

## **Section 3: Child Recruitment and Registration**

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# Energy Express Enrollment Policy

## Who to Target?

Energy Express is designed for children who need both the nutrition and reading components of the program. In making enrollment decisions, county collaboratives should target:

- ☆ Children eligible for free or reduced price school meals
- ☆ Children receiving Title I reading services
- ☆ Children who will be entering first through sixth grades the next school year (if a child has completed one year of kindergarten, but has been retained for the next school year, that child is eligible)
- ☆ Children whose families commit for the entire six weeks of the program
- ☆ Children not having access to other educational opportunities in the summer
- ☆ Children who can work in the Energy Express model

As a minimum, a site's enrollment should reflect the level of need described in the site proposal. For example, if 75% of the children in the school community to be served are receiving free or reduced price meal, then at least 75% of the children enrolled in Energy Express should also be eligible for free or reduced meals. Sites are encouraged to exceed that percentage of the school community when enrolling children in Energy Express.

While Energy Express is appropriate for children entering first through sixth grades, sites may choose to target children entering grades 1 through 3, or grades 3 through 6, and so forth. This decision is usually based on the number of children at each grade level who need the program and the ability of the site to enroll the greatest number of children.

Vertical age grouping is used to assign children to groups in Energy Express. Each mentor group must include children from at least **3 grade levels**.

When recruiting children, collaboratives should keep in mind that mentor groups cannot exceed 8 children, while at the same time striving to establish a waiting list so sites can maintain full enrollment throughout the summer. Collaboratives may want to include input from teachers and from social service agencies such as FRN or DHHR when identifying children for recruitment.

### **Maintaining full enrollment should be a goal throughout the program.**

When a child misses a day, the mentor should contact the family to inquire about the child's continued participation in the program. When the family indicates that the child

will either miss more than a week or be unable to return to the program, that child's slot should be filled from the registration waiting list. Empty slots should be filled as quickly as possible to ensure the greatest benefit to children.

## **Children with Special Needs**

Many children with special needs are able to participate in Energy Express. A significant percentage of children with special needs are served each summer and experience success in the program.

It is very important to inform parents who want their children to participate that the program is delivered by college students who have had minimal training. Experienced educators with training in special needs will not be working with the children. The program is not mandatory as is public school, but is a voluntary summer experience. Parents should also know that Energy Express is less structured than is public school and uses guidance strategies that are different than traditional behavior management techniques. For example, there are no individual or group behavior management plans that use stickers or other tangible rewards.

For children with special needs who need accommodations:

1. If a child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) has an Extended School Year Provision, the Board of Education will provide the accommodation for that child.
2. If a child's IEP does not include an Extended School Year Provision, the county contact and site supervisor should meet with the parents to discuss the child's needs for a successful Energy Express experience along with the other children in the group.
  - a. The parents can request in writing that an accommodation be provided. The communication should state the specific accommodation requested and be sent to the program director:

Dr. Ruthellen Phillips, Director  
Energy Express  
West Virginia University  
PO Box 6602  
Morgantown, WV 26506

The request will then be forwarded to the 4-H Youth Development Program Director who, along with the West Virginia University Office of Social Justice, will determine if the request is for a reasonable accommodation.

- b. The parent or another family member or friend that knows the child and is skilled in working with the child can accompany the child to Energy Express.

# Child Recruitment and Registration

## Child Application Process:

1. The number of children for each site determined by site application.
2. Local collaborative plans and executes recruitment procedure (refer to Child recruitment Ideas)
3. Each child required to have:
  - a. Child Application (Form CR-1)  
Note: If county food service provider requires additional documentation (e.g., doctor note for milk allergy) this should be requested with application.
  - b. Child Health History (Form CR-2)
4. Child application deadlines set by local collaborative
5. Waiting list created by local collaborative
6. No over-enrollment!
7. Reminders for parents:
  - Parent volunteers are needed, recruit at time of application
  - Attending program each day is recommended
  - Emergency information must be complete
  - Signature required

## Child Recruitment Ideas for Energy Express

- Teachers at Energy Express sites recruit children from their school as well as children from surrounding community schools.
- Posters around school buildings announcing Energy Express to the staff and children.
- Former AmeriCorps members visit and talk with children about the program.
- Schedule the beginning of the Energy Express day later in the morning so that families do not have to get up so early in the morning.
- Teachers at Energy Express sites foster and support conversation about Energy Express with their students.
- Presentations to PTO and PTA meetings.
- Title I teachers inform parents of the program and application during their parent/teacher meetings.
- Radio spot interviews with Energy Express children talking about their experiences
- Reimburse parents for the cost of bringing their children to Energy Express.
- Family Fun Night brings parents to the school for a closer look and individual experience.
- Partner early with other programs to share transportation, or to connect with afternoon programs.