

COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
RICHLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
AND
EMBARRAS RIVER BASIN AGENCY HEAD START

This agreement is between Richland County Community School District and Embarras River Basin Agency (ERBA Head Start) for the period of September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027.

I. Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish working procedures between Richland County Community School District and ERBA Head Start to insure the provision of services to preschool children (ages 3-5) eligible for preschool and preschool special education in compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations, including public law 110-134, Improving Head Start School Readiness Act of 2007.

It is the intent of this agreement to:

- A. Define which services will be provided by each Agency.
- B. Ensure that children eligible for preschool special education and related services receive a free and appropriate public education, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the School Code of Illinois, in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- C. Ensure that each Agency cooperatively maintains communication and shares leadership responsibilities at the local level to ensure that available resources are utilized in the most effective manner.
- D. Ensure that cooperative arrangements between Richland County Community School District and ERBA Head Start are developed, implemented, and preserved.
- E. Ensure transitions between Head Start and Kindergarten.

This Agreement applies only to children ages three years to non-kindergarten eligible five-year-olds in accordance with school policy.

II. Program Mandates

A. Responsibility of Richland County Community School District:

- 1. Comply with requirements of state and federal statutes and regulations concerning services to three to five-year-old children identified as needing special education and related services and children entering kindergarten from ERBA Head Start.

B. Responsibility of ERBA Head Start:

According to the Office of Head Start (OHS) ERBA Head Start will:

- 1. Recruit, enroll, and serve eligible children. No less than 10% of the total number (341) of enrollment opportunities in Head Start programs shall be available for children with disabilities of all levels of severity

who are eligible to participate.

2. Screen all enrolled children for potential problems in the areas of health and development.
3. Refer children found to be at-risk to appropriate professionals for diagnostic evaluation.
4. Ensure that children with disabilities receive all of the services to which they are entitled under Head Start Performance Standards for Children with Disabilities (45-CFR 1308).
5. Provide ongoing assessment of all children.
6. Transition eligible 5 year olds to Local Education Agency (LEA) as outlined in Section 10 of the 2007 Head Start Act.
7. Serve children from homeless families following the McKinney Vento rules.

III. Service Implementation

A. Child Find/Screening

1. Richland County Community School District will:
 - a. Advertise their child find efforts and
 - b. Conduct screenings to identify preschool children with disabilities in the community during February, March, or April.
 - c. Refer income eligible families to ERBA Head Start following the spring preschool screenings by:
 1. discussing Head Start as an optional program.
 2. distributing the ERBA Head Start flyer containing the phone number to parents.
 3. obtaining written parental consent to give ERBA Head Start needed identifying information.
 4. inviting ERBA Head Start staff to the conference at which the screening results are reviewed.
 - d. Conduct speech/language screenings on children accepted in the Head Start program, if possible.
2. ERBA Head Start will:
 - a. Recruit children with suspected or diagnosed disabilities by

conducting community needs assessments and contacting community agencies serving children with disabilities.

- b. Screen all enrolled children in the health and developmental areas using an appropriate Developmental Screening Tool.
- c. Explain parental rights and responsibilities to parent of enrolled children at the time of referral.
- d. Refer any child determined to need further assessment to the appropriate professionals (Richland County Community School District, County Mental Health, local physicians, etc).
- e. Provide written notices to ERBA Head Start parents regarding preschool screenings.
- f. Coordinate paperwork and parental consent to assure that special education records can be shared.

B. Case Study Evaluation

1. Richland County Community School District will:
 - a. Conduct case study evaluations for children with suspected disabilities referred by Head Start or identified through a screening after determining that the referral is appropriate.
 - b. Encourage the participation of appropriate Head Start staff as part of the pre-plan and case study team and inform these staff members of meetings.
2. ERBA Head Start will:
 - a. Assist parents in completing the consent for testing, release of information, and referral forms for determination of need for evaluation for children enrolled in the Richland Co. Head Start center who have been identified through Head Start classroom screening or teacher observations.
 - b. Contact parents of Head Start children to assist in answering questions and/or offering transportation to and from the evaluation site.

C. Eligibility Review

1. Richland County Community School District will:
 - a. Ensure that the Eligibility Review conforms to the requirements of state and federal statutes and regulations.
 - b. Attempt to schedule the Eligibility Review to enable Head Start parents to attend.

2. ERBA Head Start will:
 - a. Make arrangements for appropriate Head Start personnel to attend, if possible, the preplan meeting and the Eligibility Review scheduled for ERBA Head Start students or candidates.
 - b. Contact parents of ERBA Head Start children to assist in answering questions and/or offering transportation to and from the preplan meeting and/or Eligibility Review.

D. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development

1. Richland County Community School District will:
 - a. Ensure that IEP meetings conform to the requirements of state and federal statutes and regulations.
 - b. Attempt to schedule IEP meetings to enable appropriate Head Start personnel to attend conferences concerning children being considered for placement in Head Start and children referred from Head Start.
 - c. With written parental consent, provide Head Start with a copy of the IEP.
 - d. Attempt to schedule and coordinate IEP reviews to allow participation by ERBA Head Start staff.

2. ERBA Head Start will:
 - a. Make arrangements for appropriate Head Start personnel to attend IEP meetings.
 - b. Assist parents with the IEP process as needed.
 - c. Secure a Refusal of Services document from a family who decides to discontinue participating in IEP services after a diagnosed disability and/or an IEP has been written.

E. Placement

1. Richland County Community School District will:
 - a. Consistent with the concept of the least restrictive environment (LRE), attempt to maintain placement of children in Head Start when Head Start is the referring agent.
 - b. When appropriate, utilize ERBA Head Start as a placement option for preschool children identified through a case study evaluation as needing special services.

2. ERBA Head Start will:

- a. Make every effort to enroll the children referred by Richland County Community School District following screening, evaluation, and Eligibility Review or yearly review, per ERBA Head Start's eligibility enrollment policies.
- b. Contact Richland County Community School District to advise if the referred child was accepted into the Head Start program or placed on the waiting list.

F. Specific Program Service Delivery

1. Richland County Community School District will:

- a. Implement those provisions of the IEP which are the responsibility of the district.
- b. Document the frequency of special services at Head Start by filling out the monthly in-kind packet provided by ERBA Head Start with each month's form to be returned at the end of the month to ERBA Head Start.
- c. Make arrangements for personnel providing special services to communicate as needed with Head Start teaching staff to discuss progress and strategies for each child. (i.e. phone calls, notes, etc.)
- d. Communication:
 - 1. Provide procedures for referrals including timelines.
 - 2. Provide procedures for evaluations including timelines.
 - 3. Provide Head Start with the current IEP or IEP annual review within 15 days of the writing of the IEP document.
 - 4. If Head Start is unable to secure a current IEP or annual IEP review from the School District it is the responsibility of the School District to provide documentation/explanations for the unsecured document.
- e. Continuity of Education:
 - 1. Communicate continuity of education for shared students with IEP's if remote learning via technology is implemented.
 - 2. Provide notice of remote IEP annual reviews via technology with shared students.

2. ERBA Head Start will:

- a. Provide the monthly in-kind packet to special services professionals.
- b. Provide information to special education personnel regarding any changes in the classroom schedule (field trips, etc.) in a timely manner.
- c. Provide opportunities for children to practice and generalize the skills and goals contained in the IEP.

- d. Coordinate timely communications (written, telephoned, meetings) with special education personnel.
- e. Help parents of limited English proficiency with information.
- f. Provide any attendance reports needed by Richland County Community School District.
- g. Work toward outcomes specified in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes: Ages Birth to Five Framework encompassing core standards and Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

IV. Training and Technical Assistance

A. Richland County Community School District will:

- 1. Make arrangements for appropriate LEA (local education agency) personnel to attend training sessions provided by Head Start when determined appropriate by the district.
- 2. Notify Head Start of pertinent training sessions provided by LEA so that Head Start staff can attend when appropriate.

B. ERBA Head Start will:

- 1. Notify LEA of pertinent training sessions so that LEA staff can attend when appropriate.

V. Transition

A. Richland County Community School District will:

- 1. Consult with Head Start to arrange a kindergarten field trip for teachers, children, and parent chaperones during the spring.
- 2. Provide kindergarten readiness information to ERBA Head Start Teacher and/or Family Advocate.
- 3. Provide time for kindergarten teaching staff to visit Head Start, if possible.

B. ERBA Head Start will:

- 1. Provide the LEA with a list of ERBA Head Start children, their parents and their addresses (with ERBA Head Start parents' written permission) for those children who will be entering kindergarten in the fall or meet to review children that are entering kindergarten.
- 2. Help parents understand importance of maintaining parent engagement in elementary school.

3. Make arrangements for a field trip in the spring to the local kindergarten classes for children entering kindergarten in the fall. Also, invite kindergarten teacher to visit Head Start for shared program expectations in learning and development.
4. Provide notices to ERBA Head Start parents regarding kindergarten registration.
5. Provide local school nurses with copies of current physical exam and dental exams and Birth Certificates ERBA Head Start has on file.
6. Provide teachers with copies of School Readiness Transition Skills including fall and spring Head Start home visit progress reports.

VI. Parent Engagement Activities

A. Richland County Community School District will:

1. Invite parents of children with disabilities to participate in the parent training and activities provided by the district.
2. Provide a program to be given by a kindergarten representative for a spring parent meeting if requested.

B. ERBA Head Start will:

1. Include parents of children with disabilities in all parent training and activities, to include transition activities.
2. Invite parents of children with disabilities to all meetings regarding the child's progress.
3. Have available materials, resources, and/or 800 numbers to offer to parents concerning their child's disability.

VII. Confidentiality

Richland County Community School District and the ERBA Head Start program shall follow the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Illinois School Student Records Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

VIII. Dispute Resolution

In the event that misunderstandings or differences of opinion occur regarding policies and procedures necessary to accomplish these objectives, the staff and appropriate supervisory personnel from the respective agencies will meet to try to reach a solution which is amicable to both parties.

IX. Termination/Review

The Agreement of Understanding will expire August 31, 2027, and it can be revised or terminated entirely or in part by either agency following a sixty day written notice.

Jason Fox, Supt.


Date



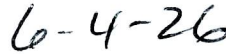
Dennis Pearson, ERBA Head Start Director



Date



Teresa Smith, Educ/Disabilities Manager



Date