

Early Learning Ventures EHS Service Plan

1302 Subpart B—Program Structure

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1302.20 Determining Program Structure

Performance Standard:

Program Option - A program must choose to operate one or more of the following program options: center-based, home-based, family child care, or an approved locally-designed variation. The program option(s) chosen must meet the needs of children and families based on the community assessment described in 1302.11(b).

To choose a program option and develop a program calendar, a program must consider in conjunction with the annual review of the community assessment described in 1302.11(b)(2), whether it would better meet child and family needs through conversion of existing slots to full school day or full working day slots, extending the program year, conversion of existing Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots, and ways to promote continuity of care and services. A program must work to identify alternate sources to support full working day services. If no additional funding is available, program resources may be used.

Comprehensive Services - All program options must deliver the full range of services, as described in subparts C, D, E, F, and G of this part, except that 1302.30 through 1302.32 and 1302.34 do not apply to home-based options.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures has developed Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships throughout its funded service area; these partnerships have been formed with both center-based child cares and family child care homes. Full working day hours, full year services are available for working families (minimum of 1,380 hours of service are provided annually).

ELV will evaluate its program options annually, in conjunction with the Community Assessment and/or annual Community Assessment updates and program planning.

Both the center-based and family child care home options will provide a full range of Early Head Start services, as outlined in subparts C – G.

At this time, ELV does not operate a home-based program option or a locally designed program option variation.

1302.20 Determining Program Structure

Performance Standard:

Conversion - Consistent with 645(a)(5) of the Head Start Act, grantees may request to convert Head Start slots to Early Head Start through the re-funding application process or as a separate grant amendment. Any grantee proposing a conversion must obtain policy council and governing body approval and submit the request to their regional office.

The request to the regional office must include:

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

Source of Funding - A 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 in this subpart.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV does not currently operate a Head Start program option.

All Child Care Partners operate for a minimum of 1,380 hours.

1302.20 Determining Program Structure
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<i>Policy Council Approval:</i>

<i>Governing Board Approval:</i>

1302.21 Center-Based Option

Performance Standard:

Setting – The center-based option delivers the full range of services, consistent with 1302.20(b). Education and child development services are delivered primarily in classroom settings.

Ratios and group size - Staff-child ratios and group size maximums must be determined by the age of the majority of children and the needs of children present. A program must determine the age of the majority of children in a class at the start of the year and may adjust this determination during the program year, if necessary. Where state or local licensing requirements are more stringent than the teacher-child ratios and group size specifications in this section, a program must meet the stricter requirements. A program must maintain appropriate ratios during all hours of program operation, except:

- For brief absences of a teaching staff member for no more than five minutes; and,
- During nap time, one teaching staff member may be replaced by one staff member or volunteer who does not meet the teaching qualifications required for the age.

An Early Head Start class that serves children under 36 months old must have two teachers with no more than eight children, or three teachers with no more than nine children. Each teacher must be assigned consistent, primary responsibility for no more than four children to promote continuity of care for individual children. A program must minimize teacher changes throughout a child's enrollment, whenever possible, and consider mixed age group classes to support continuity of care.

Policy and Procedures:

All ratios and group sizes meet the above standards. The majority of ELV's classrooms maintain a 2:8 ratio; a few classrooms have a 3:9 ratio.

When an EHS program has hours, which are not routinely staffed with EHS qualified teachers, the specific hours/days must be posted for family, state licensing and federal monitoring teams to review.

1302.21 Center-Based Option

Performance Standard:

Service Duration –

Early Head Start: By August 1, 2018, a program must provide 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations for all enrolled children.

A program that is designed to meet the needs of young parents enrolled in school settings may meet the service duration requirements if it operates a center-based program schedule during the school year aligned with its local education agency requirements and provides regular home-based services during the summer break.

Calendar Planning - A program must:

- Plan its year using a reasonable estimate of the number of days during a year that classes may be closed due to problems such as inclement weather; and,
- Make every effort to schedule makeup days using existing resources if hours of planned class operations fall below the number required per year.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures' Early Head Start program operates a minimum of 1,380 annually.

Child Care Partners provide their yearly schedule to the Administrative Office for review; schedules indicate days of operation and closures due to holidays, professional development days and other reasons.

1302.21 Center-Based Option

Performance Standard:

Licensing and Square Footage Requirements

- The facilities used by a program must meet state, tribal, or local licensing requirements, even if exempted by the licensing entity. When state, tribal, or local requirements vary from Head Start requirements, the most stringent provision takes precedence.
- A center-based program must have at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child available for the care and use of children (exclusive of bathrooms, halls, kitchen, staff rooms, and storage places) and at least 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child.
- A program that operates two or more groups within an area must ensure clearly defined, safe divisions to separate groups. A program must ensure such spaces are learning environments that facilitate the implementation of the requirements in subpart C of this part. The divisions must limit noise transfer from one group to another to prevent disruption of an effective learning environment.

Policy and Procedures:

- The facilities of all ELV Child Care Partners, including centers and family child care homes, meet CO state licensing requirements. When state licensing requirements vary from Head Start requirements, the most stringent provision takes precedence.
- All ELV Child Care Partners operating a center-based program must have at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child available for the care and use of children (exclusive of bathrooms, halls, kitchen, staff rooms, and storage places) and at least 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child.
- Any ELV Child Care Partner that operates two or more groups within an area must ensure clearly defined, safe divisions to separate groups. These spaces are learning environments that facilitate the implementation of the Education and Child Development Program Services, as outlined in subpart C. The divisions must limit noise transfer from one group to another to prevent disruption of an effective learning environment.

1302.22 Home-Based Option

Performance Standard:

Setting - The home-based option delivers the full range of services, consistent with 1302.20(b), through visits with the child's parents, primarily in the child's home and through group socialization opportunities in a Head Start classroom, community facility, home, or on field trips. For EHS programs, the home-based option may be used to deliver services to some or all of a program's enrolled children. For Head Start programs, the home-based option may only be used to deliver services to a portion of a program's enrolled children.

Caseload - A program that implements a home-based option must maintain an average caseload of 10 to 12 families per home visitor with a maximum of 12 families for any individual home visitor.

Early Head Start Service Duration - An Early Head Start home-based program must:

- Provide one home visit per week per family that lasts at least an hour and a half and provide a minimum of 46 visits per year; and,
- Provide, at a minimum, 22 group socialization activities distributed over the course of the program year.

Head Start Service Duration - A Head Start home-based program must:

- Provide one home visit per week per family that lasts at least an hour and a half and provide a minimum of 32 visits per year; and,
- Provide, at a minimum, 16 group socialization activities distributed over the course of the program year.

Meeting Minimum Requirements - A program implementing a home-based option must:

- Make up planned home visits or scheduled group socialization activities that were canceled by the program, and to the extent possible attempt to make up planned home visits canceled by the family, when this is necessary to meet the minimums described in this section; and,
- Not replace home visits or scheduled group socialization activities for medical or social service appointments for the purposes of meeting the minimum requirements described in this section.

Safety Requirements - The areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, preparing food, and eating in facilities used for group socializations in the home-based option must meet the safety standards described in 1302.47(1).

Policy and Procedures:

ELV does not currently operate a home-based program option.

1302.22 Home-Based Option
<i>Policy Council Approval: N/A</i> <i>Governing Board Approval: N/A</i>

1302.23 Family Child Care Option

Performance Standard:

Setting - The family child care program option delivers the full range of services, consistent with 1302.20(b). Education and child development services are primarily delivered by a family child care provider in their home or other family-like setting. A program may choose to offer the family child care option if:

- The program has a legally binding agreement with one or more family child care provider(s) that clearly defines the roles, rights, and responsibilities of each party, or the program is the employer of the family child care provider, and ensures children and families enrolled in this option receive the full range of services described in subparts C, D, E, F, and G of this part; and,
- The program ensures family child care homes are available that can accommodate children and families with disabilities.

Policy and Procedures:

- The program has a legally binding agreement with all family child care provider(s) that clearly defines the roles, rights, and responsibilities of each party, and ensures children and families enrolled receive the full range of services described in subparts C, D, E, F, and G of this part; and,
- The program ensures that family child care homes can accommodate children and families with disabilities.

1302.23 Family Child Care Option

Performance Standard:

Ratios and Group Size

- A program that operates the family child care option where Head Start children are enrolled must ensure group size does not exceed the limits specified in this section. If the family child care provider's own children under the age of six are present, they must be included in the group size.
- When there is one family child care provider, the maximum group size is six children and no more than two of the six may be under 24 months of age. When there is a provider and an assistant, the maximum group size is twelve children with no more than four of the twelve children under 24 months of age.
- One family child care provider may care for up to four children younger than 36 months of age with a maximum group size of four children, and no more than two of the four children may be under 18 months of age.
- A program must maintain appropriate ratios during all hours of program operation. A program must ensure providers have systems to ensure the safety of any child not within view for any period. A program must make substitute staff and assistant providers available with the necessary training and experience to ensure quality services to children are not interrupted.

Policy and Procedures:

All ratios, as described above, are followed.

When there is a *qualified provider and an assistant the maximum EHS group size is twelve children with no more than four of the twelve children under 24 months of age; licensed capacity may not be exceeded.

ELV's additional definition of *qualified, is a teacher with a Professional Development Plan (PDP) who is currently working toward meeting EHS teacher qualifications and is paced to achieve within 12 months.

1302.23 Family Child Care Option

Performance Standard:

Service Duration - Whether family child care option services are provided directly or via contractual arrangement, a program must ensure family child care providers operate sufficient hours to meet the child care needs of families and not less than 1,380 hours per year.

Licensing Requirements - A family child-care provider must be licensed by the state, tribal, or local entity to provide services in their home or family-like setting. When state, tribal, or local requirements vary from Head Start requirements, the most stringent provision applies.

Policy and Procedures:

Each Child Care Partner operates a minimum of 1380 hours each program year.

All Family Child Care providers are licensed by the state of Colorado. When state or local requirements vary from the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the most stringent provision is followed.

1302.23 Family Child Care Option

Performance Standard:

Child Development Specialist - A program that offers the family child care option must provide a child development specialist to support family child care providers and ensure the provision of quality services at each family child care home. Child development specialists must:

- Conduct regular visits to each home, some of which are unannounced, not less than once every two weeks;
- Periodically verify compliance with either contract requirements or agency policy;
- Facilitate ongoing communication between program staff, family child care providers, and enrolled families; and,
- Provide recommendations for technical assistance and support the family child care provider in developing relationships with other child care professionals.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures provides a Quality Child Care Specialist (QCCP) to support Family Child Care Home providers. The QCCP executes the standards required above, and in addition, provides support and assistance to increase participation in family and community engagement opportunities.

1302.22 Family Child Care Option

<i>Policy Council Approval:</i>

<i>Governing Board Approval:</i>

1302.24 Locally-Designed Program Option Variations

Performance Standard:

Waiver Option - Programs may request to operate a locally-designed program option, including a combination of program options, to better meet the unique needs of their communities or to demonstrate or test alternative approaches for providing program services. In order to operate a locally-designed program option, programs must seek a waiver as described in this section and must deliver the full range of services, consistent with 1302.20(b), and demonstrate how any change to their program design is consistent with achieving program goals in subpart J of this part.

Request for Approval - A program's request to operate a locally-designed variation may be approved by the responsible HHS official through the end of a program's current grant or, if the request is submitted through a grant application for an upcoming project period, for the project period of the new award. Such approval may be revoked based on progress toward program goals as described in 1302.102 and monitoring as described in 1304.2.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV does not currently operate a locally-designed program option.

1302.24 Locally-Designed Program Option Variations

Performance Standard:

Waiver Requirements - The responsible HHS official may waive one or more of the requirements contained in 1302.21(b), (c)(1)(i), and (c)(2)(iii) and (iv); 1302.22(a) through (c); and 1302.23(b) and (c), but may not waive ratios or group size for children under 24 months. Center-based locally-designed options must meet the minimums described in section 640(k)(1) of the Act for center-based programs.

If the responsible HHS official determines a waiver of group size for center-based services would better meet the needs of children and families in a community, the group size may not exceed the limits below:

- A group that serves children 24 to 36 months of age must have no more than ten children; and,
- A group that serves predominantly three-year-old children must have no more than twenty children; and,
- A group that serves predominantly four- and five-year-old children must have no more than twenty-four children.

If the responsible HHS official approves a waiver to allow a program to operate below the minimums described in 1302.21(c)(2)(iii) or (iv), a program must meet the requirements described in 1302.21(c)(2)(i), or in the case of a double session variation, a program must meet the requirements described in 1302.21(c)(2)(ii).

In order to receive a waiver under this section, a program must provide supporting evidence that demonstrates the locally-designed variation effectively supports appropriate development and progress in children's early learning outcomes.

In order to receive a waiver of service duration, a program must meet the requirement in the paragraph above, provide supporting evidence that it better meets the needs of parents than the applicable service duration minimums described in 1302.21(c)(1) and (c)(2)(iii) and (iv), 1302.22(c), or 1302.23(c), and assess the effectiveness of the variation in supporting appropriate development and progress in children's early learning outcomes.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV does not currently operate a locally-designed program option.

1302.24 Locally-Designed Program Option Variations

<i>Policy Council Approval: N/A</i>

<i>Governing Board Approval: N/A</i>
