

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
APACHE JUNCTION UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT # 43
AND
PINAL GILA COMMUNITY CHILD SERVICES, INC.

This Agreement is between Apache Junction Unified School District and Pinal Gila community Child Services, In./Head Start/Early Head Start for the period of August 1, 2017 to July 31, 2018.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to support ongoing coordination and collaboration between Apache Junction Unified School District (AJUSD), the local education agency responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs and for implementing IDEA to identify children and their families within the Apache Junction Unified School District boundaries and Pinal Gila Community Child Services, Inc. (PGCCS), a family centered, community based, not-for-profit organization that provides opportunities for pre-school children and promotes self-sufficiency for families, in order to build stronger, healthier communities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.), in accordance with Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), and in accordance with Section 642(e)(5) of the Head Start Act.

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Apache Junction Unified School District - The Early Learning Center

The Apache Junction School District's Special Needs Preschool Program offers a developmental approach to learning which includes art, music, motor, pre-literacy and readiness activities for three and five year old children. Children have opportunities to interact with each other in an environment structured with their cognitive, social/emotional and physical needs in mind. The Early Learning Center evaluates and identifies preschool students who are suspected to have developmental delays. Participants benefit from certified educators assisting in the child's physical and academic development.

The Early Learning Center is located on the west side of the Learning Center campus at:

2805 South Ironwood Drive
Apache Junction, Arizona 85120

Pinal Gila Community Child Services, Inc.

PGCCS is a comprehensive program providing services to pregnant women and children from birth to age five. Head Start provides high-quality early education and child development services, including for children with disabilities that promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school.

PGCCS must actively locate and recruit children with disabilities and other vulnerable children, including homeless children and children in foster care. PGCCS must ensure at least 10 percent (10%) of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA. AJ Head Start operates 4 classrooms; therefore eight (8) slots must be available to children with disabilities. When a program meets the ten percent requirement, children with disabilities will compete for enrollment slots according to agency criteria.

Apache Junction Head Start and Early Head Start are located at:

900 N. Plaza
Apache Junction, AZ 85120

Head Start Services

Apache Junction Head Start implements a research-based curriculum, and screening and assessment procedures that support individualization and grown in the following areas: language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts; and supports family engagement in children's learning and development for children ages three to five.

Early Head Start Services

Apache Junction Early Head Start is a federally funded, community based program that serves pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Low-income families, children in Foster Care, families receiving TANF assistance and families whose child has a disability are eligible. Early Head Start staff are trained professionals who will provide information and skills to support each child's development, health services, and family sufficiency.

III. CHILD FIND

Head start supports AJUSD in actively seeking out children at risk for developmental delay through referral to AJUSD Child Find using the PGCCS referral form, Child Find Referral.

AJUSD will:

- Publicize child find screening information according to Arizona Department of Education mandates for meeting I.D.E.A. requirements.
- Schedule a Child Find screening appointment for a child *not enrolled* in Head Start when contact by a parent/guardian from the community regarding concerns about a child.
- Determine next steps for follow up assessment for children referred to Child Find that are *enrolled* in Head Start, including provision of Prior Written Notice for those

children in need of vision or hearing follow up. AJUSD is encouraged to accept the results of the standardized developmental screenings conducted by Head Start.

Head Start will:

- Provide parent/guardian AJUSD Child Find Referral information when the parent/guardian states there is a developmental or speech concern during the application process for a child 2 years 10 months and older.
- Screen all enrolled children using research-based standardized screening tools (DIAL-4 & ASQ:SE2) to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills within 45 calendar days of when children first attend the program or receives a home visit.
- Refer children with parent/guardian consent to AJUSD Child Find for follow up assessment to determine the need for further evaluation and the child's eligibility for services under IDEA as soon as possible if warranted based on screening results or parental/guardian concern. Head Start will not hold referrals for longer than 10 days. Contact will be made with AJUSD to have files promptly picked up or exchanged.
- Provide parents/guardian with a copy of their procedural safeguards.
- Obtain written parental/guardian consent to Release or Obtain Confidential Information from parents to AJUSD using a PGCCS form.
- Send the Child Find Referral and Release of Information by electronic email to Ana Báez, Secretary at the Early Learning Center.
- Indicate in **BOLD** letters at the top of the referral form: **Head Start**.
- Provide the AJUSD team responsible for follow up assessment with available relevant information from developmental screenings (DIAL-4 & ASQ:SE2), educational assessment (TSG Individual Child Report), and sensory screenings when available.
- Participate in Review of Existing Data meetings to discuss reasons for referral, pre-referral interventions and any additional applicable data.

Head Start designated contact for Child Find referrals:

Tera Leigh, Apache Junction Site Manager
Tera.leigh@pgccs.org
480-982-4516

Early Head Start designated contact for Child Find referrals and AzEIP transitions:

Kimberly Williams, Early Head Start Site Supervisor
Kimberly.williams@pgccs.org
480-982-4516 ext. 2

AJUSD designated contact for Child Find referrals:

Ana Báez, Secretary, The Early Learning Center
abaez@goaj.org
480-982-1110 Ext 3300

IV. EVALUATION

Comprehensive Developmental Assessment

AJUSD will:

- Obtain parental/guardian consent for further evaluation.
- Conduct a full and individual evaluation in all developmental areas including cognitive, physical, communication, social/emotional, and adaptive for children in accordance with IDEA to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extend of the special education and related services the child needs.
 - Complete the evaluation as soon as possible, but shall not exceed 60 calendar days from receipt of informed consent to evaluate.
 - Use a variety of current assessment tools (criterion referenced and norm-referenced) and strategies (observation) and parental input to gather relevant functional, development, and academic information about the child being evaluated.
 - Use at least one norm-referenced assessment instrument to obtain standard deviation information.
 - Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate education program for the child.
 - Ensure that assessment and other evaluation materials:
 - a) Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminator on a racial, linguistic or cultural basis.
 - b) Are provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer.
 - c) Are used for the purpose of which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable.
 - d) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and
 - e) Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.
 - Deem a child eligible without standard scores if a child cannot be formally assessed in one or more areas and there is a preponderance of information demonstrating that the child has a delay or delays which are educationally significant.
 - Invite and encourage Head start staff to attend the MET/IEP meetings.
 - Notify the child's parents/guardians if it is determined that no additional data is needed to determine whether a child is a child with a disability, of that determination and the reasons for the determination through provision of Prior Written Notice.

Head Start will:

- Help parents/guardians understand the evaluation process and timelines required under IDEA;
- Encourage parents/guardians to actively participate in the eligibility process;
- Provide AJUSD with information on the child's present levels of education performance and academic functioning as assessed through Teaching Strategies GOLD upon request during evaluation process.

V. ELIGIBILITY

Upon completion of the comprehensive developmental assessment, the multidisciplinary evaluation team will meet with the parents to discuss the results of the evaluation. The results must be written in a report to include the child’s strengths, needs, and educational priorities (goals). If a child is determined eligible for services, AJ Head Start will partner with AJUSD and the parent to deliver the needed services identified.

AJUSD will:

- Provide special education and related services to eligible children at the Early Learning Center
- Provide Head Start with PWNs, MET/IEP after evaluation and/or following IEP meeting.

Head Start will:

- Participate in meetings with AJUSD to develop or review an IEP for children being considered for Head Start enrollment, a currently enrolled child, or a child transitioning from a program.
- Help parents/guardians understand the purposes and result of evaluations and services
- Implement IEP goals in the regular classroom.

VI. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

AJUSD will:

- A. Ensure that a meeting to develop an IEP for a child is conducted within 30 days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services.
- B. Invite Head Start to participate in the meeting with parents and other team members
- C. Ensure the components of the IEP are in accordance with IDEA and include at a minimum:
 - Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance,
 - A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals,
 - A description of progress,
 - A statement of special education and related services and supplementary aides and services,
 - A statement of the program modifications and supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child,
 - An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and in the activities with other children with and without disabilities,
 - The projected date for the beginning of services and modifications; the anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services and modifications.
 - Consideration of special factors according to IDEA.
- D. Ensure that the IEP team for each child with a disability includes:
 - The parents of the child;

- Not less than one general education teacher (if the child is participating in Head Start, this person is considered the general education teacher);
 - An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results;
 - A representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities; is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of AJUSD.
- E. Provide the parents/guardians of the child a copy of the IEP at no cost.
- F. Provide Head Start a copy of the child's IEP with a signed release of information from the parent.
- G. Review and revised at a minimum annually, as required by IDEA, and upon the written request of the parent to determine whether the annual goals for the child are being achieved; and to revise the IEP as appropriate to address any lack of progress, reevaluation information, and any information about the child provided to or by the parents.

Head Start will:

- A. Participate in and contribute to a meeting to develop or review an IEP for a child determined eligible for special education and related services;
- B. Provide educational progress monitoring information in a child's individual portfolio through an invitation to participate in Team Central of Teaching Strategies Gold;
- C. Provide any necessary modification to the environment, multiple and varied formats for instruction, and individualized accommodations and supports as necessary; and
- D. Ensure the individualized needs of children with disabilities, including but not limited to those eligible for services under IDEA, are being met and all children have access to and can fully participate in the full range of activities and services.

VII. LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

The IEP team decides the appropriate LRE for each child during the IEP meeting after necessary services have been determined. Whenever appropriate, a child with a disability should remain in the preschool setting that he or she is already attending and receive special education services there.

AJUSD will:

Provide an early childhood setting that focuses on the individual needs of students who benefit from more intensive services in a smaller "separate" classroom with opportunities for intensive, individualized services that can be provided in a more restricted environment with a specifically trained teacher.

AJ Head Start will:

Provide an inclusive early childhood setting with an enrollment of more than 50% of children without disabilities in a regular education setting of no more than 17 children. Individualize educational programming goal setting with highly trained early childhood professionals in partnership with parents.

VIII. CURRICULUM

AJUSD and Head Start use the scientifically based curriculum Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD which meets the criteria of State Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework which are derived from the study on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children by the National Academy of Sciences and other relevant research. AJUSD also uses the curriculum Handwriting Without Tears Get Set for School.

IX. TRANSITION and ALIGNMENT WITH K-12 EDUCATION

AJUSD and Head Start will continue to enhance their ongoing collaborative relationship through partnership to provide services to children with disabilities and their families as appropriate.

AJUSD and Head Start will:

- Annually review transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school, continuity of services and effective transitions. Meetings will be scheduled approximately four (4) times per year for the months of October to discuss children identified for referral, December and February to discuss progress of children in the referral process, and in April to discuss transition opportunities for children leaving the Head Start program.
- Exchange communication between appropriate staff and their counterparts through electronic mail, phone calls, and written correspondence to facilitate the continuity of children's learning and development;
- Participate in joint trainings and professional development opportunities including:
 - 1) Transition-related training
 - 2) Positive behavioral interventions and supports
 - 3) Shared expectations for children's learning and development

AJUSD will:

- Provide consultative support to AJ Head Start teaching staff in the implementation of IEP goals in the regular classroom;
- Meet with Head Start to discuss opportunities for enrollment for the upcoming program year at least annually in April of each year.
- Conduct outreach to parents of elementary age children and parents of limited English proficiency to facilitate continuity between programs

AJ Head Start will:

- Provide annual training for AJUST staff to explain the PGCCS process for eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance as guided by the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the AJ Head Start developmental concerns referral process.
- Request technical support or consultation as needed to successfully implement IEP goals in the regular education classroom.
- Communicate concerns and questions, as they arise, to the appropriate AJUSD staff.

- Engage parents/guardians by helping them understand their role and responsibilities in accordance with FERPA and Procedural Safeguards.
- Support parents/guardians in learning how to become advocates for services that meet their children's needs;
- Help parents/guardians understand the instructional and other services provided by the school in which their child will enroll after participation in Head Start;
- Transfer applicable program records for children to the school in which the child will enroll with signed parental consent;

X. TRANSPORTATION

AJUSD has transportation resources. Transportation is provided as a related service when the need is identified in an individual education program for children with disabilities.

PGCCS does not have transportation resource available for children. Head Start may be able to secure incidental transportation for parents to attend IEP meetings or local parent trainings.

Vehicles

AJUSD will ensure:

- All accidents involving vehicles that transport children are reported in accordance with applicable state requirements.
- All vehicles used to provide transportation services to children are school buses or allowable alternate vehicles that are equipped for use of height- and weight-appropriate child restraint systems, and have reverse beepers.
- Each vehicle used in providing services is equipped with an emergency communication system clearly labeled and appropriate emergency safety equipment, including a seat belt cutter, charged fire extinguisher and first aid kit
- Vehicles used to provide services are in safe operating conditions at all times as evidenced by
 - 1) Annual safety inspections of each vehicle through an inspection program licensed or operated by the state
 - 2) Systematic preventive maintenance
 - 3) Daily pre-trip vehicle inspections implemented by the driver

Vehicle Operation

AJUSD will ensure:

- Each child is seated in a child restraint system appropriate to the child age, height, and weight
- Baggage and other items transported in the passenger compartment are properly stored and secured, and the aisles remain clear and the doors and emergency exits remain unobstructed at all times;
- Up-to-date child rosters and lists of the adults each child is authorized to be released to, including alternates in case of emergency, are maintained and no child is left behind, either at the classroom or on the vehicle at the end of the route; and,
- There is at least one bus monitor on board at all times, with additional monitors provided as necessary

Drivers

AJUSD will ensure vehicle drivers:

- Have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for vehicles in the same class as the vehicle the driver will be operating; and,
- Meet any physical, mental, and other requirements as necessary to perform job-related functions with any necessary reasonable accommodations.
- Participate in a medical examination, performed by a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy, establishing that the individual possesses the physical ability to perform any job-related functions with any necessary accommodations.

Driver Training

AJUSD will ensure each driver must receive training prior to transporting any enrolled child and receive a refresher training each year.

Training must include:

- (1) Classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction sufficient to enable the driver to operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner, to safely run a fixed route, to administer basic first aid in case of injury, and to handle emergency situations, including vehicle evaluation, operate any special equipment, such as a wheelchair lift, assistance devices or special occupant restraints, conduct routine maintenance and safety checks of the vehicle, and maintain accurate record as necessary; and
- (2) Any necessary training for children with disabilities.

Bus Monitors

AJUSD will ensure:

- Bus monitors are trained before beginning work on child boarding and exiting procedures, how to use child restraint systems, completing any required paperwork, how to respond to emergencies and emergency evacuation procedures, how to use special equipment, child pick-up and release procedures, how to conduct and pre- and post-trip vehicle checks.
- Bus monitors are trained on safety requirements including Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

Trip Routing

AJUSD will ensure:

- Transit time for a child to and from the program must NOT exceed one hour unless there is no shorter route available or any alternative shorter route is either unsafe or impractical;
- Vehicles are not loaded beyond maximum passenger capacity at any time;
- Drivers do not back up or make U-turns, except when necessary for safety reasons or because of physical barriers;
- Stops are located to minimize traffic disruptions and to afford the driver a good field of view in front of and behind the vehicle;
- When possible, stops are located to eliminate the need for children to cross the street or highway to board or leave the vehicle;

- Either a bus monitor or another adult escorts children across the street to board or leave the vehicle if curbside pick-up or drop off is impossible; and,
- Drivers use alternative routines in case of hazardous conditions that could affect the safety of the children who are being transported, such as ice or water build up, natural gas line breaks, or emergency road closing.

Safety Procedures

AJUSD will ensure:

- Children riding the vehicle are taught safe riding practices, safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle, recognition of the danger zones around the vehicle, and emergency evacuation procedures, including participating in an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the vehicle the child will be riding.
- At least two bus evacuation drills are conducted during the program year.

Children with Disabilities

AJUSD will ensure:

- Any special transportation requirements as noted in a child's IEP are followed including special pick-up and drop-off requirements, seating requirements, equipment needs, and any assistance that may be required.
- A copy of the AJUSD Preschool Transportation Form is provided to Head Start.

Head Start will:

- Notify the bus monitor of child's absence at time of pick up from AJ Head Start.

XI. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Apache Junction Unified School District and Pinal Gila Community Child Services, Inc./Head Start will:

- A. Ensure staff working with children have had a completed state criminal history check including fingerprint check or Federal Bureau of investigation criminal history records, including fingerprint checks, conduct a sex offender registry check, and a child abuse and neglect state registry check.
- B. Ensure staff working with children abide by standards of conduct that ensure staff :
 - Implement positive strategies to support child's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior;
 - Do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including at a minimum, that staff must not
 - (i) use corporal punishment;
 - (ii) use isolation to discipline a child;
 - (iii) bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth;
 - (iv) use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;
 - (v) use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;
 - (vi) use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;

- (vii) physically abuse a child;
- (viii) use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family; or
- (ix) use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward;
- C. Respect and promote the unique identify of each child and family and do not stereotype on any basis including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;
- D. Comply with confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members.

XII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Apache Junction Unified School District and Pinal Gila Community Child Services, Inc./Head Start shall obtain the written consent of the parent(s)/guardian before disclosing personally identifiable information from the education records of the child. The written consent must be signed and dated by the parent(s)/guardian giving consent and shall include the following:

- Specification of the records to be disclosed,
- Purpose of disclosure, and
- Party or parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

Head Start will explain to the parent/guardian that the grant of consent is voluntary on the parent of the parent/guardian and may be revoked at any time. If a parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive and therefore it does not apply to an action that occurred before the consent was revoked.

XIII. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In the event that misunderstandings or difference of opinion occur with regard to policies and procedures necessary to accomplish these objectives, the staff and appropriate supervisor from the respective Agencies will meet to resolve the issue. If resolution is not reached through this means, the parties agree to use arbitration to the extent required by ARS Section 12-1518.

XIV. TERMINATION/REVIEW

This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed and revised by Apache Junction Unified School District and Pinal-Gila Community Child Services, Inc. at least annually or on an as needed basis. Either party upon thirty (30) days written notice may terminate this Agreement.

XV. HOMELESS LIAISON

PGCCS encourages families experiencing homelessness to apply to the Head Start program. Head Start will provide families experiencing homelessness with AJUSD Homeless Services Liaison contact information as needed. AJUSD Homeless Services Liaison contact information:

Name: Robyn Gonzales
Phone Number: 480-982-1110 ext. 2039
Email Address: rgonzale@goaj.org

Signatures

Dr. Krista Anderson, Superintendent
Apache Junction Unified School District

Date

Toni Limbrick, M. Ed.
Disability Services Coordinator, PGCCS

Date

Tami Hoover, EHS Education Coordinator
Early Head Start, PGCCS

Date

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