
Partnering With Head Start

Program/Classroom Options

Head Start grantees participate in GSRP in a number of ways. As a GSRP subrecipient, a Head Start grantee can accept slots to implement any of the GSRP classroom options.

When Head Start implements Part-Day or School-Day GSRP, the enrolled child is fully funded by GSRP and may or may not be eligible for Head Start. With these program options, the Head Start grantee must meet GSRP requirements and Head Start Performance Standards are not required.

Head Start grantees can also accept slots to implement the GSRP/Head Start Blend. In this instance, the enrolled child is dually funded by both Head Start and GSRP. This program option enhances the Head Start experience for the enrolled child and family with increased preschool dosage and robust support for school readiness. Children enrolled in the GSRP/Head Start Blend are Head Start children - regardless of the additional, state funding source for services. These children must receive comprehensive programs and services and the following from Head Start: finance, accounting, human resources, facilities management, transportation management, data tracking for child outcomes, technology support, health, nutrition, administrative assistance, executive leadership along with eligibility, recruitment and selection work. The most stringent requirement must be met; refer to the resource document for more information, *GSRP/Head Start Blend: Meeting the Standards*. For classrooms that include GSRP/Head Start Blend slots and where Head Start has the preponderance of responsibility, Head Start is contracted as the GSRP subrecipient. To ensure that implementing the GSRP/Head Start Blend does not result in unmet need, the local Great Start Collaborative school readiness advisory committee should annually review access to high-quality preschool for children who are GSRP-eligible.

Head Start classrooms can include multiple funding sources, such as Head Start, GSRP, Early Childhood Special Education and tuition-based. For example, a Head Start grantee implementing GSRP School-Day, GSRP/Head Start Blend and Head Start within one classroom will provide a full day of preschool to all enrolled children. Whenever there is one GSRP-funded slot in a classroom, all GSRP requirements must be met.

To learn more about GSRP classroom options, refer to the Classroom Requirements section of the GSRP Implementation Manual.

Educational Leadership

The GSRP Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) is the educational leader in each preschool classroom that has at least one GSRP-enrolled child. For ISDs that permit locally-provided ECSs, it is optimal for Head Start to use existing program staff as the ECS. When the ISD provides the ECS, or when Head Start cannot provide an ECS, thoughtful collaboration between the Head Start Education Manager and the GSRP ECS will result in an aligned approach to support for teaching teams: observation, evaluation (CLASS and/or PQA-R), feedback sessions, goal-setting, professional learning, coaching and mentoring. The ECS and Head Start Education Manager should have regularly scheduled consultation so as to not overwhelm teaching teams with additional adults in the classroom and plan effective feedback sessions that prioritize continuous improvement activities.

Waiting Lists

Head Start grantees are charged to collaborate and coordinate activities with state preschool, including outreach activities to identify eligible children and increase the program participation of underserved populations of eligible children. Best practice is to utilize one preschool application for all state and federally-funded programs and share one waiting list. Where Head Start has full enrollment, children eligible for GSRP should not be kept on Head Start waiting lists. The local Great Start Collaborative school readiness advisory committee is the appropriate venue for continuous conversations to ensure that children presenting with the higher risks of very low income, homelessness, foster care and/or children with individualized education plans are prioritized for service. The only exception should be when parents choose to be on a Head Start waiting list instead of enrolling in GSRP.

Budgeting

It is important to consider classroom options which will be implemented as the GSRP contract and subsequent budget is prepared with Head Start grantees. Some Head Start grantees mistakenly believe that all costs in a partnership arrangement must be allocated. For Head Start operated classrooms where enrolled children are fully funded by GSRP and the Head Start Performance Standards are not required, cost allocation is necessary only when the ISD contracts for shared resources (space, personnel). For Head Start operated classrooms where the GSRP/Head Start Blend is implemented, individual line item cost allocation is not required. The ISD ensures that all costs are covered and each cost allocation plan is fair and reciprocal.