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**Subject: Initial Application Process – Age/Income Eligibility**

**Source: This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45 CFR 1305.3**

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**Policy**

To be eligible for Early Head Start services, you must be a pregnant woman, or child age zero to 3 years old. Once a child has been enrolled into the Early Head Start Program, they remain eligible for the program. At least 90% of the children enrolled in the Early Head Start Program must be from low income families. Up to ten percent of the children enrolled may be children from families who exceed the income guidelines. Ten percent of total enrollment is reserved for children with disabilities. The family income must be verified by the Social Services Manager to determine that a child is eligible to participate.

**Procedure**

1. As an application is received at the central office:
  - A. Verify attachments and keep with the application:
    - a. Verification of age of child by birth certificate, medical card or hospital verification.
    - b. Income will be verified by Income Tax from the previous year, W-2, check stubs, or employer letters, whichever reflects the most current income. Current poverty guidelines will be used. Families who receive TANF benefits, SSI, are enrolling a foster child, or who are currently homeless, will be categorically eligible.
    - c. Current shot record to determine immunization status.
    - d. Current health insurance information.
    - e. Most current well child exam to verify health status.
    - f. Verify a disabling condition of the child. Ask for a diagnosis and a copy of the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
  - B. Income verification will be kept in the Social Services/Parent Involvement Manager's office and in the child's records.
2. Application information will be entered into the database by the Social Services manager or FSW.
3. Document eligibility verification on recruitment application, signed by the Social Services manager.
4. Print the Eligibility Verification form from Child Plus and confirm that the information matches the application eligibility statement, signed by Social Services manager.
5. The application with all required attachments and the Eligibility Verification form will then go into the appropriate binder waiting to be screened.