

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: All Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Notice of Proposed Rule Making: Head Start Program Performance Standards

INSTRUCTION:

A **Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)** to revise the Head Start Program Performance Standards will be published in the Federal Register on Friday, June 19, 2015. The central goal of this NPRM is to strengthen program performance standards so that all programs provide the highest quality comprehensive services. The bipartisan Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 called for a review and revision of the Program Performance Standards to ensure that all Head Start programs provide high quality, comprehensive services that lead to strong outcomes for Head Start children. This proposed rule does just that—sets a high bar for Head Start quality.

The NPRM proposes to strengthen program services, to reorganize, streamline, and reduce bureaucratic burden on local programs, and to improve the clarity and transparency of program requirements—all to ultimately improve outcomes. The proposed Performance Standards set higher standards for curriculum, staff development, and program duration based on research and effective practice. At the same time, the proposed rule makes program requirements easier for current and future program leaders to understand, and reduces administrative burden so that Head Start directors can focus on delivering high-quality early learning programs that put children onto a path of success. The proposed standards maintain and strengthen Head Start's commitment to comprehensive services, including health and family engagement, which are central to helping children succeed and are a hallmark of Head Start.

In developing the direction and content of the proposed revisions, the Office of Head Start (OHS) consulted extensively with grantees, as well as agency staff, parents, and representatives of Indian tribes. OHS also consulted with subject matter experts and a broad range of federal and national organizations with particular expertise and longstanding involvement in early childhood education and Head Start.

This proposed rule seeks to take an important next milestone in the program's history by creating a set of Performance Standards that result in stronger Head Start programs and better outcomes for children and families. The benefits of these proposed changes will be significant for the children and families

Head Start serves. These changes are central to the Administration's early learning efforts to ensure that all children start school ready to succeed.

The next critical step in this process is for OHS to hear from you. OHS is soliciting your feedback, and will use these comments in making decisions for a final rule. The NPRM, as well as summary materials and a link to submit comments, are available on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website under [Policy & Regulation](#).

Please submit comments on this NPRM between Friday, June 19 and Tuesday, August 18, 2015. To submit comments electronically, follow the "Submit a comment" instructions in the [Federal Register](#). To ensure we can effectively respond to your comments, clearly identify the issues on which you are commenting. Please be as specific as possible in your comments and provide the page number, identify the column, and cite the paragraph from the federal register document (e.g., page 10999, second column, §1305.6(a)(1)(i)). If you wish to comment anonymously, please enter "N/A" in the required fields. This approach is our preferred method for receiving comments. However, if this is not possible, you may send comments via the United States Postal Service to the address indicated in the Federal Register.

Please note the current Performance Standards will remain in effect until a final rule is issued.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families. We look forward to receiving your comments,

/ Blanca Enriquez, Ph.D. /

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Director
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