

# ERSEA

## **ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance)**

Nueces County Community Action Agency Birth-To-Five Head Start Program serves children between the ages 6 weeks to 5 years old and has a funded enrollment of 925. NCCAA Birth-to-Five Head Start Infant/Toddler Division serve Expectant Women and children 6 weeks to 3 years old. The Preschool Division serves children who are 3 years old and less than 5 years of age. There are 15 Early Head Start sites and 15 Preschool sites. NCCAA Centers are located in Corpus Christi and Robstown. The agency employs Family Advocates that assist in building and maintaining Family and Community Partnerships on behalf of the Agency.

The Nueces County Community Action Agency is mandated to conduct a Community Assessment to determine the strengths, concerns, and needs of the children and families they are serving or plan to serve. The information gathered allows the program to determine services that will be provided and the manner in which they will be providing. The assessment must be conducted at least once every five years and updated yearly.

**ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible for Early Head Start, a child must be an infant or a toddler younger than three years old. For Head Start (Preschool), a child must be at least three years old or turn three-year-old as determined by the cut-off date used by the local public-school system. Nueces County Community Action Agency has used September 1<sup>st</sup> as the cutoff date for each new school year.

Families must meet or fall below the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines to be eligible for Head Start Services. The few exceptions to this would be a child with a disability. At least 90% of the children in the Head Start Program must fall with the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines and up to 10% of the families in the program can exceed the income guidelines with special circumstances or approval of the Head Start Director.

**RECRUITMENT:** Recruitment efforts are carried out throughout the program year, but concentrated in late Spring for the new school year. Recruitment is the responsibility of the Family Advocates and the ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) Coordinator. Methods of Recruitment include: Word-of-Mouth, Flyers, Posters, Banners, Yard Signs, Public Announcements, Community Partners, and Door-to-Door efforts.

NCCAA Birth-to-Five Head Start staff makes every effort to recruit children with qualifying disabilities by collaboration with the Local Education Agencies (LEA) and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI).

**SELECTION:** The Head Start Program has established selection criteria used to assist in selecting children and families into the program. The selection criteria are based on information gathered from the Community Assessment. Along with the age and income of the child, the selection criteria assist in ranking children on a waiting list based on the needs of the child and/or family. The Head Start program maintains a waiting list throughout the year.

**ENROLLMENT:** Recruitment applications will be available beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, and may be picked up at any Head Start Center, Enrollment Center, or through our Agency Website ([nccaatx.org](http://nccaatx.org)). All applications will need to be submitted to be processed at our Enrollment Center

with the child's proof of age, proof of income (12 months of income for the family) and the Parent's Identification Card. The Enrollment Process is carried out by staff at the Enrollment Center and Family Advocates assisting throughout the Agency.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is monitored daily due to the fact that the agency must maintain an average daily attendance rate of 85%. Attendance is monitored daily by teachers, site-based managers, and the ERSEA Coordinator. Chronic absences are monitored and after 5 unexcused absences the child may lose his/her slot in the program.

**FAMILY ADVOCATES:** A close partnership is made with Head Start staff and parents at the time of enrollment. The Family Advocates are usually the first staff to have contact with the family. They initiate the Family Partnership Agreement and they assist the parents in accessing Community Services and Resources. The Family Advocates encourage Parent Involvement and Participation in the program. The families are encouraged to participate in a variety of ways from volunteering in the classrooms, to serving on a council or board as a representative of their Head Start Center. Parents and families are strongly encouraged and invited to participate in the Family and Community Partnership's Advisory Meetings that are held. The program offers frequent training opportunities for the families and encourages feedback and suggestions.