

State-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

I. Purpose

This agreement is entered into between the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the Missouri Department of Mental Health, the Missouri Department of Social Services, and the Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office, for the purposes of promoting State efforts to:

- a) Encourage collaboration among Head Start and Early Head Start programs, early education and child care programs, and services supported by the agreed upon parties, and
- b) Encourage the development of local agreements that are tailored to meet the unique needs of programs, necessary partnerships, and the values shared by of each collaboration.

II. Vision

As stated in the Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan, "*All young children in Missouri are safe, healthy and capable of reaching their full potential*".

III. Guiding Principles

The following core values serve as a foundation to the MOU:

- **Early childhood** is the life period of **most intensive development** where both **positive and negative factors** have the **greatest impact**
- **Effective programs** for young children **respond** to the **totality of a child's development**, not just one aspect.
- **Children with disabilities** or other **special needs** are **best served** in **natural environments and inclusive programs**, rather than separate, clinical, or disability-focused settings.
- **Family involvement and engagement is essential** to meeting the needs of young children; effective early childhood programs invite and support **parents as fully engaged partners** in the delivery of services.
- High **quality** programs that are **informed by research** are the **most effective**.
- Practices, programs, and professionals are **culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible** to all children.
- **Investments in prevention and early intervention** are the most **cost effective** use of public funds.

- The **coordination of programs** and services across the state, communities, and agencies **results** in administrative **efficiencies, greater impact of services,** and more **convenience for families.**

IV. Communication and Responsibilities of the Parties

The parties encourage coordination and collaboration among Head Start/Early Head Start agencies and their community and school-based partners. The parties believe collaboration addresses complex issues that require a comprehensive approach. Collaboration within a community involves individuals, families, agencies, organizations, and businesses joining efforts to create positive change. Furthermore, the parties agree that effective collaboration involves mutual power, respect, and trust among all participants. It requires taking risks, enforcing change, and displaying an on-going commitment to shared goals. The parties encourage local agencies to utilize this MOU and supporting resources with their efforts in developing local, individualized agreements.

The Early Childhood Interagency Team (ECIT) comprised of representatives from the agencies of this agreement will support the ongoing influence of the MOU, including effective communication between and among the cooperating agencies.

The Missouri Head Start State collaboration Office agrees to facilitate communication on aspects that may hinder collaboration or have not been resolved through established lines of communication. The MHSSCO will encourage discussion between the concerned parties at the organizational level closest to the issue.

V. Confidentiality

The parties agree that confidentiality must be maintained. Agencies are the stewards of information on children and families and share only information necessary for their shared work, and as permitted by state and federal statutes and regulations, including but not limited to the Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) and the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). Further, the agencies recognize the parent/guardian holds the authority for release of information.

VI. Conflict Management

In the event of conflict, the parties will seek to resolve the conflict with immediacy. Parties may choose to meet with a neutral third party to assist in addressing and resolving disagreements. If conflict cannot be resolved, the MOU may be terminated as initiated by one or more parties.

VII. Terms of Agreement

This agreement includes signatories designated from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Missouri Department of Social Services, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the Missouri Department of Mental Health and the Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office. The agreement shall be effective upon execution by all parties.

While addenda 2 and 3 specifically address aspects related to young children with disabilities and their families, the parties encourage agencies and organizations participating in this process to promote the integration of all early childhood programs. This integration of services may be achieved by enhancing the coordination and awareness of programs and resources that address the needs of all young children.

Unless representatives of the parties of this agreement notify the other parties that there is a desire to end or revise the agreement, this agreement will remain in place and will be formally reviewed every two years. If revisions are needed during the interim, they must be by formal amendment, reviewed, approved, and signed by the appropriate parties.

VIII. Addenda

As additional addenda are developed and added to the MOU, ECIT members will be kept informed and the parties of the MOU will be notified. Partnership addenda are considered inclusive of this MOU. New addenda or revisions to existing addenda may be made with the notification and agreement of ECIT members.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Robin Coffman Date 11/2/2018

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Date SEP 21 2018

Missouri Department of Mental Health Date 8/30/2018

Missouri Department of Social Services Date 8/21/18

Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office Date 11/2/2018

Addenda 1

Early Learning Programs Chart

Descriptions of Programs/Services within the Cooperating Agencies*		
Name	Description	Lead Agency
Early Learning Blended Funding Program	Districts in the blended funding program can use any two or more existing sources of funds; one must be from DESE, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), State and/or Federal reimbursement based on prior year ECSE expenditures, Missouri Preschool Program (MPP), Title I}. There is no new Federal or State funding available through DESE for blended funding. Instead, blended funding allows existing resources to be better utilized to support increased access for children to inclusive early learning programs.	DESE ESEA IDEA Early Learning Blended Funding Guidance
Early Childhood Special Education (Part B, Section 619)	Early Childhood Special Education is the program under the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that is responsible for services to children with disabilities from age 3 through 5. Services are administered by the Local Education Agency (LEA) that has responsibility to provide evaluation, case management, and services to support the child's education as described in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed through a collaborative and multidisciplinary team in accordance with IDEA.	DESE Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004)
Early Intervention/First Steps (Part C Infant-Toddler Services)	First Steps offers coordinated services and assistance to young children with disabilities and their families. First Steps is designed for children, birth to age 3, who have delayed development or diagnosed conditions that are associated with developmental disabilities, and is administered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary education. First Steps has the responsibility to provide evaluation, service coordination, and services as identified in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed through a collaborative and multidisciplinary team in accordance with IDEA.	DESE Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2004
McKinney Vento Program	The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act is a federal	DESE

	<p>law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless children and youth, defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” McKinney-Vento provides federal funding to states for the purpose of supporting district programs that serve homeless students. The DESE, through a competitive grant process, awards funding for programs. All funded districts are required to have liaisons who make sure that school districts are implementing the law.</p>	<p>The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).</p>
Missouri Parents As Teachers	<p>Parents As Teachers is a home-school-community partnership which supports parents in their role as their child’s first teacher. The Early Childhood Development Act (established in 1984) authorizes state funding to school districts that provide education programs and services to families expecting a child or have a child under the age of kindergarten entry. The program includes periodic development screening for all children birth to kindergarten entry and parent education for all families prenatal to kindergarten entry.</p>	<p>DESE The Early Childhood Development Act (ECDA)</p>
Missouri Preschool Program	<p>The Missouri Preschool Program (MPP) is a competitive bid or grant opportunity to create or expand high quality early care and education programs for children who are one or two years from kindergarten eligibility. The program does not offer long-term funding but helps start or expand high quality early childhood classrooms across the state.</p>	<p>DESE The Early Childhood Development Education and Care Fund.</p>
Title I	<p>Title I preschool program is a preschool program for which an LEA or school uses Title I funds, in whole or in part, to improve cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children below the grade at which an LEA provides a free public elementary education. Such a program is designed to</p>	<p>ESEA DESE</p>

	prepare eligible children with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences. See Section B of this document for further information on eligible children.	
Accreditation Facilitation	Provides accreditation facilitation services to DSS subsidized child care programs in order to increase the quality of child care services for children up to the age they are eligible to enter kindergarten.	
Home Visiting	The Home Visiting Program is an additional support to families to help link them to additional resources in the community, to help build their knowledge and skill base in regards to parenting, and to model appropriate parenting skills. To participate in the Home Visiting Program, a family must have a child less than three years of age in the home, and a household income under 185% of poverty. Additional requirements may apply.	DSS
Child Care Subsidy or Assistance Program	The Child Care Subsidy Program assists eligible Missouri parents and guardians with payments for child care. This program helps families with the cost of child care so that they are able to focus on finding and holding steady work that can support their family's needs	DSS
Transitional Child Care	When income goes above the limit for the Child Care Subsidy Program, the state may still pay a portion of your child care costs through Transitional Child Care. Transitional Child Care allows you to ease into paying for child care on your own. The amount you pay will depend on your income and which level of Transitional Child Care you qualify for	DSS
Community Based Child Care	Community based child care, as referred to in this document, describes entities and agencies both public and private that provide early childhood education to children birth to five that do not fall directly under DESE, DSS, Head Start or Early Head Start	
Project Reach/Educare	The Project REACH (R ural E arly C hildhood) Institute was designed to address the critical needs of some of Missouri's most vulnerable young children – those living in rural poverty. In 1994, Project REACH was introduced in a select few rural communities to provide a comprehensive system of education, training,	DSS

	<p>and support for rural child care providers that also reached out to parents, community social service agencies, and local school personnel to ensure that young children receive a full range of educational and related services necessary for optimal development.</p> <p>Project REACH is now a Missouri Department of Social Services' Educare Program. The vision of Educare is that all child care and early learning programs will have knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and the skills to implement comprehensive early childhood programming to support children's development and strengthen families. The mission of Educare is to support, educate, and provide resources to improve the program quality of child care and learning programs serving children receiving child care assistance.</p>	
State Funded Early Head Start (EHS)	The EHS program provides an early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development program to children under the age of 3 and whose family's incomes are at or below the federal poverty line	DSS
Federal Head Start and Early Head Start	Head Start promotes the school readiness of young children from low-income families and supports the mental, social, and emotional development of children from birth to age 5. In addition to educational services, programs provide children and their families with comprehensive services including health, mental health, dental, nutrition, social, and other services	OHS Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act
Federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships	The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) initiative brings together Early Head Start and child care through layering of funding to provide comprehensive and continuous services to low-income infants, toddlers, and their families. The EHS-CCP enhances developmental services and supports for low-income infants and toddlers, and their families, by providing strong relationship-based experiences and preparing them for the transition into Head Start and preschool.	OHS Head Start Program Performance Standards Child Care Development Block Grant
Head Start State Collaboration Office	The Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office (MHSSCO) receives funding from the	University of Missouri

	federal Office of head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the MHSSCO is to create a visible presence for Head Start at the state level while assisting in the development of significant, multi-agency and public-private partnerships. Partnership initiatives support and enhance the capacity of early childhood programs and improve the opportunities that affect low-income children and families in Missouri.	Head Start Program Performance Standards and Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act
MO Health Net	Missouri's Medicaid program is called MO HealthNet. MO HealthNet covers qualified medical expenses for individuals who meet certain eligibility requirements	DSS
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, also known as Temporary Assistance (TA), is a program designed to provide cash benefits to low-income families for the household's children such as clothing, utilities and other services. Upon approval of TA, the recipient must participate in employment and training services through the Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) program. The MWA program helps TA recipients transition from TA to a job by helping set goals and get the skills needed to find a job and support the recipient's family	DSS
Child and Adult Care Food Program	The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides funding for meals and snacks for eligible children and adults at child and adult day care centers, homes that provide child care services, after school programs and emergency shelters.	DHSS
Child Care Licensing	Child Care Licensing assures the health, safety, growth, and development of children through a regulatory process to prevent injury risk, or harm to dependent children in out-of-home child care settings.	DHSS
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant	The Title V MCH Block Grant plays a key role in the provision of maternal and child health services in Missouri. Funds from this grant are distributed among a number of programs which target the improvement of the health of women and infants, children and adolescents, and children with special health care needs.	DHSS
Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV)	MIECHV is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of	DHSS

	Health and Human Services in partnership with the Administration for Children and Families. The MIECHV Program is designed to implement evidence-based, voluntary early childhood home visitation services for pregnant women and families. It was established to ensure that more children have the opportunity to grow up healthy, safe, ready to learn and able to become productive members of society.	
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a special supplemental nutrition program which provides services to pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children up to their 5th birthday based on nutritional risk and income eligibility.	DHSS

*Not an exhaustive list

Addenda 2 Missouri First Steps (Part C of IDEA)

Addenda 2 ensures the coordination of services for children with disabilities from birth to age 3 and their families in accordance with 34 CFR 303.210 of IDEA. We encourage agencies participating in this process to promote the integration of all early childhood programs. Integration of all early childhood programs results in coordination and awareness of programs and resources that address the needs of all young children.

The cooperating agencies agree that it is critical to collaborate on administrative, programmatic, and/or professional development activities within the following categories.

Child Find (Identification and Evaluation)

Early identification of infants and toddlers with disabilities is a shared value. The expectation is that all agencies use their current policies and procedures to facilitate the identification of infants and toddlers with disabilities. This includes vigorous efforts to conduct public awareness and engage in activities or add to existing activities, elements that increase the probability of finding infants and toddlers to refer for further evaluation.

In accordance with the expectations set out above, the cooperating agencies agree to the following:

- Persons from cooperating agencies who are administering developmental screenings must be well-trained in the procedures and tools used to screen infants and toddlers. The First Steps program does not conduct screenings to assist with eligibility determination.
- Tools for screening are valid and reliable.
- Screening information is shared by professionals or staff in one or more of the cooperating agencies in a respectful and accurate manner, acknowledging the family as a valued member and integral part of the decision-making team.
- There is a shared understanding of criteria that merits a referral to the First Steps program. Professionals work collaboratively to provide options and support for families to access the services for their infant or toddler.
- In all instances where a "preponderance of evidence" determination is made regarding a victim less than 3 years old, Children's Division will make a referral to the First Steps program pursuant to the federal mandate of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).
- Infants and toddlers suspected of a developmental delay or disability must be referred to the First Steps program within 7 days after identification (e.g., screening).
- When an evaluation by the First Steps program is warranted, the process is facilitated in a timely manner to ensure early intervention services begin within 45 days from the date of referral.

- First Steps is responsible for selecting the evaluation instruments and conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the child's abilities, strengths and needs.
- During the evaluation process, the child's First Steps home visitor, Early Head Start, child care provider, and parents are invited and respected as full members of the evaluation team, along with any other professionals or family members that may be invited by the parent.

IFSP Development and Services

Including families as a full partner and educational decision maker is a shared value. The expectation is that all agencies work to engage families throughout the process of screening, evaluation of the child, development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and implementation of early intervention services.

In regard to the above expectation, the cooperating agencies agree to:

- Foster, support, and cooperate in the exchange of information to ensure coordination of IFSP services and avoid duplication of effort and services to the child and family.
- Place infants and toddlers in natural settings whenever possible, with the understanding that settings are selected in partnership with the family and in the best interest of the child.
- Align the development of the IFSP, whenever possible, with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), quality indicators, and best practices that are evidenced-based. Of note, the Head Start Act reauthorization in 2007 further aligned Head Start and IDEA requirements so that "not less than 10 percent of the total number of children actually enrolled by each Head Start agency and each delegate agency will be children with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act".
- Develop guidance at the local level for a specific process for problem solving, addressing concerns, and clarifying policies, and to ensure documentation and reporting required by the various agencies is shared in a timely manner.
- Coordinate educational activities, strategies, and activities for the family to ensure early intervention services are delivered in accordance with the child's IFSP.
- Encourage and support parents in advocacy efforts, including involvement in program approaches to child development and education, and sharing insights, ideas and suggestions for coordinating services between home and early childhood settings.
- Ensure seamless services and avoid lapses in services for infants and toddlers transitioning to schools or other community based providers as appropriate.

Addenda 3

Early Childhood Special Education (Part B/619 of IDEA)

To ensure coordination of services for children age 3 to 5 with disabilities, the cooperating agencies agree to the following:

Child Find (Identification and Evaluation)

Early identification of young children with disabilities is a shared value. The expectation is that all agencies use their current policies and procedures to facilitate the identification of children that may have disabilities. This includes vigorous efforts to conduct public awareness and engage in activities or add to existing activities, elements that increase the probability of finding children to refer for further evaluation. In regard to the above expectation, the agencies agree:

- Persons administering screening are well-trained.
- Tools for screening are valid and reliable.
- Screening information is shared by the professional team in a respectful and accurate manner, acknowledging the family as a valued member and integral part of the decision-making team.
- There is a shared understanding of criteria that merits a referral. Professionals work collaboratively to provide options and support for families to access the services for their child.
- When an evaluation is warranted, the process is facilitated in a timely manner to ensure special education and related services begin at the earliest possible time.
- The local educational agency (LEA) is responsible for selecting the evaluation instruments and conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the child's abilities.
- During the evaluation process, the child's teacher, child care provider, and parents are invited and respected as full members of the team, along with any other professionals or family members that may be appropriate or invited by the parent.

IEP Development and Services

Including families as a full partner and educational decision maker is a shared value. The expectation is that all agencies work to engage families throughout the process of screening, evaluation, development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and implementation of special education and related services. In regard to the above expectation, the agencies agree to:

- Foster, support and cooperate in the exchange of information to ensure coordination of services and avoid duplication of effort and services.
- Place children in the least restrictive environment whenever possible.
- Align the development of the IEP, whenever possible, with the Improving Head Start

for School Readiness Act, the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), quality indicators, and best practices that are evidenced-based. Of note, the Head Start Act reauthorization in 2007 further aligned Head Start and IDEA requirements so that “not less than 10 percent of the total number of children actually enrolled by each Head Start agency and each delegate agency will be children with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act”.

- Encourage collaboration between agencies throughout the IEP process.
- Develop guidance at the local level for a process for problem solving, addressing concern and clarifying policies and to ensure documentation and reporting required by the various agencies is shared in a timely manner.
- Coordinate educational activities, curricular objectives and instruction.
- Encourage and support parents in advocacy efforts, including involvement in program approaches to child development and education, and sharing insights, ideas and suggestions for coordinating services in early childhood settings.