serves children in the Head Start classrooms when appropriate. According to data, in previous years this subcontractor was successful in recruiting children who would benefit from referrals or who had an IEP, this year is unusual as the children on IEPs was very low during the recruitment effort. They currently do not have any children on IEPs despite enrollment efforts. Currently, there are two children in the referral process and they likely to receive IEPs later in the year. Per the Family Advocate, the program did not have children who presented with developmental concerns other than the two currently in process.

Kent Youth and Family Services: The vast majority of the students in the 715 grant are attending classes within Kent Youth and Family Services (KYFS). KYFS partners with Kent School District, which is one of the larger school districts in our area. The program is very inclusive and serves children with a wide range of special needs. Unfortunately, not all children with developmental delays or disabilities have IEPs for a variety of reasons. KYFS has developed a process with Kent School District that is intended to streamline the referral process once children have been identified as needing a referral and parents have given consent. Based on teacher, family advocate, and center director report, as well as the experience of the PSESD Disabilities Coordinator Education Coach, the following are barriers to meeting the 10% enrollment requirement this program year.

- The size of the district and high volume of referrals to Child Find in this school district results in delays in the referral process, especially delays in the initial appointments to complete the screening portion of the referral process. Currently 4 children are in the referral process and one child/family began the process in October 2018.
- The school district can decline to evaluate after the initial screening process. This year, the district has made decisions to not proceed to evaluation even when the child presents with significant delays and screening results indicate a need for an evaluation. In this case, the Disabilities Consultant supported the family and worked with KYFS Center Director and encouraged the district to reconsider. The district responded by agreeing to evaluate, but the process was significantly delayed due to the initial denial.
- Not all parents wish to have their children evaluated and/or participate in special education. Some parents do not agree that there is a developmental concern based on their experience with the child. In some cases data is presented from screenings and parents deny additional support exercising their parental right to advocate as they see fit for their child. In other cases, parents are concerned about the stigma associated with special education. The understanding and stigma of developmental delays and disabilities vary among families and cultures, and not all of our families believe pursuing special services is the right course of action to support their child's needs.
- Some children with delays or disabilities receive therapies from private clinics through insurance, therefore they do not have IEPs.

10HP010007:

The 007 grant is comprised of 14 subcontractors who have not historically presented issues in recruiting children with IFSP or supporting qualified families through the process. This school year the grant percentage is 7.5.

Many sites reported that enrolling children with existing IFSP's is consistent with previous years and the most significant challenge being parent willingness to go through the assessment process. It is our goal to continue to inform parents about the benefits of early intervention while respecting their wishes to not refer. We have also improved many systems to support staff in the communication with families on this topic. Although the enrollment of children with IFSP's has not significantly decrease we have still improved systems including documents and training that will improve the recruitment outcomes to receive our neediest families with children with disabilities at the top of that list.

3. How has your agency increased or improved efforts to recruit children with disabilities and to identify and refer children with suspected disabilities? Please provide an explanation of the steps taken in preparation for and during the current program year to meet the requirement and why these steps were not sufficient. Please indicate if any technical assistance was requested and/or provided to address this issue.

Puget Sound Educational Service District's (PSESD) Early Learning program has policies and procedures that promote and support inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays. Children with disabilities and their families are welcome and included in all aspects of PSESD Early Learning programs, and we do not deny enrollment of children with disabilities or developmental delays.

The Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) Early Learning program has taken the following actions to identify and refer children with suspected disabilities:

- The parent application has been adapted to more clearly identify developmental concerns that families may have upon entry. If concerns are identified during the enrollment process, staff are advised to 1) move directly to a conversation with the family about referral to Early Intervention or Child Find for screening, 2) make site-level developmental screening a priority.
- Enrolled children are screened for social-emotional well-being using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire- Social Emotional (ASQ- SE 2) and developmental well-being using Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Screenings are done within 45 days of enrollment date, or sooner if a concern is raised. Both the developmental and social-emotional versions of the ASQ tools area parent based questionnaires. Strategies and supports are provided to both address concerns and document addition items outside of the tool, these items are used as part of the information that can be included in any future referrals.
- Recent updates to procedures and guidance to Family Support and Teaching Staff regarding partnering with families, timelines for referral, improved documentation practices and advocating for children in the referral/evaluation process. Individual roles and responsibilities in documenting IFSPs and IEPs have been clarified and added to our program guidance as well as to training. Our screening guidance clearly directs staff to engage families and to describe options to request additional services based on screening results, and/ or parental concerns about possible delays or disability.
- Disabilities Services has created a comprehensive online course, which was recently added to required courses for all new staff. A face to face comprehensive course is also offered to

all new staff to solidify understanding and provide support. To support seasoned and returning staff, the course content has been made readily available to all staff within the PSED online course content.

- Through an improved system of communication, Disabilities Consultants have regularly communicated with Center Directors about the requirements for referrals and the requirements for what needs to be in place at site level once a child has an IFSP or IEP (for example, a copy of the IFSP/IEP in the Family File, documentation entered into Child Plus, 1 School Readiness Goal selected from IFSP/IEP for implementation in the classroom.
- Disabilities Consultants also support site staff to read the entire IFSP/IEP to be knowledgeable of the child’s goals and outcomes to be able to successfully implement strategies and accommodations in the classroom.
- PSED Agency’s Special Education Department has recently applied for and received a grant through the State OSPI to support two school districts in our region to explore system development that supports the recruitment of and services to children and families with suspected or diagnosed disabilities through inclusion in regular education preschool programs (e.g, Head Start, State-funded preschool, Title 1 preschools, tuition-based preschools) offered by the district or through community partners. The Pre-K Inclusion Champion Project is being piloted at Bethel and Shoreline School Districts. The Project includes deliberate efforts in stakeholder collaboration, the creation of a shared vision, mission statement and viable action plan to move the district’s systems toward inclusion. The selected team from each district begin by assessing their readiness to move forward by completing an inclusion assessment together. PSED Early Learning staff, including our Disabilities Consultant, are partnering with K-Post Secondary ESD staff on this project. We look forward to learning from the pilot and determining how it might be scaled to additional districts.

4. What does the community assessment identify regarding the number of children with disabilities? Please speak to what the assessment indicates regarding children with disabilities within the service area and the number of children served by other community agencies.

The current PSED Early Learning Community Needs Assessment shows that we have 142,675 children under the age of 5 in the Puget Sound area, with just over 17% of those children living in poverty (24,604). The data available for the community assessment did not specifically identify the total number of children under 5 with disabilities across the area. The data that we could derive through the Community Assessments related to the population of children with disabilities is found through OSPI counts of children with disabilities, aged three to 21 years, who are enrolled in state-provided educational opportunities through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The following chart shows this data across various disabilities across the Puget Sound ESD Service Area:

Public School Students with Specific Disabilities enrolled in Strt-Provided Educational Opportunities, SY-2016-17 (the most recent data available).

Hearing Impairments	Speech or Language Impairments	Orthopedic Impairments	Other Health Impairments	Multiple Disabilities	Autism	Developmental Delay	Total
17	1,283	**	212	**	570	3133	5416

*Note: The double asterisk “**” above indicates suppression to protect confidentiality due to total being less than ten.*

The single asterisk "" denotes that this total includes students with other tracked disabilities (including Intellectual Disabilities, Visual Impairments, Serious Emotional Disturbances, Specific Learning Disabilities, Deaf-Blindness, and Traumatic Brain Injuries).*

Source: OSPI, 2016-2017; BERK, 2018

The community assessment also pointed out that the total number of children with disabilities is likely to be greater than indicated above due to barriers to enrollment, such as stigma and criteria for accessing services. It should also be noted that even when children are referred due to a concern with development or a suspected disability, not all referrals result in an initial IFSP or IEP. Some children do not complete the evaluation process due to lack of transportation and/or other family circumstances, while other may not pursue the evaluation due to different cultural beliefs and perspectives. Other children do not qualify, and a proportional number of children who are eligible for disability services are significantly over-income.

We don't have data to demonstrate the number of children being served by other community agencies. However, we have multiple School District partners that have developed blended/inclusive classroom settings in their early learning programs through their state preschool (ECEAP) funding or by having community children join Special Education classrooms. These blended classrooms often are for a shorter time period than our Head Start classrooms and so may be a preferred option for the districts. Because districts have their own developmental preschool classrooms, they are often reluctant to place a child with an IEP for any area other than speech, in a Head Start Classroom. Very few of our district partners offer itinerant services, adding to the difficulty in placing children in Head Start or other community-based child care partner programs.

5. Describe the role and efforts your agency has made to refer enrolled children that may be eligible for services to the local LEA and/or early intervention agency for further evaluation.

PSESD's Early Learning policies and guidance lay out a clear timeline and the expectations for family involvement in the referral process, and teachers and FS staff are trained on this element. A set of screening questions are built into our application which enables staff to screen for children with developmental concerns and children on IEP/IFSP early in the enrollment process. All programs have the contact information for referrals in the family's home school district and information of community agencies/sub-contractors that enroll children from outside their LEA. Disabilities Consultants provide follow-up support to center and site staff as they use an interdisciplinary and family-centered approach to and through the referral process. PSESD also coordinates/supports Early Childhood Special Education services in the region and we have developed a plan with our Agency leads to work together to develop standardized agreements.

In addition, while we have the screening tools and processes in place, if a family communicates a concern at enrollment or subsequently the PSESD guidance is clear that site staff communicate with the family and move directly to referral.

A comprehensive online training course has been developed and is required for all new staff. The training covers the referral process, as well expectations for follow up to screening results that indicate a possible need for referral. The steps to follow once a child is identified as having a suspected delay or disability are clearly outlined in our Developmental Delay and Disabilities Process Checklist, and this is required documentation for all PSESD EHS and HS programs. Disabilities consultants incorporate

screening follow up and referral process into face to face training for all new teaching and family support staff, and Disabilities Consultants provide individualized site-based consultation and technical assistance to programs as needed.

Describe the role and efforts of your agency's disabilities services Consultant. Please include how long the employee has held this position and what support mechanisms are in place for individuals transitioning into this position.

PSESD employs 2 Disabilities Consultants, both of which provide teacher-level and site-based technical assistance to teaching, family support staff, and center directors. Support includes using screening results and observational data to support timely referrals. All new teachers are trained by the Consultants on use and analysis of the screening tools, use of the Developmental Delays and Disabilities Process Checklist, the Head Start philosophy of inclusion, working with families, the IFSP/IEP process, and the timelines/responsibilities for referral and advocacy. Disabilities Consultants support site staff in developing best practices in communicating the referral process and timeline to families. They also support site staff in developing working relationships with key Child Find Coordinators in their area. In addition, Consultants have an active advocate role with School Districts which includes providing them with information about Head Start Performance Standards and explaining Head Start's role in providing screenings that aligns with Child Find and that also can be used to move children forward to evaluation. The primary role for Disabilities Consultants is supporting teachers in adapting and individualizing their classroom supports and instructional accommodations relevant to children on IEPs and IFSP's, as well as those who have a suspected delay but are not on an IEPs or IFSP. The Disabilities Consultants also provide advocacy on behalf of families when they encounter barriers such as being unable to secure referral appointments with their home school district.

The Disabilities Consultants are well-trained on both of our foundational curricula providing a high level of individualization. Our current Disabilities Consultants represent a great depth of knowledge on classroom instruction as well as working with families and supporting children with disabilities. The Disabilities Consultants regularly and routinely coordinate and collaborate the broader site support teams and well as PSESD's agency Special Services Directors.

Note whether there are CURRENT agreements or MOUs with the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) (for preschoolers) or early intervention agencies (for infants and toddlers) in the service area (or areas). Please identify how these agreements are documented at the local level.

We are in the process of updating our agreements increasing and clarifying language that includes our shared vision for Head Start as a viable part of service delivery, as well as a more streamlined and effective referral process. We also work with 0-3 Services and EHS internal and external partners including Children's Home Society of Washington to transition Early Head Start children from EHS and Part C services into our pre-school programs. Home-based EHS Educators have cultivated strong relationships with Family Resources Coordinators in their areas and these partnerships have been successful for many families.

6. Identify challenges to participation in these LEA and/or early intervention agency agreements. What efforts were made to overcome these challenges and how were these challenges documented? Please indicate if the agency informed the Program Specialist of difficulties in collaborating with IDEA agencies and how this information was shared.

Disabilities Consultants are working to streamline the referral process by meeting with Child Find teams and Early Childhood Special Education Coordinators. Districts are developing a better understanding of the challenges and barriers for our families. Some identified barriers include homelessness, severe restrictions on the amount of time a parent may be away from work, multiple competing needs within a family). It is not unusual for a child identified by the PSESD Early Learning as needing an evaluation to take many months to make it through the process. A child needs to be referred within the first 30-45 days of our school year for the possibility of being qualified by February. With that said, 30-45 days is the goal of all staff and this goal is communicated to families as needed.

7. Explain efforts to recruit children with disabilities. Has your agency: Provided information to parents describing Head Start as an appropriate placement for children with disabilities? If so, how was this information distributed (e.g., verbally, electronically, handouts, etc.) and how often?

PSESD in partnership with Region X and other Head Start providers in the region have developed a cross referral process with Harborview Medical Center Pediatrics Department. This partnership is to ensure more children who have been screened for developmental concerns by Harborview Medical Center are referred to Head Start programs in the region. The PSESD developed a partnership with Open Doors for Multicultural Families, this agency serves diverse families who have family members with developmental disabilities and special health needs. This partnership serves as one mechanism for PSESD to serve children with established IEP/IFSP. Throughout the year, PSESD subcontracted partners have designed their recruitment activities to reach children with disability. The strategies include developing community partnerships, handing out flyers and applications at fairs, festivals and community events, and developing relationships with area early intervention agencies.

PSESD Disabilities Consultants participate in monthly meetings with area Early Childhood Special Education Coordinators. The topic of placement of children with IEPs in Head Start is a routine part of these meetings. Disabilities Consultants have increased their collaboration with our agency's Special Services Directors in order to align efforts to support the inclusion of children with IEPs in Head Start programs.

Recruitment, including and accommodating children with a wide range of disabilities (children with medical diagnoses, mental health concerns, as well as developmental disabilities) is a constant part of the services. However, many children in this broader category of disability do not have an IFSP or IEP, therefore do not count in the 10% yet still receive services within Early Head Start and Head Start classes.

- **Ensured that parents of children with suspected disabilities understand the benefits of early intervention and their rights under IDEA and are offered support in obtaining a full evaluation and attending IEP meetings?**

In conjunction with site staff, PSESD Disabilities Consultants are available to meet with families as part of their decision to pursue an evaluation. Disabilities Consultants also regularly meet with teaching and FS staff to help support and guide conversations with families in regards to what could be for any family sensitive topic. Written materials and web-based resources are available to site staff including the Developmental Delays and Disabilities Process Checklist, an outline of the referral process and timelines, and information about Parents Rights under IDEA. Training is offered and has been provided to family

support and teaching staff on the importance of early intervention, and strategies for supporting parents through the process.

It is important to note that even when parents are aware of the benefits of early intervention, they reserve the right to not enter into that system for any reason they choose. For example, some parents do not want their child to have a “label”, and may not want to discuss referral and evaluation as an option due to reasons including past experience, culture or the stigma associated with the process.

- **Provided information to the local IDEA agencies making sure they are aware of Head Start as the least restrictive placement for many eligible children? If so, how was this information distributed (e.g., verbally, electronically, handouts, etc.) and how often?**

Disabilities Consultants attend regular meetings with Early Childhood Special Education Coordinators and provide written information as well as frequent reminders about Head Start as a valuable and viable option for placement in the general education classroom as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) option. However, Child Find teams are often reluctant to consider Head Start placement for children who have more than speech impairment as a qualifying area on their IEP.

Child Find Coordinators and school district staff involved with IEP placement inform us that a barrier to placement in Head Start is the requirement for full enrollment. Children come through the Child Find process over the course of the whole school year, and, even when the team would like to place the child in the Head Start classroom, they are not able to because the enrollment is full. As a result, the child is placed in a developmental preschool or district administered inclusive setting.

- **Worked with local special education and related service providers, health clinics and other organizations to ensure they are knowledgeable about Head Start?**

Disabilities Consultants may facilitate Head Start staff coordination and collaboration with special education teachers and related service providers (for example visits to the developmental preschool classroom to observe accommodations) on meeting the needs of identified children in Head Start as well as the possibilities for Head Start as the LRE placement. The PSESD Disabilities Consultant has increased participation in Health Services Advisory Committee to be part of the larger conversation with service providers who have contact with potential families. They know, understand and agree that Head Start classrooms are an acceptable and accommodating environment for children with disabilities. (Please see below for next steps.)

8. As applicable, has the agency worked with Part C providers to transition age eligible children with disabilities to Head Start?

PSESD has increased their work with Part C providers throughout the assigned region to support placement of children with disabilities into Head Start programs. A strength of the program is that Part C providers are very accepting of Head Start placement as a natural environment and are regular and visible partners in our site-level programs.

This year, the EHS Home Based managers and Disabilities Consultant met with the Family Resource Coordinators from one of the area’s largest Early Intervention Providers, A Step Ahead of Pierce County. The collaboration was a success and including dialogue discussing a range of EHS and HS supports for children with disabilities, specifically addressing transition and placement of children with IEPs in Head

Start programs. In addition, the PSESD EHS FSS routinely communicates with area early intervention agencies through monthly emails and visits when time and schedules permit.

- a. **Has the agency identified delays in obtaining evaluations or IFSPs, or IEPs in compliance with the timelines established under Section 619 or Part C of IDEA? If so, how has this been addressed and responded to?**

The identification of delays have been documented as they occur; however, the delay is in the access to initial screening especially in larger school districts. Limited appointments are available in many districts, and the number of referrals often exceed the available appointments causing additional delays. Family barriers also include in some districts inability to be flexible due to limited appointment options and many families have limited transportation and work schedules that hinder their abilities that make prescheduled appointments that they did not have input in scheduling. These delays have been reported to the District Early Childhood Special Education Directors as well as the Early Learning Special Services Director and the Agency Special Services Directors, they are actively seeking feedback with the intent being to lessen the burden on families.

9. Explain the strategies the agency will use to assure an increase in the percentage of enrolled children with disabilities.

PSESD will continue to work with LEAs and Early Childhood Special Education Directors to increase the number of children with disabilities enrolled in Head Start. PSESD's Early Learning program will complete their plan to develop a standardized agreement for our region in conjunction with Early Childhood Special Education Directors. Increased collaboration with the school districts with a focus on improving services to homeless families and families residing in transitional housing as this transient population are harder to reach.

PSESD will engage in specific work with our two HS 715 sub-contractors to take a closer look at relevant issues and barriers unique to their programs. More intentional targeted partnering with the larger school districts will also occur in order to support problem solving efforts and increase enrollment of children with IEPs.

PSESD will continue to support teachers and sites with regards to inclusive services and child referral to identify coaching and training needs. The continued services to Family Support staff to increase outreach to their community schools by making connections with elementary schools near each of their centers, meeting with school counselors and special education staff at the building level to bring awareness of Head Start as an option for qualified children with disabilities.

10. Explain how the agency will document their efforts to enroll children with disabilities as well as any barriers to providing timely evaluations, eligibility determinations, and supports to children with disabilities.

PSESD will use information from the application, developmental screening results, family partnership documentation and site-reported efforts to identify whether there is follow-through on referrals, what types of supports have been given to families/what types of barriers might exist for families, what communication has been in place with the school district and when evaluations are completed.

Individualization within curriculum planning will be sampled to determine appropriateness/quality of individualized supports as well as monitoring of the progress of children with disabilities toward their school readiness goals. Observational assessment of teachers will be added to our teacher assessment list to align with our School Readiness strategy that focuses on inclusive practices. In addition, training and technical assistance and coaching provided to site staff will be documented.

Disabilities Consultants will work in collaboration with Education Consultants to address behaviors that may present a challenge to teaching staff. Individualization of the curriculum and supports/accommodations needed for children with disabilities will be provided as coaches have the responsibility to follow up on the recommendations made by the Disabilities Consultant.