

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2011 Monitoring

INFORMATION:

The Head Start Act requires that every grantee be monitored at least once every three years. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, the Office of Head Start (OHS) will also conduct monitoring reviews on grantees that received funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to serve infants and toddlers in an Early Head Start program. It has never been more important to assure that all programs are providing eligible children and families with high quality, comprehensive services that will help Head Start children better succeed in school and assist parents in achieving their goals while always understanding that parents are their child’s primary educators. No enrolled child or family should be denied the opportunity to receive the best Head Start experience possible. The Head Start program can be transformational in improving the lives of many of our nation’s disadvantaged families. Children get only one chance to receive the Head Start experience they deserve.

The OHS monitoring system is critical to ensuring program integrity. It informs OHS about programs that have not met the requirements and requires those programs to take corrective action and to obtain training and technical assistance, as appropriate. Monitoring also informs OHS about programs’ strengths and innovative program practices that support high-quality services.

Each year, OHS strives to strengthen its monitoring process, maintain the highest level of transparency, and assure maximum accountability and program integrity. OHS has implemented several changes in the FY 2011 monitoring process.

Highlights of Changes for FY 2011

- **Unannounced Reviews:** Some grantees will not receive advance notice of their review date. The team will arrive unannounced on Monday morning. This will require flexibility and adaptability on the part of the program and review team. Unannounced reviews demonstrate that Head Start and Early Head Start programs are “review ready” everyday.
- **Monitoring Protocol:** The monitoring protocol has been revised and reorganized to gather information more efficiently. These improvements will provide grantees and OHS with a more comprehensive view of how well programs are delivering services.
- **Preparation before On-site Visits:** Review teams are required to conduct in-depth reviews of documents before on-site visits. If the teams are better informed about the programs’ operations before the review, they will be more efficient and effective in obtaining a complete understanding of the program through interviews and observations on-site. Each grantee will be notified of the date that the grantee will be required to have documents entered into the Head Start Enterprise System. It is very important to upload all materials requested.

- Team Size: Team size will be determined by such factors as grantee performance history, grantee size, and complexity.
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®): Each team will have a dedicated member whose sole responsibility will be to conduct classroom observations using CLASS®. This will afford the Early Childhood Development reviewer adequate time to address other aspects of the **program's** education and early childhood development services.

Effective monitoring plays an important role in ensuring the quality performance of Head Start programs. OHS maintains its commitment to ensure that every program is able to demonstrate the positive changes it makes in the lives of Head Start children and families. Our responsibilities are too great to ever tolerate anything other than quality of the highest level.

Please direct any questions on this Information Memorandum to your OHS Regional Office.

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