



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can you tell me more about Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS)?

Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) has been providing services to Orange County's most vulnerable and at-risk children and their families since 1979. OCHS is funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start to provide Early Head Start (pregnant mothers and children birth-3 years in age) and Head Start (children 3-5 years in age) services at centers and in home base throughout all of Orange County, CA. OCHS services are comprehensive with emphasis on promoting children's school readiness in areas including, but not limited to: language and cognitive development, early reading, science, mathematics, social skills, health and physical development. Each year, OCHS serves over 3,000 pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families across all of Orange County, including those who are homeless, in foster care, have special needs, are on public assistance, whose family incomes are at or below the federal poverty line, and/or have other high-risk circumstances.

When will our services with OCPT end?

As part of its current contract with OCHS, OCPT will continue to provide center and home base services to the children and families currently enrolled in the program until center based programming is scheduled to end in June 2019. Home base services for Early Head Start families will also continue until the end of June 2019.

When did OCHS provide notification of this change?

On February 21, 2019, the OCHS Board of Directors notified OCPT that it would not be including OCPT in OCHS's new Head Start and Early Head Start grant application and that OCHS would provide services directly to children and families in the Orange Unified School District service area. The OCHS Board arrived at this decision only after ongoing consideration of many important factors, including but not limited to its legal, fiscal, and oversight responsibilities as a steward of federal funds for the entire program. Ultimately, after much time, consideration, and correspondence with OCPT, the Board determined OCHS directly operating the services would result in significantly more cost savings than delegating those services to OCPT.

What is OCHS's goal during this transition?

OCHS is committed to working with Orange Children and Parents Together, Inc. (OCPT) to ensure a smooth transition of Head Start and Early Head Start services that prioritizes high quality services to children and families and the protection of federal dollars through compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations. This includes services to children and families that are: (1) currently enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start; (2) currently enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start and will continue to be age eligible next school year; and (3) eligible pregnant moms, infants, toddlers and preschoolers that are not enrolled at this time but would like to enroll in the future.

For continuity of care and the benefit of the children and families, OCHS is very interested in operating at the same centers, if possible. OCHS is also very interested in exploring employment opportunities with interested qualified staff that may be leaving employment with OCPT. We will post information about employment opportunities soon.

OCHS is hopeful that there will be as few changes to direct services as possible, however, this will require the cooperation of all parties involved in the transition. In the best interest of the children and families, OCHS would greatly appreciate full support throughout this process.

Will I lose my (or my child's) slot in the program or have to reenroll?

No. OCHS will maintain services for the children and families currently enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start program. OCHS will not require reenrollment for families that are currently attending OCPT's Head Start and Early Head Start Program because of this transition. However, under law, OCHS is required to re-determine eligibility for any child transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start as well as any child that will be entering Head Start for the third year.

Will someone be calling me about what to do next?

Yes! OCHS will be in contact with you in the next month or so to discuss your child and your current services. We look very forward to serving you and your family.

Does OCHS have centers in other cities in Orange County that might be closer to my work?

Yes! OCHS has centers located throughout Orange County. Please go to the locations tab on our website to determine if there may be a center(s) closer to your work that you may wish to have your child attend. Let us know that when we call you to discuss your child and family needs.

Will my teacher be the same and will I have the same day for home visits after July 1, 2019?

We will make every effort to minimize any disruption of services to children and families during this transition and maintain continuity of care; however, OCHS cannot guarantee that all children will have the same teacher or the same day for home visits for many reasons.

OCHS will have many positions available. If qualified OCPT staff, that may be leaving employment with OCPT, are interested in working with OCHS, it is our hope that they will choose to seek employment with OCHS. We will post information about employment opportunities soon.

Will OCHS consider hiring OCPT program staff to begin employment July 1, 2019?

OCHS will have many positions available. If qualified OCPT staff, that may be leaving employment with OCPT, are interested in working with OCHS, it is our hope that they will choose to apply to work at OCHS. We will post information about employment opportunities soon.

Will services be provided at the same centers?

OCHS cannot guarantee that services will be provided at the same centers, however OCHS is working to minimize any disruption during the transition. OCHS will also make every effort possible to continue providing services at the same centers or comparable locations.

What will be the hours of operation next year?

The hours of operation are determined by many factors. Part day sessions are typically run from 8:00a.m. to 11:30a.m. or 12:30p.m. to 4:00p.m., however they can change based the location or other factors that may necessitate a minor fluctuation of start times.

What is the reason for the change in providers?

June 30, 2019 ends a five year grant for OCHS. As with all Head Start/Early Head Start grantees, OCHS is responsible for conducting community assessments as well as cost, data and other analyses throughout each grant cycle, in particular in the last year when it is time to plan for a brand new five year grant application. This process includes the collection of a lot of information that must be utilized to make decisions about how to best serve eligible children and families in all areas of Orange County.

Why was this decision made so fast?

The OCHS Board arrived at this decision only after considering many important factors, including but not limited to its legal and fiscal responsibilities as a steward of federal funds for the entire program. Ultimately, after much time, consideration and correspondence with OCPT, the Board determined OCHS directly operating the services would result in significantly more cost savings than delegating those services to OCPT. We have provided notice of the change to allow enough time for a smooth transition for children and families, provided that we have cooperation from all parties involved.

How will OCHS meet the needs of our community?

All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to operate within a designated set of federal, state and local laws. As the grantee agency, OCHS is responsible for identifying the needs of all eligible children and families in Orange County, including those in the City of Orange. It is through a comprehensive assessment process that OCHS has identified those needs and the best way to meet them through program operations and fiscal prudence.

How can community partners continue to work with Head Start/ Early Head Start?

As always, OCHS values community partners and welcomes community partners to collaborate with us. We are always seeking to establish new partnerships that will support our children, families, staff, and agency. Please reach out to us so that we can meet to discuss how we might work together to strengthen our community. There will be a need to develop new agreements with OCHS after July 1, 2019.